

# Greece and Rome Lesson 1

## *Here's What I See*

### The Basics

**Objective:** To introduce participants to objects from ancient Greece.

**Performance of Skill Expectations/Enduring Understandings:** The participants will continue developing observational skills through a discussion of new artifacts.

**Prerequisite Lessons:** *Box 1 Lesson: The Key to Understanding Artifacts.* You may also want to view a video of this activity modeled on the Spurlock Museum's website at <https://www.spurlock.illinois.edu/educators/borrow-objects/profiles/aas-ancient.html>

**Estimated Materials Preparation Time:** 5 minutes.

**Duration:** Instructor discretion.

**Materials Provided in the Box:** a kylix, an amphora, and a statue. Artifact Information Sheets.

**Materials to be Provided by the Instructor:** a smartboard, chalkboard, or easel pad, and associated writing materials.

**Other Notes:** All of the instructions for *Here's What I See* lessons are nearly identical. Differences will be found in vocabulary, development, and the artifacts used. The full instructions are repeated each time as a refresher for returning educators or a full lesson for educators new to the program.

### Concepts/Vocabulary

none

### Procedure

**Preparation:** Have the artifacts to be discussed out of the box and ready for showing.

**Introduction/Instruction:** Explain to the participants that when historians/archaeologists/anthropologists look at artifacts, they look for patterns: characteristics that are common among all artifacts of a certain type for a certain group of people. They examine how and why those patterns may vary among the different places where those people live or how the patterns have evolved over time.

Explain that for this lesson, they will be playing a game called "Here's What I See." As you walk around the room with an artifact, the participants will look at it then raise their hands when they have an observation to make about it. The observation is stated as "Here's what

I see. I see a \_\_\_\_\_.” Observations are things they actually see—facts—not assumptions or conclusions they have made from what they see. They are looking for aspects of the artifact, the things that are recognizable and can be compared among artifacts. An easy example to show before looking at the ancient artifacts is a watch. Good observations for a watch might be (depending on the watch):

- “I see numbers.”
- “I see a word.”
- “I see moving parts.”
- “I see a buckle.”
- “I see metal.”

Tell the participants not to worry about stating an observation that seems obvious. Sometimes the obvious thing is a very important thing (e.g., you may get 10 observations about a statue, but no one will say that it is a male or female figure portrayed).

Before taking observations, suggest that the participants speak loudly enough for all to hear, because you want to see how many observations they give before you get a repeat.

**Development:** For the Greece and Rome lesson, there are three individual artifacts, a kylix, an amphora, and a statue. Each should be observed separately. You may want to write down the answers (or have a helper do this). This helps reduce the number of repeated answers. It also can serve as an aid in discussion of what kinds of observations the participants are making. Once you have a nice list of observations, see what types of observations have already occurred and which ones you may need to prompt. For example, the participants may talk a lot about the shape of an artifact, but not give their observations on the type of material it is made from. They may have their thoughts on the material, but not mention size or color. Ask the participants for specific observations on the aspects of an artifact that they haven’t mentioned yet.

**Closure:** Once the artifacts have been shown and the observations made, ask the participants to give their guesses on what the artifacts are. If the artifacts are guessed correctly, have the participants tell you what they already know about them. Use the information from the Artifact Report Sheets to give the participants any information they may not have given during the discussion. Here are a few key facts:

Kylix:

- A flat drinking cup.
- This type of cup works well when the person drinking is reclining on a couch, as is shown in the painting inside the cup.

Amphora:

- An amphora is a two-handled storage jar.
- By the painting on this vase, we know it is in the style of a Panathenaic amphora, given as a prize to an athletic contestant. The competition painted on the front shows the event won. The back shows Athena, the patron goddess of Athens.

Statue:

- This statue is thought to represent either Zeus or Poseidon. The item the god is holding has disappeared. It would have helped in identification.

- Ancient Greeks considered a man's sound body and mind very important. Depicting a man or a god in the nude showed off his perfection.

**Reflection:** Generate a short discussion with these questions:

For all participants:

- Were you surprised to learn that rich Greeks and Romans reclined while they ate? Would you like to eat this way?
- How did you feel when you saw men portrayed in the nude? What do you think about this?

If this is the first time the game is played:

- What was the most fun about this activity?
- Why is it important to learn about the skill of observation when studying other cultures?

If the game has been once before:

- What was easier about playing the game this time? Do you think your observation skills have improved? If so, how?
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If the game has been played twice before:

- What aspects of the artifacts/types of observations do you find you are making with every artifact? Why do you think these are important?

**Assessment:** This game will be played multiple times over the school year, if all loan kits are used. Use the game to assess how well the participants' observation and description skills develop over time.