

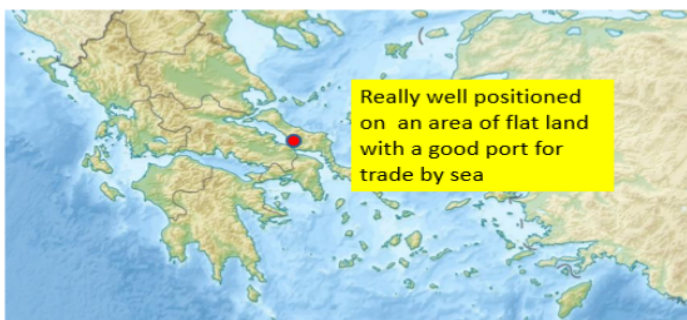
Topic – Ancient Greece (two lessons)

LO: to identify and understand the causes and reasons why Athens became THE most powerful city in Greece

Opening Question: Why was Athens able to move from second-rate polis to the most powerful city in Greece?  
city

Task: Read the question above and then respond to the red questions that have been asked throughout the next few pages.

Read the information about the reasons HOW and WHY Athens was able to become the most powerful city in Ancient Greece. I will help you with what some phrases and sentences mean by writing the helpful notes in blue, so look out for these! You must try to make sense of what the sentences are getting at, also.



Reason 1 - Geographical location

- 1) Why would being on an area of flat land make Athens a powerful city?
- 2) Why would Athens having a good port for trade by sea, make it a powerful city? THINK - how did the sea help them as a city?
- 3) How is Portsmouth like the city of Athens from the information given on the map?

So reason 2 why Athens became strong was SILVER

There was also a lot of lead and marble which are expensive materials.



The silver mines were worked by large teams of slaves working in terrible conditions in narrow passages with the only light coming from burning oil lamps.

It is a high value coin representing, in the mid-fifth century BC, four days' pay for a skilled labourer or for a hoplite soldier, or two days' pay for a sculptor working on a public building. It represents 12 days of welfare payment for a poor Athenian man unable to work or 24 days of pay for a citizen serving on a jury or for an unskilled labourer.

- 4) How does this silver coin above help explain why Athens became so strong as a city? THINK too - what would they do with these silver coins?
  - 5) What did people tend to do down in the silver mines?
  - 6) What was the value of the coin equivalent to for people during the days of Ancient Athens?
  - 7) Look at the paragraph beginning, 'It is a high value...'
- From the list of jobs in this paragraph, which was the best paid job in those days? How can you tell? Justify your thinking.

### Reason 3 TRADE

Athens great position as a sea port with expert sailors and strong ships meant that she could trade with lots of other countries for goods she couldn't grow.

The Athenian politician Pericles remarked that Athenians, unlike other Greeks, expected to be able to enjoy **products from all over the world** not just those they had produced themselves.

Luxury goods such as ivory and glass came from Egypt, dyes, spices and perfumes from the Middle East, textiles as well as a variety of foodstuffs including dates, chestnuts and fine cheese and wines came from Carthage. However, in common with all other Greek cities, Athens needed to import several basic commodities: grain and slaves from Egypt or the Black Sea area, wood, hides, and metals such as copper, tin, gold and iron.

8) Read this section. How did being a sea port help Athens as a city grow in power?

9) Athenian people appeared to enjoy trading with people from all over the world. How did they benefit in this way?

10) Find out online where Carthage is, or used to be located.

### Reason 4 - the way people helped run the city - democracy

The way Athens was run by the people, instead of by a few powerful people called tyrants, made it very popular and successful.

There was a very clear social hierarchy in the economy of 5th century Athens: at the top were the landowners, and both traders and craft-workers were regarded as inferior to them; at the bottom came the **slaves**.

11) What were tyrants?

12) What does 'inferior' mean? Look it up on Google.

13) What kinds of items would traders have sold to people in Ancient Athens? Give some examples. Look it up online if you are not sure. Type in to Google: 'What did traders sell in Ancient Athens?'

### Reason 5 - Clever men

Like Silicon valley in California today where all the clever IT ideas are generated, Athens became a magnet for clever men such as Solon.

*Information Technology*

14) Athens became a place where clever men wanted to go to ('Athens became a magnet...'). Why do you think they all wanted to go to the same place?

15) Look up online who Solon was. Who was he? How was he intelligent? What did he believe? What was his significance?