







How to use this resource

- 
- This resource centres around the Battle of Thermopylae in Greece around 480BC between the Greeks and Persians. The idea is to use the primary sources of Greek writers Herodotus and Diodorus to create 2 separate accounts of the battle from both sides.
 - Page 2 gives you an extract from both writers' accounts of the battle, which agree on most details and are some of the only sources of the battle.
 - After reading through the sources, watch the video about 'viewpoints' and bias, then revisit the sources to identify which parts could have bias and how the meaning can change when applying the ancient meaning of barbarian to the modern meaning.
 - Use Page 3 to analyse the extracts so that there is an understanding of whether particular sources are reliable or not.
 - Page 4 works as a retrieval-style task which will help to understand how each side has been portrayed and described.
 - Using the notes from Page 4, write down the ways that both sides have been described on Page 5. See Page 7 for an example.
 - Page 6 then details the final culminating task where the notes gathered from Pages 4 and 5 are used to write a short account of the battle from each perspective.
- 



The Battle of Thermopylae (480BC - Greece)




Herodotus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae

'So the barbarians under Xerxes began to draw nigh; and the Greeks under Leonidas, as they now went forth determined to die, advanced much further than on previous days, until they reached the more open portion of the pass. Hitherto they had held their station within the wall, and from this had gone forth to fight at the point where the pass was the narrowest. Now they joined battle beyond the defile, and carried slaughter among the barbarians, who fell in heaps. Behind them the captains of the squadrons, armed with whips, urged their men forward with continual blows. Many were thrust into the sea, and there perished; a still greater number were trampled to death by their own soldiers; no one heeded the dying. For the Greeks, reckless of their own safety and desperate, since they knew that, as the mountain had been crossed, their destruction was nigh at hand, exerted themselves with the most furious valor against the barbarians.'



Diodorus Siculus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae

'The fight which followed was a fierce one, and since the barbarians had the king as a witness of their valour and the Greeks kept in mind their liberty and were exhorted to the fray by Leonidas, it followed that the struggle was amazing. For since the men stood shoulder to shoulder in the fighting and the blows were struck in close combat, and the lines were densely packed, for a considerable time and in the great size of their shields, the Medes gradually gave way; for many of them were slain and not a few wounded. ...For the barbarians used small round or irregularly shaped shields, by which they enjoyed an advantage in open fields, since they were thus enabled to move more easily, but in narrow places they could not easily inflict wounds upon an enemy who were formed in close ranks and had their entire bodies protected by large shields, whereas they, being at a disadvantage by reason of the lightness of their protective armour, received repeated wounds.'





Analysing the sources

What do we know about Herodotus and Diodorus and their writing?

Where were they both from?

How might that impact on their viewpoints of the Greeks?

How might that impact on their viewpoints of the Persians?

How has the word 'barbarian' changed?

How does that change the meaning of the source now?





Herodotus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae

Who were the Greeks led by?

Why did the Greeks move forwards to the narrowest point?

Why do you think the Persian captains whipped their men from behind?

‘Many were thrust into the sea, and there perished; a still greater number were trampled to death by their own soldiers; no one heeded the dying.’

How do you think this would affect the Persians?

Why did the Greeks fight with ‘furious valor’?

Diodorus Siculus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae

Why did the Persians fight bravely? Why did the Greeks?

Persians:

Greeks:

How does Diodorus describe the formation of the Greek soldiers?

Which 2 advantages did the Greeks have over the Persians?

