**Ancient Greek Houses**

**POWERPOINT NOTES**

2. This is a picture of what an ancient Greek house might have looked like. We know about ancient Greek houses from the pictures on painted pottery and from the archaeological remains of some houses. Houses are not often mentioned in writing from ancient Greece.

* Houses look inwards towards a central courtyard rather than facing the street.
* The ancient Greeks wanted their houses to be very private and they did not want people looking in from the street. Why? (so that the women of the household were protected).

3. Some houses have been excavated in Athens but the best preserved houses are in Northern Greece in a place called Olynthos.These houses are laid out in regular blocks – like terraced houses. In this picture you can see 10 houses in 3 blocks and then a picture of what the block of 10 houses would have looked like.

You can see in the picture that not much of the houses survive. This is because they were not made out of marble or stone like temples. What do you think they were made of? (A stone footing with mudbricks on top - only the layer of stones survives). The floor would have been made of beaten earth. Very few rooms had mosaics. The things that were once in the house were taken out when people abandoned their house when the city was invaded. All that is left is things that were broken or lost.

4. Most Greek houses were fairly small and very simple. Archaeologists think that many houses would have had an upstairs because traces of stairs are sometimes found. At Olynthos stairs were found in the courtyard of the house. The drawing shows what this might have looked like.

5. Some of the writers from ancient Greece talk about a space which is just for women called the gynaikon. On this pot you can see a woman sitting on a stool beside a table. She has some bread and a cup of water. Behind her a mirror hangs upside down and there is a column to show she is inside.

6. Women spent most of their time in the house. Can you remember what important job they had to do? (Making cloth). Spinning and weaving were carried out in the house and archaeologists find spindle whorls and loom weights which have been lost in the floor. At Olynthos 26,000 loom weights have been found. Why do you think spindle whorls and loom weights get lost? (because they are very small).

7. You can see in this house at Olynthos that loom weights were found in a room but also in the courtyard. Women would have worked in the open air courtyard as well as inside the house.

A room which is often easy to identify is the andron. This is the dining room where men had their drinking parties. The women of the house did not go to these parties. The only women present would be slaves or foreigners who would serve the wine and play instruments.

8. Most mosaics are found in the andron. The couches which the men lay on are arranged around the walls of the room. In the top photograph you can see the mosaic floor and the stone ledge around the edges where the couches would once have stood. The pictures show how the andron would have looked when a party was taking place.

9. Other rooms in the house are less easy to identify. Sometimes archaeologists can tell a room was a storeroom as it might have giant storage pots called pithoi sunk into the ground. The picture shows how a store room might have looked. This is where the wine, oil and grain would have been kept.

10. Often there does not seem to have been a specific kitchen. Cooking was done on a little portable brazier – a bit like a BBQ and this could have been moved around the house or used in the courtyard. The picture shows a woman cooking on one of these braziers.

11. Ancient Greek houses did not have a lot of furniture. Chairs and stools can be reconstructed from pictures on pottery. The chair on the right is modern but made to look like an ancient Greek chair.

12. In the andron there would be couches, tables and footstools – like the ones in the picture. Furniture does not survive – why? (Because it is made of wood which rots away).

13. There were no wardrobes or drawers – things would be stored in wooden boxes and baskets.

14. Click on the link.

Click on **Daily Life** and scroll down to click on **Challenge**

Click **next** and you can explore the house by moving the mouse over it

Click **start** then click **normal morning** and you can drag the people into the right rooms

Once all the people are in rooms click **next** and you can drag objects into the room.

**Now try the house activity, which is based on this game**

**The Hidden Lives workshop in the Great North Museum includes this activity**