The ancient Greeks didn’t have cameras, so they used sculpture to capture people’s faces instead. What expression would your sculpture have?
Take a trip through thousands of years of Greek history to find out how life and art changed across the centuries and how the ancient Greeks lived. You’ll need to be extra observant to track down every object you need!

Your journey starts in Room 12, Ground floor, Level 0

Case numbers can be hard to find – don’t be afraid to ask a member of staff for help finding an object

1. Ancient makers
   Room 12

2. Meet the neighbours
   Room 13

3. Party time
   Room 15

4. Happy Birthday, Athena
   Room 18

5. Walking on water
   Room 17

6. People and portraits
   Room 22
Minoans and Mycenaeans decorated pots with animals that were important to them and made small objects shaped like them. Explore Case 2 and find these animals:

- Octopus
- Dolphin
- Goat
- Bull
- Falcon
- Duck

Now go to Case 8 and look at the Mycenaean objects. Can you find:

- Precious jewels?
- A weapon?
- Tools for catching food?

What do these objects tell you about Mycenaean life?

- How rich were they?
- Did they fight? What did they eat?

Find this jar. It once stood in the Minoan palace at Knossos on the island of Crete.

It can hold 450 litres of wine, oil or grain – that's enough to fill two big baths! What would you and your family store in it?
Meet the neighbours

Go to Room 13 and find the two statues pictured below.

In the **Archaic Age**, the Greeks got to know their neighbours around the Mediterranean Sea. They set up trading towns in other countries and swapped ideas about art with the people they met.

The left statue is from Egypt and the right one is from Greece. The Greeks were influenced by Egyptian sculpture, but then developed their own style. What similarities can you spot between the two statues? What differences are there?

Go back towards the entrance of the room and find the vase with the motifs below. It was used to mix wine and water for drinking. Can you find these creatures on the vase?

The Archaic Age covers the period 700–480 BC.
3 Party time

Go to Room 15

Greeks grew larger and richer and many great monuments were built. Craftspeople refined their skills, writers produced wonderful plays and great thinkers shared their deep thoughts with others.

The Classical Age covers the period 480–323 BC

Drinking parties were popular with ancient Greeks. Explore the cases in this gallery and find these objects for a drinking party:

- Bowl
- Cups
- Jug
- Pot with three handles

Find this pot in Case 1. It shows the Greek hero Theseus fighting a mythical creature called the Minotaur. Guests at ancient Greek parties told stories inspired by the myths and legends illustrated on pots. Why do you think Theseus and the Minotaur are fighting in this illustration? Now take turns and create a story together, using the picture on the pot as a starting point.
Go to Room 18

Athens once controlled a large empire and was the richest city in the Greek world. The wealthy Athenians built a huge temple for the goddess Athena on top of a hill called the Acropolis. The temple was known as the Parthenon.

Inside the Parthenon stood a colossal statue of the goddess Athena, made of gold and ivory, and towering some 12m high!

Explore the gallery
Start by standing in the middle of the gallery. The stone carving round the walls is known as a frieze. The frieze shows a procession to celebrate the goddess Athena’s birthday.

Walk round the frieze and find:

- A group of cattle
- People on chariots
- Horses galloping
- Gods and goddesses resting

Where on the frieze would you like to be? Choose a small section of the frieze that you find interesting. Imagine you’re there. What can you see, hear and smell?
The skills of Classical Greek architects and sculptors were well known. The 2,000 year-old Nereid Monument is a beautiful tomb made for a king of Lykia. It is named after the Nereids, or sea-goddesses, whose statues look as if they are hovering over the ocean.

Lykian rulers built tombs above ground in their local tradition, but had them decorated with sculptures in the Greek style.

Look at the frieze on the wall and find the picture above. Can you see the woman between the soldiers on the right-hand side? Wave your arms like her. What do you think she might be signalling?

Pick one of the three Nereid sculptures standing between the columns. Imagine what they were once like. Mimic the pose and ask the other people in your group to guess which one you are copying.
People and portraits

Go to Room 22

Lifelike sculptures of people, called portraits, became popular in the Hellenistic Age. A bit like looking at a 3D photograph of someone, people enjoyed seeing carvings of someone's face. Artists of the time became very skilled at showing different people.

The Hellenistic Age covers the period 323–30 BC

Look around the gallery. What different types of people have the artists shown? Do you know anyone who looks like them?

Take it in turns to choose a sculpture and describe it. Ask the group to guess which one each of you is talking about.

Draw a portrait of someone in your group. If you don't have a pencil to hand, draw it at home later.
You have completed the ancient Greeks trail!

You can find out even more about ancient Greek life in other parts of the Museum:

- Learn about the everyday life of ancient Greeks in Room 69
- Travel to Italy with the Greeks in Room 73
- Explore the influence the Greeks had on Roman sculptures in Room 23

Head back to the Families Desk to receive a stamp!

What an adventure that was. You've travelled through thousands of years of Greek history and explored life and art in the ancient Greek world. Of all the things you discovered, what was your favourite?

Names

Ages

Date

Favourite objects

Other things you could do when you get home:

- Read some Greek myths and find out what ancient Greek gods, goddesses and heroes got up to.
- Create your own mythical creature – don’t forget to give it a name!

At home

Draw and colour the other half of this Greek pot using just orange and black – one colour for the figures, the other for the background.
Trails in the Museum
explorers series

Ages 6+
• Africa around the world
• Ancient Britain
• Ancient Egypt
• Ancient Greeks
• Fantastic creatures
• Journey across Japan

Ages 3+
• Colour and shape
• Time to count

You can find out more about our family activities at britishmuseum.org

See you at the British Museum again soon!