

Name _____ Date _____ Period ____ Class _____

Directions: Read and annotate the article and answer the questions that follow in complete sentences.

THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Adapted from an article by Dr Karen Carr, Associate Professor of History at Portland State University

After the Persian Wars ended, the Athenians convinced the other Greek cities that they needed to keep the strong Greek navy together in case the Persians came back again. At first everyone thought this was a good idea, and they formed an alliance called the Delian League. Then the Athenians said to the other cities, "Don't bother sending ships and men for the navy anymore; that is too hard. Just send money to Athens, and we will build ships and defend you against the Persians." So a lot of cities did that. But the Persians did not come back. After a while, some of the cities said, "We don't want to send any more money to Athens. We don't think the Persians are ever coming back." But the Athenians used their now enormous navy to *make* the other cities continue sending money. When the island of Naxos refused, the Athenians destroyed the walls of the Naxians' main city. The Athenians also spent some of the money on their own city. No Athenians had to pay taxes anymore. They used the money from the other cities to build great temples like the Parthenon.

Athens had become too greedy, and the other cities in Greece were angry. They asked the Spartans to help stop the Athenians, who were trying to take over all of Greece. The Spartans, who lived in the south of the Peloponnese, formed an alliance with Corinth and some other, smaller Greek cities called the Peloponnesian League, and brought an army to march to the walls of Athens in 431 BC. The Peloponnesian War had begun.

Even with all that money and such a powerful navy, Athens had a big geographical disadvantage. Sparta was inland, so the Athenian navy could attack Sparta directly. On the other hand, the Spartan army only had to march north to attack Athens. Knowing this, the Athenian leader Pericles allowed all of the people from the countryside to move into the city so its walls would protect them. The Spartans could not break through, and the Athenians could get food, and come and go as they pleased, by sailing out of their port in their ships. The Spartans didn't have any navy, so they couldn't stop the Athenians from sailing around.

But in the summer of 430 BC the Athenians began to die from a terrible plague. The overcrowding in the city made it was easy for the disease to spread. Hundreds of people died, including the Athenian general Pericles. Things just kept getting worse for Athens. An Athenian general named Alcibiades suggested a plan to attack Spartan food supplies on the island of Sicily. If they had no food, he argued, the Spartans would have to surrender. The Athenian Assembly was convinced, and allowed Alcibiades to take most of the Athenian navy and army to Sicily. However, Alcibiades turned out to be a traitor. Rather than attacking the Spartans, he joined with them, and the Athenians formerly under his command were defeated. After that, the Spartans also received support from the *Persians*, and together they helped support anti-Athenian rebellions in the cities that Athens controlled in the Aegean Sea and Ionia. The naval fleet of Athens was then destroyed and they had no choice but to surrender.

After the war was over, things slowly started to get better for Athens and the other states. The culture and economy began to repair themselves, but Athens would never be the same. The Golden Age of Classical Greece had ended, and war had weakened all of the Greek states, which only made it easier for an outside force to conquer them. In Macedonia, just to the north of Greece, an ambitious ruler was planning to conquer Greece, and beyond...

1. Why did the Greek states form the Delian League? _____

2. Why did the Greek states change their minds about giving money to Athens? _____

3. Was it fair for Athens to spend the Delian money to improve their own city? What was the money supposed to be for? _____

4. Why do you think the other city-states turned to Sparta for help? _____

5. Why would it have been difficult for Athens to attack Sparta? _____

6. What did Pericles do to protect the Athenians from Spartan attack? How did that lead to the spread of disease? _____

7. Name three things that went wrong for Athens during the course of the war. _____

8. Why did the Peloponnesian War make Greece more vulnerable to being conquered? _____

