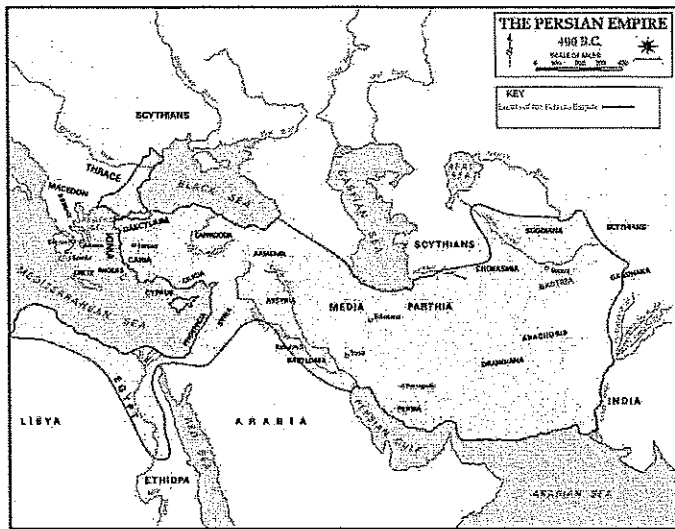


# THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

## 550 BC – 300 BC

### GROWTH OF AN EMPIRE



The Persian Empire was one of the largest in history, at its **height** it spread from Egypt to the Indus River. Indo-Europeans began settling in the land east of the Fertile Crescent around 1000 B.C.E. In 550 B.C.E., a Persian king named Cyrus began conquering kingdoms. Over time, his empire had grown from Anatolia (Turkey) in the west to the Indus River in the east. The way that **Cyrus** ruled his empire was very special for that time. He was tolerant of the people he conquered by allowing them to keep their local customs, religion, and language. The Persian Empire was able to control such a

large empire by a well-developed **imperial bureaucracy**. The empire was divided into various **provinces** and each province was ruled by a governor called a **satrap**. In this way the emperor was able to effectively govern such a large empire. This system of bureaucracy has been copied in modern day governments and its influence can be seen in modern American government.

### PERSIAN CULTURE

The Persians were also great engineers and built **royal roads** that connected the empire. These roads encouraged trade, communication, and allowed the military to move quickly. As the Persian Empire spread, it came in contact with Central Asian, Mesopotamian, Arabic, and Egyptian cultures. All of these earlier civilizations contributed to the Persian culture and also allowed it to become the largest empire in the world at that time. A Persian prophet named **Zoroaster** lived around 600 B.C.E. and taught that there are two opposite forces in the universe, good and evil. Because of this, humans are involved in an endless battle and are expected to participate. The religion believed in one god, Ahura Mazda. They believed that Ahura Mazda would judge people based on how well they fought for the good. Zoroaster's religious teachings became the basis for **Zoroastrianism**, and it was the main religion of the Persian empire. Zoroastrianism is still practiced today in parts of Iran, India, Pakistan, and other small areas of the world. This religion has also influenced other religions such as Christianity and Islam.



### KEY VOCABULARY

**Height:** the high point of something

**Imperial Bureaucracy:** a government with many local officials working to run the empire

**Satrap:** rulers chosen by the emperor to control a local province

**Royal Roads:** long roads built by the Persian Empire to easily connect the empire

**Zoroastrianism:** religion started by Zoroaster, and it was the main religion of Persia

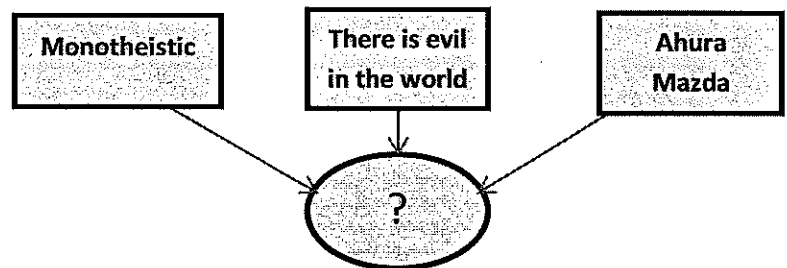
# REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) The Royal Roads allowed the Persians to effectively manage their empire. What tools today help governments function well? Why are they helpful?
  
- 2) All of the following are examples of the Persian Empire except:
  - a. Tolerance of conquered peoples
  - b. Extensive road system
  - c. Imperial bureaucracy
  - d. Islam

?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People could keep their own religion</li><li>• People could keep their own customs</li><li>• People could keep their own language</li><li>• People could keep some of their own laws</li></ul>

- 3) Which is the best title for the table above?
  - a. Activities in the Persian Empire
  - b. Desires of conquered people in the Persian Empire
  - c. Examples of tolerance of conquered peoples in the Persian Empire
  - d. Living in the Persian Empire

- 4) What is being described by the graphic?
  - a. Zoroastrianism
  - b. Christianity
  - c. Islam
  - d. Judaism



- 5) Choose two of Cyrus' ideas about government. Explain how these can be an example for leaders of nations today?

