CHAPTER 29: THE GOLDEN AGE OF ATHENS

29.1 Introduction
- At the end of the Persian wars, Athens was in ruins
  - The Athenians were inspired to rebuild by a great leader named Pericles
    - Under his leadership, Athens entered a golden age, a period of great peace and wealth (479-431 B.C.E)
- **Agora** - public meeting place in the center of the city
  - Square
    - On two sides, there are large, stately public buildings
    - On the other two sides, there are covered walkways where people meet and talk with friends
  - In the center are market stalls with things to buy from all over Greece

29.2 A City of Contrasts
- **Homes**
  - Most homes in Athens were one story high and made of mud bricks
  - The homes of poor families were very simple
  - Wealthier people had larger homes with rooms built around a central courtyard
  - Very few windows
- **Acropolis** - the hill above a Greek city on which temples were built
  - Homes for their gods and goddess
- **Parthenon** - the temple honoring the goddess Athena, built on the acropolis above Athens

29.3 Religion: The Temple at Delphi
- **Temples** of Athens show how important religion was to the Greeks
- Each goddess had power over a particular subject
  - Example: A famous temple in the town at Delphi was dedicated to the god Apollo. People could ask Apollo questions through a priestess who was called the oracle of Delphi. To answer a question, the priestess went into a trance. The words she spoke were thought to come from Apollo himself
- **Myth** - a traditional story that helps to explain a culture’s beliefs
  - According to these stories, the home of the gods was Mount Olympus, which is a real mountain in Greece
  - The twelve most important Gods are called the Olympian Gods

29.4 Architecture: The Acropolis
- **Architecture** - the art of designing buildings
  - **Temples**, built their temples as beautiful dwelling places for the gods and goddesses rather than as places to worship
Show the importance of balance and order in the Greeks’ idea of beauty.

Most temples had a main room with a stature of the temple’s god or goddess.

- **Columns**: 3 types
  - Doric - simplest with no base and slim towards the top
  - Ionic - thinner than the Doric and sat on a base with spirals carved into the top
  - Corinthian - most complex with carvings that looked like leaves at the top

- **Parthenon**
  - One of the most beautiful temples in Greece
  - Built rectangular with 8 columns across the front and back and 17 along each side
  - Roof was slanted, creating triangles called pediments at the front and back of the building
  - Top of temple was a band of sculptures called a frieze
    - Sculptures themselves are called metopes

### 29.5 A Marble Workshop

- **Sculpture** - the art of creating three-dimensional figured from such materials as wood, stone, and clay
  - Sculptors in Athens often set up a workshop near the site where the finished statue would go
  - Sculptors apprentices first made a life-size clay model supported by wooden or metal frames
  - The general outline of the stature was then roughed out in marble.
    - A master sculptor added details and finishing touches

- **Greek statues** were colorful with bronze pieces
  - Painters applied wax and bright colors to the statue’s hair, lips, clothes, and headdresses
  - Creating life-life statue’s was one of the great achievements of Greek sculptors
  - Influenced by Egyptian styles
    - Larger-than-life figures that faced front, with their arms held stiffly at their sides

- **Phidias** was one of the most famous sculptors in Athens
  - Designed the figures that line the top of the Parthenon
  - Sculpted the statue of Athena that stood inside the temple

### 29.6 Drama: The Theater of Dionysus

- **Drama** - the art of writing, acting in, and producing plays
- **Theater of Dionysus** was an important theater that held thousands of people
  - Dionysus was the god of theater and wine
• **Plays** grew out of the songs and dances that the Greeks performed at harvest time to honor him
  o Included a few main characters and a chorus
    ▪ *Chorus* was a group of men who recited liens that commented on the actions of the characters
    ▪ Words spoken by the chorus helped to explain and expand on the story
  o Part of *competitions* that could last for days
    ▪ Judges chose winners in four categories: tragic playwrights, comic playwrights, leading tragic actor, and leading comic actors
    ▪ Winners and actors were crowned with olive leaves and given prizes such as figs and wine
  o No women actors
    ▪ Men played womens’ parts
  o Stages in open-air *theaters*
    ▪ Shaped like a bowl so that everyone could hear what was said
      ▪ Seats rose in a semi-circle around the stage
    ▪ Scenery was painted on canvas and hung behind the actors

**29.7 Philosophy: The Agora**
• Athenians loves to talk and argue
  o In the sheltered spaces on the side of the agora, men gathered to discuss the world around them
    ▪ Talked about nature, trading ideas, the natural world and how it worked, meaning of life, truth, and justice, and beauty
  o **Philosophy** - the search of wisdom of knowledge
    ▪ “love of wisdom”
• **Socrates** was one of the greatest philosophers in Greece and encouraged people to question the things they thought they knew
  o “What is the good life for a man? What is truth? How do you know?”
  o Constant questioning got Socrates in trouble and accused him of not honoring the gods and of leading young people into error
  o In 399 B.C.E, Socrates was brought to trial
    ▪ Guilty
      ▪ Sentenced to death by drinking Hemlock poison
  o Taught another philosopher, Plato
    ▪ *Plato* taught the famous *Aristotle*

**29.8 Sports: The Panathenaic Games**
• Often held events to honor gods and goddesses
  o Part of the *Panathenaea*, festival that honored the goddess Athena
  o Events: horse and chariot races, footraces, boxing, and wrestling
• **Olympics** honored Zeus