Wars That Reshaped Greece

Trace how decisions and rivalries led to war and changed Greek power.

9-12.WC.4 "Analyze the causes and consequences of the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two causes and circle two consequences for each war, then draw an arrow between one related cause and consequence for each war.

From Invasion to Rivalry

1. In 499 BCE, Greek cities in Ionia, on the coast of Anatolia, rebelled against the Persian Empire. Athens sent ships to help them. Persia defeated the revolt, and King Darius I sought to punish Athens while extending Persian control westward. His forces landed near Marathon in 490 BCE, but an Athenian army defeated them. Darius's son Xerxes invaded again in 480 BCE. Greek forces lost at Thermopylae but won a naval battle at Salamis and a land battle at Plataea the next year. These victories kept mainland Greek cities independent and gave Athens a reputation for naval strength.

2. After the Persian invasions, Athens led the Delian League, a group of cities that pledged ships or money to resist further Persian attacks. Over time, Athens used league payments to strengthen its own power and prevented some members from leaving. Sparta, a powerful land state, led a separate alliance and feared Athens's growing influence. Disputes involving allies, including Corinth, increased mistrust. In 431 BCE, Sparta and Athens went to war, each backed by allies. Sparta repeatedly invaded Athenian farmland, while Athens sheltered behind city walls and used its fleet to raid enemy coasts. Crowding inside Athens helped a deadly plague spread.

3. The war lasted, with a temporary peace, for nearly three decades. The plague killed many Athenians, including their leader Pericles, but neither side won quickly. In 415 BCE, Athens sent a large expedition against Syracuse in Sicily, hoping to expand its influence and gain resources. The expedition ended in disaster, destroying much of Athens's fleet and army. Persia later gave Sparta money to build a fleet, seeking to weaken Athens. In 405 BCE, Sparta destroyed the remaining Athenian fleet at Aegospotami, cutting off Athens's grain supply. Athens surrendered in 404 BCE, lost its empire and walls, and Sparta became the leading Greek power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Persia attack Athens, and how did the Greek victories change Athens's position?

2. How did Athens's actions in the Delian League help bring about war with Sparta?

3. How did Sparta's attacks and Athens's response contribute to a deadly consequence inside Athens?

4. How did the failed expedition to Sicily and Persia's support for Sparta contribute to Athens's surrender?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Athens let Delian League members leave freely. In one paragraph, predict how this choice might change both the risk of war with Sparta and Athens's ability to fight if war still began. Use at least two details from the passage, and make clear which claims are predictions.

ANSWER KEY

Wars That Reshaped Greece

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.WC.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two causes and circle two consequences for each war, then draw an arrow between one related cause and consequence for each war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Persia attack Athens, and how did the Greek victories change Athens's position?	**Darius sought to punish Athens for helping the Ionian revolt and to extend Persian control. The Greek victories kept mainland Greek cities independent and strengthened Athens's reputation as a naval power.**
2	How did Athens's actions in the Delian League help bring about war with Sparta?	**Athens used league payments to increase its power and stopped some members from leaving. Sparta feared Athens's growing influence, while disputes among allies added to the mistrust.**
3	How did Sparta's attacks and Athens's response contribute to a deadly consequence inside Athens?	**Sparta invaded Athenian farmland, so Athenians sheltered behind their city walls. The resulting crowding helped a deadly plague spread.**
4	How did the failed expedition to Sicily and Persia's support for Sparta contribute to Athens's surrender?	**The Sicily expedition destroyed much of Athens's fleet and army. Persian money helped Sparta build a fleet that later destroyed the remaining Athenian fleet and cut off Athens's grain supply, leading to surrender.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Athens might have lowered the risk of war by allowing Delian League members to leave. Sparta feared Athens's growing influence, and disputes among allies increased mistrust, so a less powerful league might have eased that fear. Yet if war still began, Athens might have had fewer resources for its fleet because league members provided ships or money. Since Athens relied on its fleet to raid enemy coasts while Sparta invaded its farmland, losing support could have made the war harder for Athens to sustain. These outcomes are possible, not certain.

Accept other predictions in Part 3 if they distinguish possibility from fact and connect at least two passage details to both the risk of war and Athens's ability to fight. For marking, accept immediate or longer-term consequences when the causal link is clear.