**The Persian Wars**

**POWERPOINT NOTES**

1. The Persian Wars were a series of battles between 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.
2. We know about the Persian wars from a variety of sources. The most important is the work of Herodotus, a Greek writer. Herodotus is known as the ‘father of history’ and is one of the very first historians we know about.
3. The Persians came from Iran and ruled over a large area of the Middle East. The Persian Empire was ruled by a Great King who had several major palaces in Persia. The picture on the right shows the King on his throne with one of his subjects in front of him.
4. The Great King’s power was based on his huge wealth and the strength of the Persian army. The slide shows a gold Persian coin, called a Daric, with a picture of the King holding his bow and arrow. The other picture shows Persian soldiers armed with spears and bows.
5. The Persian Empire eventually spread to the Aegean Sea and the Persians conquered the Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor (Turkey), including Ephesus and Miletus.
6. The Greek cities of Asia Minor rebelled against the Persians between 499 and 493 BC. This was called the Ionian revolt. Eventually the cities were defeated and brought back under Persian control. There was a big sea battle.
7. The Persian King Darius was angry that the Athenians had supported the Greeks of Asia Minor in their revolt and decided to punish them by sending an army to Greece. This 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 (on the right of the slide) was the son of the messenger god Hermes, he 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.

1. Darius’ son Xerxes was determined to conquer Greece and defeat the Athenians once and for all and in 480 BC he launched a massive invasion of Greece.
2. Xerxes’ army crossed the Hellespont, the straits that divide Europe from Asia, on a bridge made from hundreds of boats. His army was so big that it supposedly drank some of the rivers of Europe dry!
3. The Greeks put aside their usual quarrels and came together to face the Persian threat. At Thermopylae a small Greek force, led by the Spartan King Leonidas, tried to stop the Persian army from marching through a mountain pass into Greece. They held out for some time until a Greek traitor led the Persians across the mountains by a secret path. The Persians were then able to surround the Greek army and defeat them. All 300 Spartans who fought with their King Leonidas are supposed to have died. After Thermopylae the Persians captured and burnt the city of Athens but most of the Athenians had fled to a nearby island. The Greek fleet, including the Athenians, then beat the Persians in a sea battle near the island of Salamis.
4. After Salamis Xerxes returned to Persia but left a large army behind to finish off the job of conquering the Greeks. However a Greek force defeated them at the battle of Platea and the Persians had to retreat. The Persian threat was over and the Greeks very soon went back to doing what they did best, which was arguing amongst themselves.