The Art of Ancient Greece
Key works

- Geometric Krater Vase
  (Geometric) 1000-700 BC
- Parthenon (Classical) 480 – 300 BC
- Nike of Samothrace
  (Hellenistic) 300 – 100 BC
Some gods were specifically associated with a certain city. Athena was associated with the city of Athens, Apollo with Delphi, Zeus with Olympia and Aphrodite with Corinth.

Other deities were associated with nations outside of Greece; Poseidon was associated with Ethiopia and Troy.
Theology: The ancient Greeks believed there were many gods and goddesses.

There was a hierarchy of deities, with Zeus, the king of the gods.

Some deities had dominion over certain aspects of nature. For instance, Zeus was the sky-god, sending thunder and lightning. Poseidon ruled over the sea and earthquakes. Hades projected his remarkable power throughout the realms of death and the Underworld. And Helios controlled the sun. Other deities ruled over an abstract concept; for instance, Aphrodite controlled love.
Greek religion had an extensive mythology. It consisted largely of stories of the gods and of how they affected humans on Earth.

Myths often revolved around heroes and their actions, such as Heracles, and his twelve labors, Odysseus and his voyage home, Jason and the quest for the Golden Fleece.

Many of the myths revolved around the Trojan War between Greece and Troy. For instance, the epic poem, *The Iliad*, by Homer, is based on the war.
Athena and Zeus
Greek ceremonies and rituals were mainly performed at altars. These typically were devoted to one, or a few gods, and contained a statue of the particular deity upon it.

Votive deposits would be left at the altar, such as food, drinks, as well as precious objects. Sometimes animal sacrifices would be performed here.
Time periods within Greek art

- **Geometric** 1000 – 700 BC
  Krater Vase

- **Archaic** 700 – 480 BC
  (no examples of artwork)

- **Classical** 480 – 300 BC
  Parthenon

- **Hellenistic** 300 BC – 100 CE
  Nike of Samothrace or Winged Victory
Geometric – 1,000 – 700 BC
Krater vase

- Pottery ornamented with geometric banding and friezes of simplified animals or humans
- Vase paintings told stories about gods and heroes of Greek myths.
- Kraters were placed in the center of the room. They were quite large, so they were not easily portable when filled.
Examples of geometric Kraters
A perfect example of the desire for perfection and incorporation of the mathematical principles of Classical Architecture.

- Sculptures represented the perfection of the human form
- Bodies were not stiff, they looked fully alive and movable
- Parthenon – symbol of Ancient Greece and of Athenian democracy and one of the world’s greatest cultural monuments.
Hellenistic 300 BC – 100 AD
Nike of Samothrace

- Marble sculpture of the Greek goddess, Nike
- The Nike of Samothrace, discovered in 1863, is estimated to have been created around 190 BC. It was created to not only honor the goddess, Nike, but to honor a sea battle. It conveys a sense of action and triumph as well as portraying artful flowing drapery through its features which the Greeks considered ideal beauty.