Sparta and Athens

In the 600s B.C., Sparta becomes a city focused on war.



The Spartan fighting force plays a key role in the Greek wars against the Persians.



By 520 B.C., Cyrus the Great of Persia gains control of the Greek colonies on the west coast of Asia Minor.



The Athenian army wins a great victory against the Persians in the battle at Marathon.



The Persian threat distracts the Greek city-states from fighting one another and allows Greece to briefly unite and drive away the Persians.



Athens' influence spreads over much of ancient Greece.



People of other city-states begin to fear and resent Athens' power.



Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta begins in 431 B.C. and lasts for 27 years.



Athens is struck by a plague early in the war and loses about one third of its population.



Athens surrenders to Sparta in 404 B.C.