Birth of Greece

Minoans, Mycenaeans, & Dorians
Minoans 2000- 1400 B.C.

- Named by archeologist after the legendary king Minos
- Located on the island of Crete- stepping stone to the Greek culture
- Minotaur- legendary beast of the Labyrinth (Half bull/ half man)
Contributions

• Unique architecture- wall painting called frescoes
• Painted vases
• Vast palaces at Knossos
• Traded with the Egyptians
• Built the 1st Navy- great sailors
• Writing system: adopted by the Greeks
Religion

• Many gods & goddesses
• Earth Mother
• Priestesses - told future at shrines
• Sacrificed: bull & other animals to the gods
Activities

- Wrestling
- Boxing
- Bull leaping

- Vanished because of natural disasters & invaders, earthquakes & tidal waves and the invasion of the Mycenaeans from the mainland

- Women could hold important roles in society
Mycenaeans - 1600-1200 B.C.

- first Greek speaking people
- Dominated mainland Greece - Peloponnesus Peninsula & north central Greece
- Local people were known as the Hellenes
- Palace center of city, served as: government center & area of trade
- Adopted many ideas of the Minoans: writing & religion (worshipped earth mother) & many gods & goddesses
- Sea Traders: Egypt & Mesopotamia
- Trojan War 1250 B.C. - Rivalry between Troy (Turkey) & Mycenae
Dorians

- Civilization crumble with the invasion of the Dorians: cities were abandoned, trade declined, & people fled to Ionia
- Began the “Dark Age” of Greece; next 400 years. No writing.
- Bards - (singing story tellers) kept the Mycenaean culture alive with oral traditions
- 2 Epics of Homer - Iliad & the Odyssey
- 750 B.C. Ionians - reintroduced the Mycenaean’s culture, crafts & skills to the Mainland; Alphabet from the Phoenicians
- New Greek civilization with Mycenaean elements emerged: Hellenic period
Religion

• Polytheistic

• Humanized deities: total human form, behaved like humans: marry, have kids, lie & murder, jealous but also have supernatural powers

• Each community chooses a particular god or goddess as their patron or protector

• Zeus - Father of the gods & Hera was his wife; 12 important deities that lived on Mount Olympus