# THE PERSIAN WARS



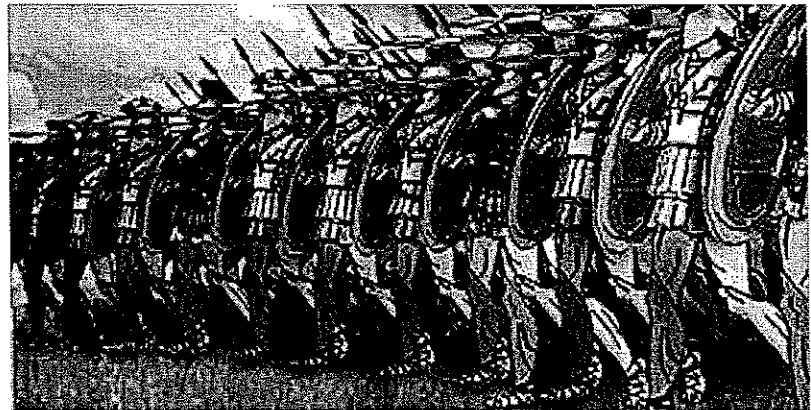
By 500 B.C.E., the Persian Empire had conquered all of the Fertile Crescent and Asia Minor (Anatolia). Several **Ionian** Greek city-states on the west coast of Anatolia decided to revolt against the Persian Empire in 499 B.C.E. The Ionian Greeks asked for help from Greeks on the mainland. Athens was one of the few city-states to send help. The Persian navy fought mostly against the Athenian navy and was defeated. King Darius I of Persia was angry that the Athenians had helped the Ionians rebel against the Persia and declared war on Athens and its allies in 492 B.C.E.

## THE FIRST PERSIAN WAR: 491- 490 B. C. E.

In 490 B.C.E., Darius sent a representative to several Greek city-states with the message that all Greeks should send him “earth and water” to show that the Greeks recognized Darius as the ruler of their lands and seas. Characteristic of their city-state’s attitude, the Spartans threw the representative down a well, saying Darius could have both “earth and water” at the same time! This was also their way of showing Darius that the Spartans were not intimidated.

Darius responded by sending his huge navy, carrying the massive Persian army, across the Aegean to have his troops start the land war. His goal was to conquer Athens first, then control the other arrogant city-states. His troops landed at **Marathon**, which is just north of Athens.

The militarily brilliant Spartans refused to help Athens. Even without the Spartans help, the Athenians – against all odds –destroyed the Persian invading force. How? The Greek soldiers, called **hoplites**, had perfected a battle formation called a **Phalanx**. The Persian forces had no fighting experience against this formation, and they were quickly defeated in the Battle of Marathon.



The remaining Persian force attempted to leave Marathon and make their way toward Athens in hopes the city would surrender without its hoplites to protect it. The popular story tells us that, luckily for the Athenians, they had an incredible runner name Pheidippides. Pheidippides sprinted just 26 miles from Marathon to Athens to warn them of the approaching Persian force. Legend says that when he got to Athens, he yelled, “Rejoice, we conquer!” and then dropped dead. Since they had advance notice, the Athenians were able to fight the invaders back rather than surrender. Darius I was forced to return to Persia defeated and embarrassed by the Athenians yet again.

## THE SECOND PERSIAN WAR: 480- 479 B. C. E.

After his father Darius I died, the next Persian king, Xerxes, swore to take revenge on all of Greece, especially the Athenians. He spent 10 years raising a massive to destroy Greece. The first major battle of this portion of the war was the **Battle of Thermopylae**.

For one of the few times in Greek history, Athens and Sparta united to defend themselves against the Persians. The Spartan king, Leonidas, led a small army of just 300 Spartans warriors to defend the pass at Thermopylae. Thermopylae was the entrance from Macedonia in the north to Greece. Leonidas and his small group of men stalled the massive Persian force from entering Greece while the other Greek forces retreated to further prepare for the Persian invasion. After a valiant struggle, the Persians slaughtered Leonidas and every one of his men. Not surprisingly, the Spartans willingly sacrificed themselves for the good of Greece.

