**The Peloponnesian War**

**POWERPOINT NOTES**

1. The Peloponnesian War is the name given to a series of battles between the Athenians and their allies and the Spartans and their allies. The War was fought throughout mainland Greece, the Aegean and even involved fighting on the island of Sicily, where there were a large number of Greek settlements.
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.
3. After the Persian Wars Athens set up agreements with other Greek city-states to protect each other from the Persians. Over time the Athenians began to control the city-states they had agreements with, raising taxes and not allowing them to govern themselves. The Spartans also had their own league of allies and as they became more worried about the growth of Athenian power the chance of war between these two groups of Greek cities grew.
4. Spartan soldiers were the best in Greece. From a very young age Spartan boys trained to be warriors. The pictures show a Spartan hoplite (heavy infantryman) and the some of the remains of ancient Sparta visible today.
5. In contrast to the Spartans the Athenians were some of the best sailors in the Greek World and Athens had the most powerful navy of any Greek city. They depended on fast war galleys 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.
6. The war broke out because the Athenians became involved in a quarrel with the city of Corinth, which was allied to Sparta. After some debate the Spartans decided to support Corinth against the Athenians.
7. The first ten years of the war are known as the Archidamian War, after the Spartan King Archidamus II. The two sides were evenly matched.

The Athenians were best at sea battles and avoided fighting the Spartans on land. They attacked Spartan lands from the sea, while the Spartans invaded the territory of Athens and destroyed Athenian farmers’ crops.

1. Both Sparta and Athens had victories but neither side could completely beat the other. In 421 BC they signed a treaty of 50 years peace.
2. This peace was broken very soon by both sides. Athens and Sparta began to form alliances with other city states once again and start to fight each other.
3. 415 BC – Segesta, in Sicily, asks Athens for help against its neighbours. Athens accepts, hoping to gain power on the island of Sicily. They take 134 triremes with about 25,000 men to Sicily. The Greek city of Syracuse in Sicily asks Sparta for help against the Athenians and a series of land and naval battles take place around Syracuse. The Athenian fleet was eventually destroyed. Many Athenians tried to escape by land but most were killed or captured and enslaved and set to work in quarries. Athens lost nearly one third of its fleet but was determined to continue the fight against Sparta.
4. The last stage of the Peloponnesian War mainly took place around the Aegean Sea. The Spartans were given lots of money by the Persian Empire and were able to create a large navy to take on the Athenians. In 405 BC the Athenian fleet was finally destroyed and in 404 BC there was a siege of Athens by both land and sea. The Athenians were starved into submission. Athens lost all of its power and so the Peloponnesian War ends.

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