Ancient Ideas, New Uses

Trace how Greek and Roman achievements shape modern life.

WH.2.5 "Examine the significant achievements of the Greeks and Romans and their impact on the modern world."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Greek and two Roman achievements, then circle a modern use of each one. Number each achievement and its modern use with matching numbers to show the connections.

A City Built on Old Ideas

1. Picture a city debating a new transit line. In ancient Athens, male citizens could speak and vote directly in the assembly, and juries of citizens decided many court cases. That arrangement made public argument part of governing, an idea echoed when people attend town meetings or serve on juries today. Yet Athens excluded women, enslaved people, and foreign residents from citizenship. Modern democracies generally extend political rights much more widely, although access and participation still vary. The Greek achievement was not a complete model to copy. Its lasting contribution is the claim that citizens can help shape public decisions.

2. Roman jurists developed ways to organize rules about property, contracts, and disputes. The Twelve Tables, displayed in the fifth century BCE, made some legal rules public rather than leaving them entirely to officials' memory. Later Roman law collections influenced legal systems in many countries, especially through European legal traditions. Written laws and trained judges still help people predict how disputes may be handled. But Roman law did not treat everyone equally: enslaved people were property under its rules. Modern legal protections draw on many sources and reject that feature of Roman society.

3. A city also needs reliable water. Roman engineers built aqueducts that used carefully measured slopes to carry water over long distances. Some channels crossed valleys on arches, while others ran underground. These works helped supply baths, fountains, and households, though access was uneven. Modern water systems also use gravity to move water, but they add pumps, filtration, and tests for safety. Greek thinkers made another contribution to technical work: geometry offered methods for reasoning about shapes and measurements. Engineers today still use geometry when planning slopes and structures. Ancient ideas remain useful because people test and adapt them, not because old designs solve every modern problem.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does a modern town meeting reflect an Athenian achievement, and how do modern political rights differ?

2. How did Roman written law influence later legal systems, and what injustice in Roman law should not be copied?

3. What idea from Roman aqueducts do modern water systems still use, and what do modern systems add?

4. How does a Greek achievement help engineers plan modern structures?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 100 word proposal for a new school rule on student use of AI tools. Apply one Greek and one Roman achievement from the passage, and explain how your plan avoids one exclusion or injustice described there.

ANSWER KEY

Ancient Ideas, New Uses

HIGH SCHOOL · WH.2.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Greek and two Roman achievements, then circle a modern use of each one. Number each achievement and its modern use with matching numbers to show the connections. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does a modern town meeting reflect an Athenian achievement, and how do modern political rights differ?	**Both give citizens a voice in public decisions. Athens excluded women, enslaved people, and foreign residents, while modern democracies generally extend political rights more widely.**
2	How did Roman written law influence later legal systems, and what injustice in Roman law should not be copied?	**Roman law collections influenced later legal systems, and public written rules help people know what to expect. Roman law treated enslaved people as property.**
3	What idea from Roman aqueducts do modern water systems still use, and what do modern systems add?	**Both use gravity to move water. Modern systems also add pumps, filtration, and safety tests.**
4	How does a Greek achievement help engineers plan modern structures?	**Greek geometry provides ways to reason about shapes and measurements, which engineers use when planning slopes and structures.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should create a rule for using AI tools on assignments. A student assembly would discuss when AI is useful and vote on a proposal, following the Athenian practice of public decision-making. Unlike Athens, every student could participate, including students who cannot attend in person through an online ballot. The final rule would be posted in plain language, drawing on Rome's practice of making rules public. Students would know what is allowed, and teachers could apply the same written rule to everyone.

Accept other accurate connections supported by the passage. For the proposal, look for a specific school rule, a meaningful use of one Greek and one Roman achievement, and a clear way to avoid an ancient exclusion or injustice.