

Make a Greek shield and sword

The ancient Greeks needed a powerful shield to protect themselves from the swords of the enemy. They used wood and leather with bronze at the centre.

To make a shield, you need a large piece of stiff cardboard. Cut it to make a circle about 50 cm across.

Paint the outside with colours and add an L for Laconia, or the symbol for some other state.

Fasten a strip of cardboard to the inside of the shield (see the book page 35), leaving it slack enough for you to be able to get your arm through. Add some string to the outside to make something to grip the shield with. You can loop the string through holes made in the cardboard.

Now make a short sword from another piece of stiff cardboard.

Finally, all line up to make a phalanx and see how important it is to overlap shields if you are going to protect yourself properly.

Make a Greek shield and sword

Background

Students can better understand the actions of the troops if they pretend to be hoplites. For example, if they make shields they can see how you need to hold a shield for it to be useful and how overlapping shields can be important.

If different groups of students decorate their shields with symbols from a variety of cities, they can imagine what it was like for one group to line up against the other.