

Module 4: Ancient Greece
Topic 3 Content: The Persian Wars

Instructions

The Persian Wars



Click on each event in the timeline to learn more about major battles and developments of the Persian Wars. Exit the interactivity when you have finished exploring the content.



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Ionian Revolt

X Ionian Revolt

499 – 493 B.C. (B.C.E.)

- The Persian Empire reached close to Athens and Sparta.
- Persians conquered the Ionian cities on the western coast.
- Conquered cities started to rebel, and the Athenian navy helped.
- Persians maintained control.
- Persian leader Darius I wanted revenge for the revolt.



A map showing the extent of the Persian Empire in 490 B.C. (B.C.E.)

Between 550 B.C. (B.C.E.) and 330 B.C. (B.C.E.), the Persian Empire spanned across regions to meet in close proximity to Athens and Sparta. In the 6th century B.C. (B.C.E.), the Persian Empire had conquered the Ionian cities on the western coast of Asia Minor. These cities were situated across the Aegean Sea from Greece. Starting in 499 B.C. (B.C.E.) and lasting until 493 B.C. (B.C.E.), these cities attempted to rebel against the satraps that oversaw them on behalf of the Persian Empire. They were assisted by the Athenian navy. The Persian Empire succeeded in keeping control of the region, and this was the first major event in the Persian Wars. The leader of the Persians, Darius I, wanted revenge for the revolt and began to build a larger army and navy to conquer Greece.

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Battle of Marathon

✕ Battle of Marathon

490 B.C. (B.C.E.)

- Xerxes led the Persians to invade Athens.
- Athenians and allies met the Persians in Marathon.
- Persian soldiers withdrew their ships.
- Athenians encircled the ship and won the battle.



BATTLE OF MARATHON
Greek Double Envelopment,
490 B.C.

*The military plan of the Battle of Marathon -
courtesy of The Department of History,
United States Military Academy*

In 490 B.C. (B.C.E.), under the rule of Xerxes, the Persians attempted to invade Athens. Athenian soldiers and their allies met the Persians in the town of Marathon. In that battle, around 10,000 Athenians held off more than 25,000 Persian soldiers, until the Persian soldiers withdrew to their ships. At this time, the Athenians encircled the ships and won the battle, marking the first Greek victory in the Persian Wars. Later, the Greek soldiers returned to Athens to warn its people, and protect it from any further Persian attack.

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Battle of Thermopylae

✕ Battle of Thermopylae

480 B.C. (B.C.E.)

- King Leonidas of Sparta led Greek soldiers.
- Leonidas dismissed a large portion of the Greek army.
- The Greeks were defeated.
- The Persian Empire overtook the region of Boeotia and Athens.



A monument to Leonidas I and the other Spartan soldiers in Thermopylae

In Thermopylae, Greece, King Leonidas of Sparta led a united group of around 7,000 Greek soldiers against more than 100,000 Persian soldiers fighting under Xerxes I. Sensing a loss, King Leonidas dismissed a large portion of the Greek army and stayed behind with 300 Spartan soldiers, plus more than a thousand soldiers from Thebes and Thespieae. The Greeks were defeated, and the Persian Empire overtook the region of Boeotia and the empty city of Athens.


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Battle of Salamis

✕ Battle of Salamis



480 B.C. (B.C.E.)

- Greeks and Persians met in a sea battle off of the Island of Salamis.
- Greek city-states united under the Athenian-led navy.
- The Greeks sank or captured over 200 Persian ships.
- The Greeks were victorious.



The Battle of Salamis by Wilhelm von Kaulbach

In 480 B.C. (B.C.E.), the Greeks and Persian met in a sea battle off of the coast of the Island of Salamis, which is ten miles away from Athens in the Saronic Gulf. In this battle, the Greek city-states united under an Athenian-led navy. The Greeks sank or captured more than 200 Persian ships and were victorious in blocking the Persians from conquering the region.


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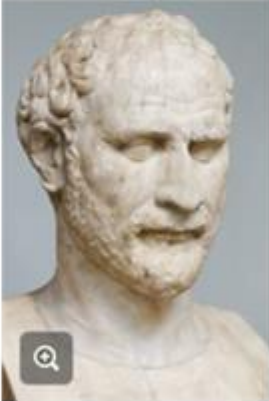
Peace of Callias

X **Peace of Callias**



449 B.C. (B.C.E.)

- The Persian Wars ended with the signing of the Peace of Callias.
- Anything known about it was through writings of 4th century Greek historians and speakers.
- Ionian cities of Asia Minor could now rule themselves.



*A bust of Demosthenes,
one of the Greek orators to reference
the Peace of Callias in his works*

While several smaller battles took place between 479 B.C. (B.C.E.) and 449 B.C. (B.C.E.), the Persian Wars officially came to an end in 449 B.C. (B.C.E.) with the signing of the Peace of Callias. While not much is known about the Peace of Callias except through the writings of 4th century Greek historians and speakers, it gave the Ionian cities of Asia Minor the right to rule themselves.

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