

L.O. I can understand the significance of the Battle of Marathon.



Recap

Who were the Athenians?

Who were the Spartans?

What differences were there between  
the two city-states?

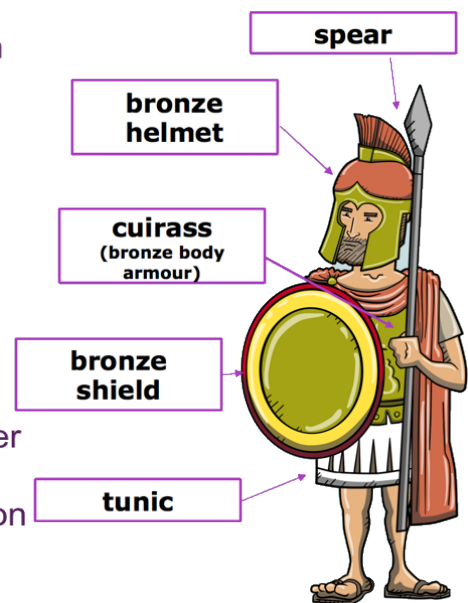


# A Hoplite

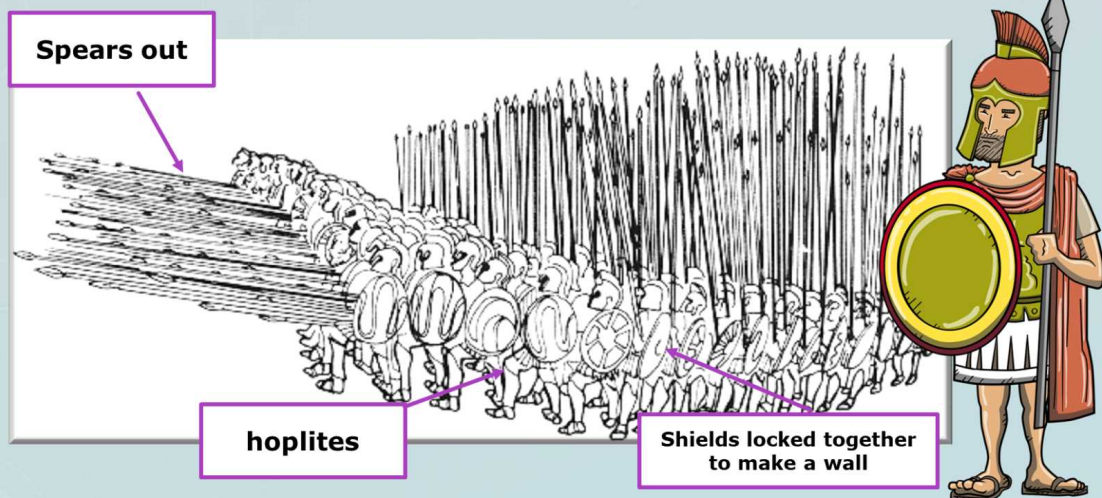
In Ancient Greek times there were **lots of wars**, both between different Greek city-states and also against foreign enemies.

The main type of Greek soldiers were the **hoplites**. These were foot soldiers who fought together as a team. They often had long spears, a large shield and strong body armour.

Hoplites fought as a team by staying in close formation. They would often lock their shields together to make a strong wall around them and move in formation with their spears pointing out. This formation was called a **phalanx** and it was very hard to break into.



## Phalanx Formation





## The Mystery of Marathon

You would generally expect armies with more soldiers to defeat ones with a smaller number in battle, like in the game.

However, one famous Ancient Greek battle had a surprising outcome. At the battle of Marathon, **10,000 Greeks from the Athenian army** faced **25,000 Persians** and went on to win the battle despite being heavily outnumbered!

**Greek Army  
(Athenians)**  
10,000



**Persian Army**  
25,000



How do you think  
they did it?



## Marathon: What happened?

In 490BC, as you know, Athens and Sparta were separate Greek city-states. They were very different types of cities and sometimes they fought each other.

However, when they were faced with a foreign enemy, the two city-states often teamed up together to join forces into a stronger, bigger army.



## Marathon: Attack of the Persians



What do you think the Athenians should do?

Around the same time, the Greeks had a foreign enemy called The Persian Empire. It was a large empire ruled by King Darius.



Darius wanted to expand his empire into Greece, so he decided to invade Athens with his massive army. He headed to the **Bay of Marathon**, which was close to Athens. The Athenians would need to block the way of the Persians to stop them marching on to Athens. The Persian army was huge, and the Athenians knew they would be heavily outnumbered.