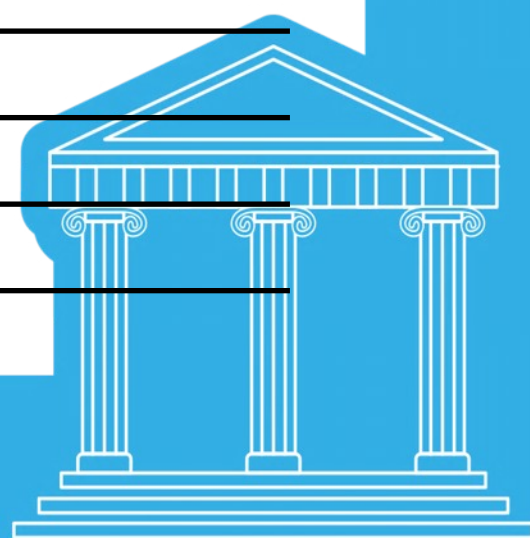


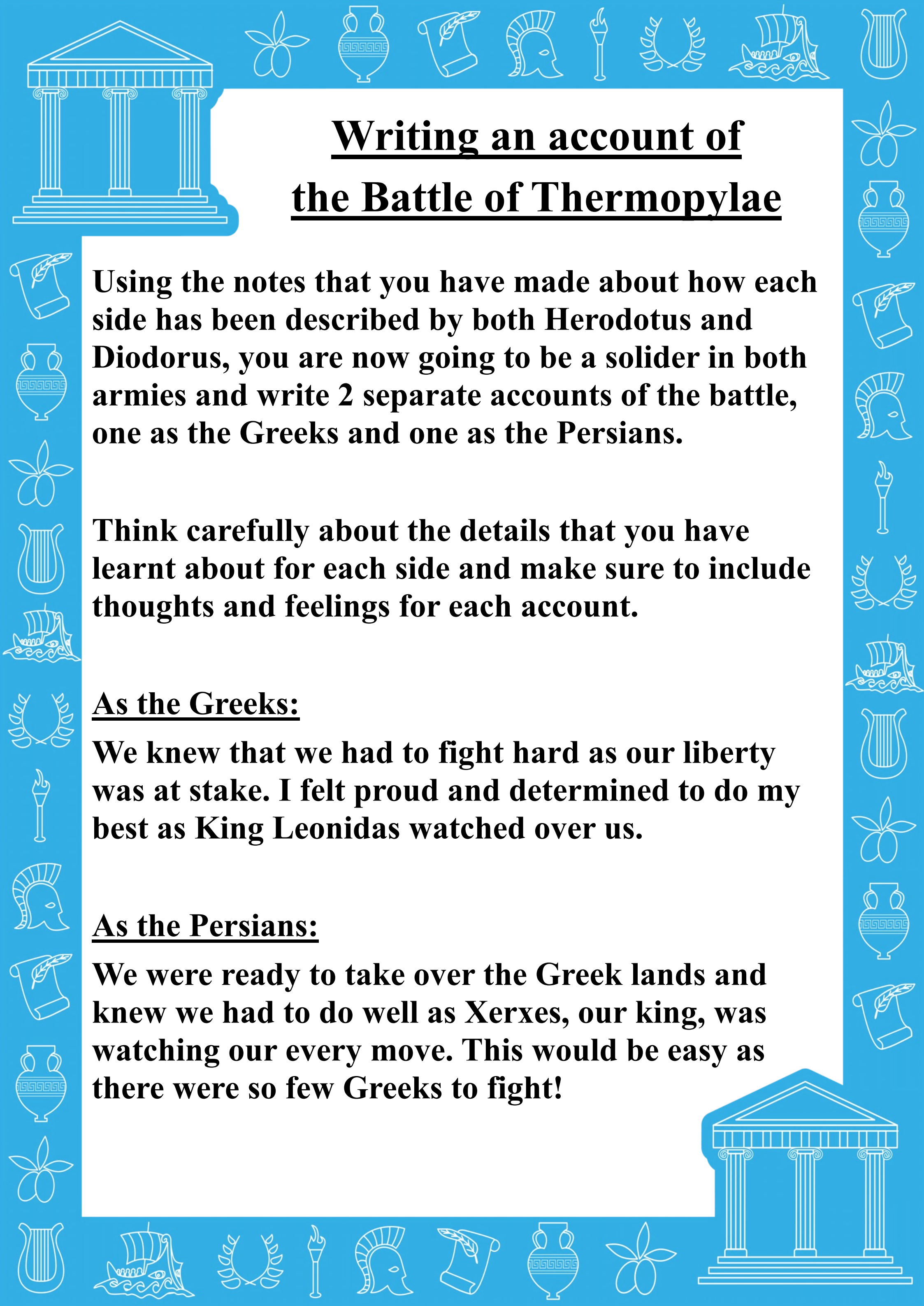


How is each side described?

Persians

Greeks

[illegible][illegible]



Writing an account of the Battle of Thermopylae

Using the notes that you have made about how each side has been described by both Herodotus and Diodorus, you are now going to be a soldier in both armies and write 2 separate accounts of the battle, one as the Greeks and one as the Persians.

Think carefully about the details that you have learnt about for each side and make sure to include thoughts and feelings for each account.

As the Greeks:

We knew that we had to fight hard as our liberty was at stake. I felt proud and determined to do my best as King Leonidas watched over us.

As the Persians:

We were ready to take over the Greek lands and knew we had to do well as Xerxes, our king, was watching our every move. This would be easy as there were so few Greeks to fight!



How is each side described?

Persians

Being watched by their king so they wanted to fight bravely

Outnumbered the Greeks considerably

Had smaller, irregular shaped shields

Lots of us being killed by Greeks - pushed off cliffs, being trampled on

No one bothered about the wounded

Being whipped by our captains to keep fighting

Greeks

Fighting for their liberty and pushed on by King Leonidas

Used the terrain to their advantage - small gap to fight in

Had much larger shields that covered most of their bodies and had heavier armour

Knew they were going to die so fought even harder

Stood shoulder to shoulder with their brothers

