**Ancient Greek Historians**

**POWERPOINT NOTES**

1. The Greeks invented the subject of history. Its name comes from the Greek word HISTORIA which means enquiry. What is history?

* An attempt to describe and explain events from the past
* It aims to be factual

1. The first Greek historian was Herodotus, a Greek from the city of Halicarnassus on what is now the coast of Turkey. Herodotus is known as the ‘father of history’ and is one of the very first historians we know about. His work starts with the following passage [on next slide].
2. Herodotus writes about the Persian Wars. These wars, early in the fifth century BC, were a series of conflicts between many of the city-states of Greece and the Persian Empire. The Persians were the major power in the Ancient World in the 6th and 5th centuries BC and the Greeks’ defeat of Persia is often regarded as one of their most important achievements.

Herodotus interviewed lots of people who had fought in the Persian Wars and wrote down what they told him. He did not always know if they told him the truth but he wrote it down anyway.

1. The Persian army was defeated by the Athenians at the Battle of Marathon. The heavily armed Greek soldiers were more than a match for the lightly equipped Persians.

Pan, the son of the messenger god Hermes, was the god of shepherds and sheep as well as nature. Pan was half man and half goat. Pan is an important God in warfare as he was able to sow panic and fear into the enemy. Pan helped the Athenians to win at Marathon. Pan’s symbol became the musical pipes after falling in love with a nymph who escaped from him and turned into a bed of reeds. The musical pipes were made from these reeds. He often holds a club.

1. The father of lies? Herodotus was sometimes called the father of lies by later historians because some of his stories seemed too far-fetched to be believable. For example many did not believe his stories about fierce warrior women called Amazons living in what is now Russia. But when archaeologists discovered graves with warrior women buried in them it seemed that he might be right after all.
2. Our main source for understanding the Peloponnesian War is the Athenian historian Thucydides, who lived between circa 460-400 BC. He served as an Athenian general and had first-hand experience of many of the key events. He was also able to talk directly to many people who saw action in the War.

However Thucydides still made up some of his Histories. He tells us that when he records speeches that he has heard if he cannot remember them he makes them up:

*The speakers say what, in my opinion, was called for by each situation.* (1.22)

Historians today could not do that!

1. The Peloponnesian War is the name given to a series of conflicts between the Athenians and their allies and the Spartans and their allies later on in the fifth century BC.
2. Spartan society was based around war and Spartan soldiers were the best in Greece. From a very young age Spartan boys trained to be warriors. The images show a Spartan hoplite (heavy infantryman) and some of the remains of ancient Sparta visible today.
3. In contrast to the Spartans, the Athenians were some of the best sailors in the Greek world and Athens certainly had the most powerful navy of any Greek city. They depended on fast war galleys (large ships) which were called triremes because they were powered by three banks of rowers. The images show a trireme and the some of the impressive remains of ancient Athens still visible today on the Acropolis.

**Herodotus tells the story of Pheidippides – read the story and try the storyboard activity**