## Marathon: Send for help!

The Athenians needed help, quickly! They **wanted the Spartans** to team up with them against the Persian army.

There were no instant messages or fast cars in those times. So they sent **a fast Athenian runner called Pheidippides to run all the way to Sparta** to send a message asking for help! It took him 2 days and 2 nights to run the whole distance of over 240km!



## Marathon: What's the message?

Imagine you are an Athenian army general giving Pheidippides a message to deliver to the Spartans.

What would your message say?





## Marathon: What's the reply?



After delivering the message, Pheidippides then ran all the way back to Athens again with the reply!

This was the reply:

***Dear Athenians,***

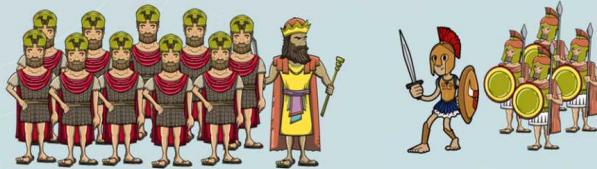
*We are very busy celebrating a month-long religious festival at the moment. We are willing to help, but you will have to wait until our festival has finished before we set off!*

***From the Spartans***

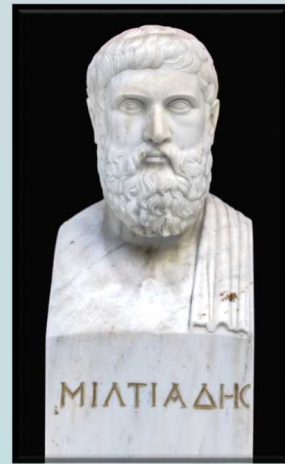


## Marathon: Prepare for Battle

This was not the answer the Athenians had hoped for! They tried to wait for the Spartans, but the Persian forces were very strong and the Athenians soon realised they would have to **fight by themselves**. They were **heavily outnumbered** by the Persian troops and their chances of holding off the invasion did not look good.



The Athenian army had a leader called **General Miltiades**, and he realised that he would have to use clever fighting tactics to stop the Persians from marching on to Athens.



**General Miltiades**

## Marathon: Miltiades' Battle Plan



### Athenian Battle Plan - By General Miltiades

- ✓ Use a **phalanx formation**
- ✓ Arrange a battle on **marshy or rocky ground**, so the enemy cannot use its horses and chariots.
- ✓ Put the **strongest hoplites on the outside** of the formation (the Persians always put their strongest in the middle and weakest on the outside)
- ✓ **Charge quickly straight** past the enemy archers (fighters usually stop in their tracks when they meet enemy archers and the Persians will not expect us to run past them!)
- ✓ Chase them back **towards the sea** (away from the road to Athens)
- ✓ **Cause them to panic and break up their own formation!**

## Marathon: Athenian Victory

**The plan was successful!** The Persians expected an easy victory, but Miltiades' tactics took them by surprise. The Athenian phalanx **ran straight past the enemy archers** to battle with the Persian soldiers.

The strong fighters at the edges of the Athenian phalanx quickly attacked the weaker Persian soldiers, who had less sturdy armour and began to fall away from their own formations in panic. The Persians **retreated to the ships** in fear.

What a victory! The Persian army had lost 6400 fighters in the battle, whereas the smaller Greek army only lost 192 men!



How do you think the Persian King Darius felt when he heard the news from the battle?

## Marathon: Back to Athens

Now that the Persians had retreated to their ships, there was still a chance they might sail on to Athens and attack directly. The Athenians sent **Pheidippides** to run the 25 mile journey from Marathon to Athens to give news of the battle and to warn them of a possible attack. The rest of the Athenian fighters also **marched towards Athens** as quickly as they could, in an attempt to arrive before the Persian ships. They arrived in time, and when the Persian ships landed in Athens and saw the fearsome troops they had already encountered at Marathon, they **turned away and sailed back home!**



Can you explain why our modern-day long distance running race is called a marathon?

**Pheidippides** had already arrived in Athens to give news before the Athenian soldiers. As soon as he delivered his message, he died of exhaustion!





## **Task 1:**

**Map Work** - Look at the map. Label the route Pheidippides took. Calculate the distance of his route and record this.

## **Task 2:**

**Diamond Nine** - Analyse the reasons for the Athenians' success at Marathon. Read the factor cards and decide which you think were the main reasons for the victory. Sort the cards on to the diamond nine diagram.