

Chapter 31

The Legacy of Ancient Greece

How did ancient Greece contribute to the modern world?

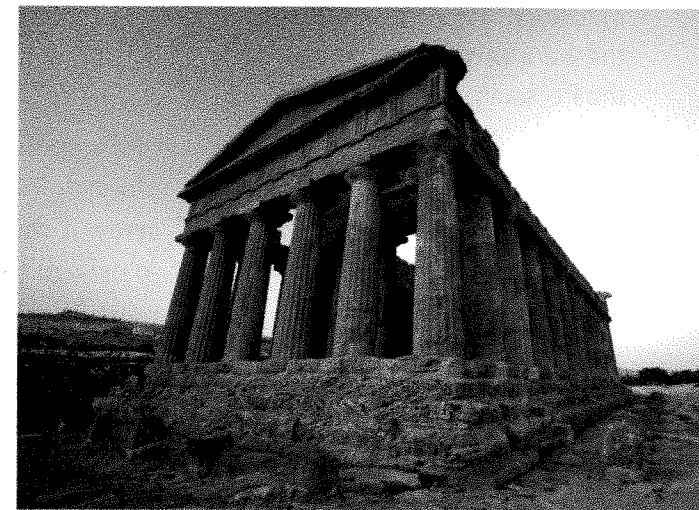
31.1 Introduction

In this chapter, you will explore the advances made by the ancient Greeks in many aspects of their civilization. You will also discover how these achievements continue to affect us today.

There is an ancient story, still told today, about a Greek thinker named Archimedes (ar-kuh-MEE-deez), who climbed into a bath filled to the top with water. As the water overflowed onto the floor, he realized something. The **volume** of his body could be measured by the amount of water that left the tub. “Eureka!” Archimedes is said to have shouted. In Greek this means, “I have found it!” By being curious and observing events closely, Archimedes had discovered an interesting fact about the natural world.

Curiosity and careful observation are important in the study of science. This way of thinking is one of the gifts that we have received from the ancient Greeks. The Greeks left us valuable ideas in many other fields as well.

Not only have important ideas come from the Greeks, but so have many of the words we use to describe those ideas. The world of the ancient Greeks may seem far away, but it is as close as the thoughts we think and the words we speak. Let’s look at Greek contributions to our lives in the areas of language, government, medicine, mathematics and science, architecture, entertainment, and sports.



Note the Greek architectural features—columns, pediment, and frieze—in the ruins of an ancient Greek temple in Sicily, Italy.

◀ Greek architecture influenced the columns of the U.S. Capitol.