

## Teacher's Discussion Guide

### Discussion Part 1

Initiate an open discussion in which students share their conjectures about specific processes through which ancient Greece influence has been infused and sustained in Western thought and culture.

Some possible responses include:

- The Greeks were ambitious writers; many Greek manuscripts have been recovered, some found in archaeological digs.
- Greek manuscripts also have been found in Egyptian tombs (students interested in history might want to pursue this topic).
- Archeologists have discovered many Greek artifacts such as ruins of Greek temples, sculptures, coins, vases.
- Manuscripts were retrieved in Roman invasions and hidden in monasteries as Christianity took hold.
- The Anglo-Saxon King Alfred the Great aimed to educate young males in his country, promoting Ancient Greek sources as an important part of that education.
- The rise of Medieval universities, underscoring formal education as a prime value and creating an environment which valued and expanded access to ancient Greek thought, lore, the great dramas of the Greek Tragedians, and achievements in science, medicine, architecture and the arts.
- The re-embodiment of ancient Greek forms of art, philosophy, and idealism in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Chaucer, Boccaccio, Dante, Shakespeare, etc.; Raphael; Michelangelo, Bottocelli, etc.).
- The drama of the discovery of the ruins of Pompeii, although in Rome, kindling renewed interest in the Ancient World.
- The impact of the intellectual movement of Neo-Classicism (18th century) with its attention to embedding Greek sources in the education of the young, Greek revival in architecture and art, and its focus on order, balance, symmetry, scientific inquiry, and democratic principles.
- The intellectual movement of Romanticism (19th century), with its drive against tyranny and celebration of freedom of the individual and its belief in the Sublime, a "Master Intellect", as a definition of the spiritual world - both movements drawing heavily from ancient Greek sources for inspiration and modes of design and expression.
- Ancient Greek images, symbols and themes that permeate Modernist literature and art (for instance, William Butler Yeats' poetry; Matisse paintings; James Joyce's *Ulysses*).
- O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*; Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending*.

### Discussion Part 2

Initiate an open discussion in which students share their conjectures about some aspects of ancient Greek influence that have had special impact on the shaping of the Western "ethos," particularly that of America.

Some possible responses include:

- The incredible range, rhetorical astuteness, and intellectual richness of Greek philosophical thought.
- The model of honoring individual worth and the valuing of freedom.

- The compelling narratives of Greek myths, particularly those that project "heroic" vision and life's "lessons."
- The aesthetic beauty of the architecture, vases, coins, paintings, and sculpture;
- The skill in engineering design (building of temples, etc.).
- The magnetic draw of the formal patterns and imaginative and universal themes of ancient Greek literature, especially the haunting themes and forms of the three great Tragedians.
- Homer's written narratives culled from oral tradition that read like history and speak to man's desire to learn about the past.