Meanwhile, the Athenian general Themistocles ordered the evacuation of all women

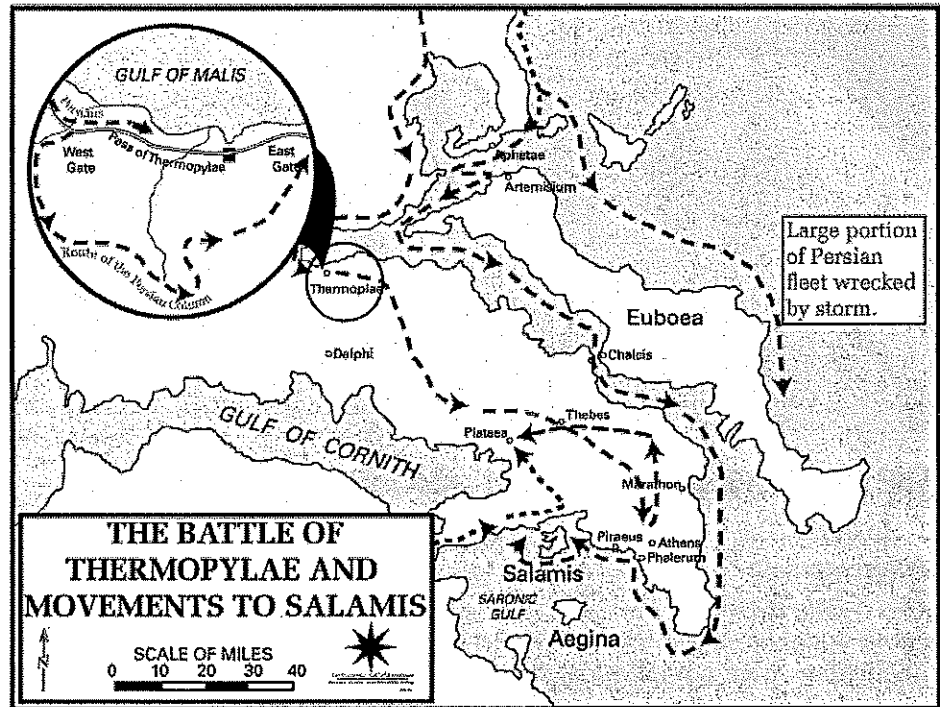
and children in Athens while the Athenian men went to their warships. The Athenians decided to stake their survival on their powerful navy. After the Persians defeated Leonidas, Xerxes and his army swept into Greece and headed straight for Athens. When they found the city abandoned, they burned Athens to the ground. Xerxes then set his mind on destroying the Athenian navy and ending the war in victory.

Themistocles tricked Xerxes into believing the Athenian navy was retreating and the massive Persian navy pursued them into a small strip of sea off the island of **Salamis**. The Persian ships were much larger than the Greeks and were not built for confined spaces. The huge Persian navy found it could not maneuver and was trapped. The much smaller ships of the Athenian navy repeatedly smashed into the Persian warships. Xerxes, sitting upon a golden throne placed on a cliff high above the shore overlooking the battle, saw his navy completely destroyed.

Xerxes retreated with his remaining army. The Athenians and their allies defeated Xerxes' army for the last time at the **Battle of Plataea** in 479 B.C.E. Xerxes returned to Persia, defeated, and the Persian Empire never again invaded Greece.

## THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR

Both Athens and Sparta claimed credit for the victory over Persia, which led to problems. Sparta was left very weak after its defeat at Thermopylae, while Athens emerged as the most powerful city-state after rebuilding. Athens created the Delian League: an alliance with other city states to protect themselves if Persia ever again invaded. Athens rebuilt their city-state more splendid than ever, and experienced its Golden Age of economic and cultural magnificence.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE PERSIAN WARS

**Battles:** Use the reading to complete the following chart.

Battle	M _____	T _____	S _____	P _____
Combatants (who fought?)	vs.	vs.	vs.	vs.
Who won?				
Notes specific to this battle				

**Vocabulary Terms and People:** Use the reading to find the correct term

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. King of Persia who declared war on Athens and started the Persian Wars.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. King of Persia who fought Leonidas at the Battle of Thermopylae.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Greek city-state with the strongest military.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Greek city-state which created the Delian League.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Greek citizen-soldiers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Fighting formation that helped Greece win the Battle of Marathon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Greek runner who yelled "Rejoice, we conquer!" Then, he died.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Spartan leader of the brave 300.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Greek general from Athens who commanded the navy at Salamis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Group of Greek city-states created to protect themselves from Persia.

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# THE PERSIAN WARS

**Directions:** Your assignment is to create a comic strip that tells the story of the Persian Wars visually. Use the reading, your notes, and other sources to create a factual story about the Persian Wars. Your comic must be at least 6 slides long.

**Slide 1:** Causes of the War- Make sure you talk about the Ionian Greeks.

**Slide 2:** Battle of Marathon- Make sure you mention Pheidippides.

**Slide 3:** Battle of Thermopylae – Make sure you include King Leonidas and his loss.

**Slide 4:** Battle of Salamis- Make sure you include the differences between Athenian and Persian ships.

**Slide 5:** Battle of Plateau: Make sure you include the winner

**Slide 6:** Effects of the war- Include the Delian League

Each Slide must:

- Have a title and date (The Cause and Effects slides do NOT need dates)
- Have a story line written either in word bubbles or at the bottom of the slide
- Be colorful, neat and creative

All of your pictures must be drawn by you and not off the internet.

## PERSIAN WARS COMIC RUBRIC

<b>Slide</b>	<b>Title (1pt)</b>	<b>Date (1pt)</b>	<b>Content (3)</b>	<b>Colorful/ Neatness (1)</b>
<b>Slide 1: Causes</b>				
<b>Slide 2: Marathon</b>				
<b>Slide 3: Thermopylae</b>				
<b>Slide 4: Salamis</b>				
<b>Slide 5: Plateau</b>				
<b>Slide 6: Effects</b>				

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_ /36

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# PERSIAN WARS COMIC TEMPLATE
