Name _____ Date _____

Ancient Greece: Mountains, Sea and Colonies

Directions: Read the passage about the land and sea of ancient Greece and study the table of colonies. Back up each answer with details from the passage or the table.

Geography and the Greek World

Living Between Mountains and Sea

Greece is a land of rugged mountains, narrow valleys and long coastlines. Only a small part of the land is good for farming. Travel across the mountains was slow and hard. Ships, though, carried people and goods along the coasts and among the islands.

Historians think the way mountains and sea divided the land is one reason Greeks lived in many separate city-states. Each **polis**, or city-state, had its own government. It included a town and the farmland around it. A town often had an **acropolis**, a high hill with temples and a fort. Most towns also had an **agora**, an open space for markets and meetings.

Greek farmers grew grain, olives and grapes, crops that suit hot, dry summers and mild, rainy winters. Merchants shipped olive oil, wine and pottery across the Mediterranean. Some city-states also brought in grain from Egypt and lands around the Black Sea.

From about 750 to 550 BCE, city-states sent groups of settlers to start **colonies**, new settlements in distant lands. Historians give several reasons, such as a need for more farmland and a wish to trade. Greeks founded colonies along the coasts of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Many colonies grew into city-states of their own.

The Greeks lived far apart, yet they shared a language and many of the same gods. Every four years, athletes from across the Greek world met at Olympia for the Olympic Games, held to honor Zeus. Later Greek writers gave 776 BCE as the date of the first games.

Four Greek Colonies

Colony	Founded by (mother city) and when	Where it is today
Syracuse	Corinth, about 733 BCE	On the island of Sicily, now part of Italy
Byzantium	Megara, in the 600s BCE	Istanbul, a large city in Turkey
Cyrene	Settlers from the island of Thera, about 631 BCE	Ruins near the town of Shahat, Libya
Massalia	Phocaea, a Greek city on the coast of what is now Turkey, about 600 BCE	Marseille, a port city in France

1. Which sentence from the passage best supports the idea that farming was hard in much of Greece?

A. Only a small part of the land is good for farming.

B. Ships, though, carried people and goods along the coasts and among the islands.

C. Every four years, athletes from across the Greek world met at Olympia for the Olympic Games, held to honor Zeus.

D. Many colonies grew into city-states of their own.

2. Match each term from the passage about the Greek world to its meaning.

Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ polis
2. _____ acropolis
3. _____ agora
4. _____ colony
5. _____ Olympia

A. an open space for markets and meetings

B. the place where athletes met every four years to honor Zeus

C. a king who ruled all of the city-states

D. a new settlement started in a distant land

E. a high hill with temples and a fort

F. a city-state made up of a town and the farmland around it

G. a ship that carried soldiers to war

3. Which detail from the passage shows that the sea linked Greek city-states to faraway lands?

A. Greek farmers grew grain, olives and grapes.

B. Some city-states brought in grain from Egypt and from lands near the Black Sea.

C. Travel across the mountains was slow and hard.

D. Later Greek writers gave 776 BCE as the date of the first games.

4. According to the table, which colony was founded first?

A. Byzantium B. Massalia C. Cyrene D. Syracuse

5. Complete the sentences about farming and trade in ancient Greece.

Word bank
colonies • winters • pottery • mountains

Greek farmers grew crops that suit hot, dry summers and mild, rainy _____. Merchants shipped olive oil, wine and _____, made of baked clay, across the Mediterranean.

6. What does the table show about where Greek colonies were founded?

A. They were spread far apart, from what is now France to Libya and Turkey.

B. They were all built on small islands close to Corinth.

C. They were all founded far inland, away from any coast.

D. They were all founded inside what is now Greece.

7. Which two details from the passage show that Greeks in different city-states shared a common culture? Select 2.

☐ A. Only a small part of the land is good for farming.

☐ B. Athletes from across the Greek world met at Olympia for the games.

☐ C. Travel across the mountains was slow and hard.

☐ D. They shared a language and many of the same gods.

8. Which claim can you support using only the table?

A. Corinth founded the colony of Syracuse.

B. Settlers from Thera founded Massalia.

C. Megara founded the colony of Massalia.

D. Cyrene was founded before Syracuse.

9. Why did Greek city-states start colonies, according to the passage?

A. because the Olympic Games could be held only in faraway colonies

B. because mountains forced every single Greek family to leave home

C. for several reasons, such as a need for farmland and a wish to trade

D. because one king who ruled all of the Greek city-states ordered it

10. The passage says later Greek writers gave 776 BCE as the date of the first Olympic Games. Why does the author tell readers where the date comes from?

A. to show that the games honored a god of the sea

B. to prove that the games were held only one time

C. to prove that nothing at all is known about the games

D. to show that the date is a traditional one and may not be exact