

# Greece and Rome

GRADE 3



Based on images of two works of art from VMFA's collection, these activities will provide students with background information before their visit and, afterwards, encourage them to use critical thinking skills to draw conclusions from what they saw. The works may or may not be shown on your guided tour, but they are related to the tour theme, and the pre-visit activities will help prepare students for the interactive component of the tour.

### **Tour Description**

Discover the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans and the contributions they have made globally. Delve into the beginnings of the Olympic games, daily life, pottery, and rich mythology.

### **Tour Objectives**

1. Students on this tour will gain an understanding of the contributions the Greeks and Romans have made to the present, especially in terms of architecture, government, sports, and art.
2. Students will see examples of pottery, sculpture, painting, and a mosaic.
3. Students will understand how the Greeks and Romans used natural resources to create works of art.

# Virginia Standards of Learning for Grade 3

---

The following SOLs are for the tour and follow-up activities:

## History and Social Science

- 3.1 The student will explain how the contributions of ancient Greece and Rome have influenced the present world in terms of architecture, government (direct and representative democracy), and sports.
- 3.4 The student will develop map skills by
  - a) locating Greece, Rome, and West Africa;
  - b) describing the physical and human characteristics of Greece, Rome, and West Africa;
  - c) explaining how the people of Greece, Rome, and West Africa adapted to and/or changed their environment to meet their needs.
- 3.7 The student will explain how producers in ancient Greece, Rome, and the West African empire of Mali used natural resources, human resources, and capital resources in the production of goods and services.
- 3.8 The student will explain the role of archaeology in learning about the art of past cultures.

## Visual Arts

- 3.11 The student will identify how works of art and craft reflect times, places, and cultures.
- 3.13 The student will identify how history, culture, and the visual arts influence each other.
- 3.16 The student will compare and contrast art and architecture from other cultures.

## English

- 3.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional text and poetry.
  - d.) Compare and contrast settings, characters, and events.
  - i.) Differentiate between fiction and nonfiction.

## Pre-Visit Activities

---

### Object 1: Greece



***Relief Amphora***, ca. 675 BCE

Greek (Cretan)

Terracotta

Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment,  
79.147

The ancient Greeks are famous for their decorated pottery, which was often functional, or used in daily life. This is a very large amphora, or storage jar, from ancient Greece. It is almost five feet tall and more than 2600 years old. It came from the island of Crete, the largest of the Greek islands. Crete sits in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, which made it extremely important for trade between Egypt and other regions of the Greek world. This vessel is covered with decorations, which were made with a mold or stamped on. Many of the decorations may have been inspired by designs on textiles the Greeks imported from the ancient Near East.





# Pre-Visit Activities

---

## Questions

- What do you think this large vessel is made from?

*It is made from clay, or terra cotta ("baked earth"), a natural resource that was abundant in ancient Greece and Rome.*

- What do you think would have been stored in this vessel?

*This amphora would have been used to store grain, oil, or wine.*

- What crops produced the grain, oil, and wine the Greeks stored in these jars?

*The Greeks (like the Romans) were farmers and grew lots of crops like grasses (wheat, barley), olives, and grapes. From the grasses they harvested grain to make bread or cereal; from olives they made olive oil for cooking or using as fuel for oil lamps. They also used the oil on their skin. Grapes were made into wine.*

- If you had a jar this large, what would you store in it?

- What sorts of decorations do you notice on the outside of the amphora?

*Wavy lines, swirling lines, circles, mythological creatures (at the top).*

- Do you know what the mythological creatures are called?

*The mythological creatures at the top are monsters called sphinxes. They were very popular figures in Greek art. They have the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the head of a woman. The Greeks learned about the sphinx from Egypt and quickly adopted the figure in their own mythology. A sphinx was said to guard the Greek town of Thebes and would not let anyone pass who could not solve her famous riddle. "What goes on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?" Answer: Man, who crawls on all fours as a baby, walks on two legs as an adult, and uses a cane in old age. A king named Oedipus [ed-i-pus] is said to have solved the riddle. The sphinx then destroyed herself.*

- Look at a map of the Mediterranean Sea and locate Crete. Discuss the advantages of this location for trade.

### Object 2 Rome



***Relief of Potter and His Wife, 1st–2nd century***  
Roman marble  
Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 60.2

This work of art comes from ancient Rome and was created almost two thousand years ago. It is a relief sculpture, which means the background is carved away to allow the figures to stand out. It is carved from a stone called marble, which is a natural resource the Romans frequently used to make sculptures and build temples and other buildings. This work of art was part of a funerary monument to honor a man and his wife after they died. Freed slaves often purchased reliefs like this to proudly record their successes in life. A funerary relief is similar to a headstone or gravestone you may have seen in a cemetery or graveyard. This would have marked where the man and woman were buried.

## Pre-Visit Activities

---

### Questions

- What figures do you see in this work of art?  
*A man and a woman*
- Look at what the figures are holding. What does the man have in his hands?  
*The man is holding a pot and a paintbrush.*
- What do you think the man is doing?  
*Painting a pot. A slip (liquid clay) is often used to cover a vase before it is fired, or put in an oven or kiln to make it harder*
- Given all this information, what do you think the man might do for a living?  
*He was a potter, a person who specializes in making pottery.*
- What do you think the pots were made from?  
*Clay or terra cotta. Clay is a natural resource.*
- What do you think these pots were used for?  
*They could have been used for cooking as well as for holding or storing food and drink*
- Can you tell what the woman is holding?  
*The object she holds in her left hand may be a fan, which is a Roman symbol of marriage and lets us know that she is married to the man sitting across from her. The round object in her right hand is believed to be a loaf of bread.*
- What is bread usually made from?  
*Grain, another natural resource. The Romans grew wheat, barley, and other grains to make bread. Bread was an important part of the Roman diet, just like ours. Rome grew larger and larger over the years and became an empire, which is a group of states or territories under one government. The capital was the city of Rome itself on the Italian peninsula, but the Romans controlled territory that covered thousands of miles. The city of Rome became so large and there were so many soldiers to feed all over the empire that the Romans could not feed all their people with just the crops grown in Italy. Because the Greeks and Romans could not always grow and produce everything they needed or wanted, they traded with other people. In the Roman Empire, Egypt was one of the most important suppliers of grain*

## Post-Visit Activities

---

- Ask the students what they learned from their visit. Have them fill in the answers on their K-W-L charts. Ask them if the questions they had before their visit were answered.
- Ask them what their favorite image was and why.
- Show students the two images again and ask them what they remember about seeing the works of art in the galleries. Did they look different from what they expected? What did they learn about the subjects of the two works of art as well as the works themselves? Did they see other works that helped them understand these two works?
- Ask the students to draw an image of their favorite work of art and add as many details as they can.
- Ask the students to think about some of the objects they saw and what a modern equivalent would be. What types of containers do you store your food in today?
- Make a list of the works of art students remember from the tour and ask them what natural resource each was made from and if the object was made by a person who specialized in a trade or profession.
- Have the students write their own myths, stories, or poems based on some of the characters or events they learned about on the tour.
- Since the students saw images of athletes, gods, goddesses, emperors, and people of different professions that were thousands of years old, ask them how they would like to be remembered two thousand years from now. Have them draw an image or write a description of how they would be portrayed, or what they would be remembered for.
- Please let us know how your students have been inspired by VMFA! Visit our tumblr. page and submit images of student works at: <http://vmfaeducation.tumblr.com/>





VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

200 N. Boulevard | Richmond, VA 23220 | [www.VMFA.museum](http://www.VMFA.museum)