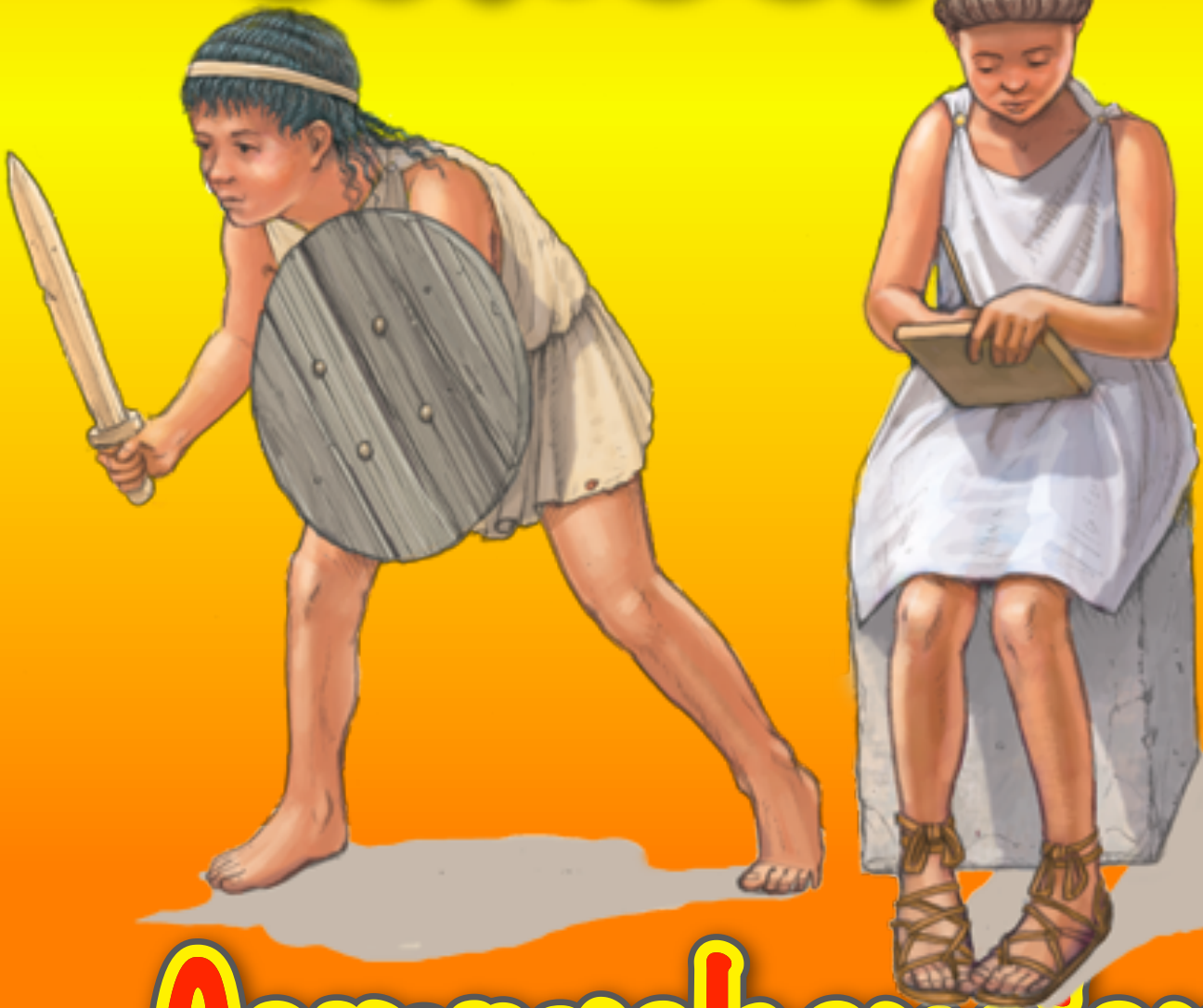


# Ancient Greek school



# Comprehension

# Ancient Greek school

I am eight years old, and I have been going to school for nearly a year now. My father pays for me and my older brother to learn so that we can be useful to our city later in life. Children from poorer families do not have lessons like we do, because they have to help out on the farm or at home.

I go to school in Athens with ten other boys. The school is an open space near the agora. There is a walkway with columns and a roof nearby, so that we can shelter when it gets too hot outside in the summer. I sit down with the other boys in front of our teacher as he gives us lessons.

The teacher tells us how to count, and we practise writing down numbers. We each have a wooden tablet with wax on one side to write on. I make marks in the wax using a wooden stick called a stylus. When I have covered the wax with writing, I can rub it with my fingers to make it smooth and use it again.

My favourite lesson is poetry. Our teacher reads out lines of epic poems, and we read them back to learn them by heart. The best poem is the Odyssey, which a blind man called Homer wrote. It tells the tale of a man called Odysseus, who has adventures on his way home from the Trojan War. I love reading out the part of the poem where Odysseus is trapped in a cave with a scary monster who has only one eye and likes to eat people. It is called a cyclops.

We also learn how to play musical instruments, like the lyre. I am not good at playing the lyre, but my friend, Timon, can already play the lyre well. When he plays the lyre he looks like the god Apollon because the lyre is Apollon's instrument, and he is the god of music. Maybe one day he will win a music competition at a religious festival, and I will win a poetry competition. But for now, we have more lessons to do – including learning how to defend our city.

# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'shelter'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'shelter' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'shelter'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'shelter'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'shelter' means.

Try this for other words, too. 

# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

**Key word**

**Synonym (similar word)**

Example: nearly

almost

# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

We sit in front of the teacher as he gives us lessons.

After that, we learn how to play musical instruments like the lyre.

First we have lessons on counting and numbers.

We use wax tablets to practise writing numbers.

I go to school in Athens with ten other boys.

Then we have poetry lessons.

# Get to the facts

1 How old is the boy in the story?

2 How many boys does he go to school with?

3 What do the boys write on?

4 What is the boy in the story's favourite lesson?

5 Who can play the lyre well already?

# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

## Playing the lyre

One day Timon came into school with a new lyre. It was beautiful, and we all wanted to have a go on it. When it was my turn to play it, I dropped the lyre and it broke... (now complete the story)

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**

## Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'shelter'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'shelter' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'shelter'.
- d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'shelter'.
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## Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – nearly

Synonym – almost

## Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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After that, we learn how to play musical instruments like the lyre.

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## **Get to the facts:**

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- 2 How many boys does he go to school with?
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## **Make a story...**

### **Playing the lyre**

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