

This component is based around life in ancient Greece just over three thousand years ago. The Culture half of the topic covers the ancient civilisation known as the Mycenaean Age. You will study some of the main Mycenaean sites and the items that made these places so remarkable. From tiny objects like rings, to huge, city walls, you will study a variety of source material to find out what life was like at the time.

Funerary Objects

1	Burial Objects	Many of the shaft graves from Mycenaean cities are found to have contained valuable items, reflecting the importance of the people buried in them.
2	Beliefs	Similarly to other ancient societies such as the Egyptians, Greeks believed that dead should be buried with valuable items so they could use them in the afterlife. An alternative view is that they were buried with these items to show off their status.
3	Pottery	The most common item found in graves were pottery items – be they vessels or figurines. At the time of the burial, they would have contained oils, perfumes, and other liquids.
4	Military Equipment	Other graves have found military equipment such as swords and shields, suggesting the deceased was a warrior. Most were made of bronze, but there are exceptions like the Lion Hunt Dagger.
5	Jewellery	Women were often buried with jewellery and expensive boxes that would have contained jewellery, cosmetics or mirrors.

Grave Circles A and B, Mycenae

12	Location	Grave Circle A and B are located in Mycenae. Grave Circle A is located within the city walls, and Grave Circle B further outside the city walls and near the Tomb of Clytemnestra (an example of a tholos tomb).
----	----------	--



Gold Death Mask of Agamemnon

6	Gold Death Mask of Agamemnon	The gold death mask of Agamemnon is perhaps the most iconic image of Mycenae. When Schliemann saw the mask, he is said to have written, 'I have gazed on the face of Agamemnon'.
7	Grave Circle A, Grave V	The mask was found in Grave Circle A, and inside Grave V.



Gold Death of Agamemnon

9	Creation of the Mask	It is made out of a thick sheet of gold. The gold would have been heated to make it softer and workable. It then would have been hammered into shape against a wooden background.
10	Size of the Mask	The mask is 17cm high, 25cm wide and weighs only 168g. As it is so light, it emphasises the skill of the craftsman to produce such precise details on such a thin piece of gold.
11	Repousse Technique	The repousse technique would have been used to create the facial features of the mask. The facial features show an old, dignified, bearded man and of an exceptional quality.

13	Heinrich Schliemann	Heinrich Schliemann is a pioneer in archaeology and unearthed many of the graves found in Mycenae. A controversial figure who is accused of planting discoveries, including the death mask of Agamemnon.
14	Contents of the Grave Circles	The contents of the graves found in Grave Circle A and B are some of the finest found in graves ever, especially Grave Circle A.
15	Graves in Grave Circle A	The six Graves in Grave Circle A contained the following finds and suggest they were undoubtedly for important and wealthy people, possibly even royalty.
16	Contents of the Graves in Grave Circle A	Two gold death masks, one purportedly of Agamemnon (see left)
17		Gold cup with repousse spirals
18		Gold necklace
19		Bronze dagger with the blade inlaid with gold spirals
20		Amber bead necklace
21		Gold Pyxis (see previous topic on Decorative Arts)
22		Ostrich-egg rhyton with faience (a glazed ceramic) dolphins
23		Swords with handles decorated with gold
24		Bronze sword decorated with griffins
25		Gold octopus brooch
26	Bull rhyton with gold horns, rosette, and muzzle	
27	Gold two-handled cup referred to as the 'Cup of Nestor'	
28	Lion Hunt Dagger depicting scene of lion hunt using inlaid metal	