CHAPTER 5

The Persian Wars

The Big Question: Why do you think the Spartans and the Athenians joined together to fight the Persians in the later battles of the Persian Wars?

Primary Focus Objectives

✓ Describe the Persian Wars and the battles of Sardis, Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis.
✓ Understand the achievements of Sparta and Athens during the wars.
✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *pass* and *evacuate*.

Materials

Activity Pages

- Display and individual student copies of Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1)
- Individual student copies of Notes on the Persian Wars (AP 5.2)

Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

**pass, n.** a place in the mountains that is lower than the surrounding peaks and that people use as a path through the mountains (33)

*Example:* The explorers looked for a pass to make it easier for them to get through the mountains.

*Variations:* passes

**evacuate, v.** to leave a place in an organized way, in order to get away from danger (34)

*Example:* We decided to evacuate the building when we smelled smoke.

*Variations:* evacuated, evacuation (n.)
Introduce “The Persian Wars”  

Remind students that in the 500s BCE, Athens and Sparta were two of the most powerful Greek city-states. Ask students to locate Athens and Sparta on the display and individual student copies of Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1). Also ask students to share what they remember about the military abilities of each city-state. (*Athens had a strong navy; Sparta had a strong army.*)

Explain that in this chapter, students will read about how those military abilities were tested. Call students’ attention to the Big Question. Tell students to look for reasons that Sparta and Athens decided to work together.

Independent Reading of “The Persian Wars”  

Distribute Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1) and Notes on the Persian Wars (AP 5.2). Direct students to read the entire chapter independently, referring to the Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1) and completing Notes on the Persian Wars (AP 5.2) as they read.

*Note:* This is the first instance in which students are not only being asked to read an entire chapter independently, but are also asked to refer to and use a map independently while reading.

Tell students that if they finish reading the chapter before their classmates, they should begin to copy and write a response to the Big Question, as well as write a sentence using one of the Core Vocabulary words from the chapter.

*SUPPORT*—Prior to having students start reading the chapter, write the following words on the board or chart paper, pronounce and then briefly explain each word: *trireme, marathon, exhaustion,* and *evacuate.* Have students repeat the pronunciation of each word.

*SUPPORT*—Write the Big Question on the board or chart paper to remind students to provide a written answer if they finish reading the chapter early. Also, add a reminder about writing a sentence using a Core Vocabulary word.

*Note:* Guided Reading Supports are included below as an alternative to independent reading, if, in your judgment, some or all students are not yet capable of reading the entire chapter independently while still maintaining a good understanding of what they have read. This chapter may be particularly challenging for ELL students and others with weak vocabulary or language skills, as many idioms are used throughout the chapter.
When you or a student reads aloud, always prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember to provide discussion opportunities.

**“The Beginning of the War,” Pages 30–31**

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

Invite volunteers to read the section on page 30 aloud.

**SUPPORT**—Display Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1). Have students locate the places named in this section: Asia Minor, the Aegean Sea, and the city-states of Athens, Miletus, and Sardis.

**SUPPORT**—Have students examine the image on page 31 of the Greek sailors rowing the trireme. Remind students that many Greek city-states were near the coast or on islands. Greek civilization was influenced by its proximity to the sea. Ask a student to read the image caption. Note the word *trireme* and ask whether a volunteer can explain the name of the boat. (Tri- means three.)

**SUPPORT**—Point out the word *tyrant* in the first paragraph, and help students make the connection to the Core Vocabulary word *tyranny*, which they learned in Chapter 1.

After volunteers read the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What type of government did the Persians set up in the Greek city-states they conquered in Asia Minor?

» They set up tyrannies. The Persian tyrants were harsh.

**LITERAL**—Which city-state helped the people of Miletus?

» Athens

**LITERAL**—How did Athens’s victory at Sardis affect other Greek city-states in Asia Minor?

» They revolted against the Persians after Athens won at Sardis.

**LITERAL**—Was the revolt successful?

» It was successful at first, but the Persians put down the revolt and took control again in Asia Minor.
“Marathon,” Page 32

Scaffold understanding as follows:

Read the section aloud to the class.

**SUPPORT**—Display Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1), and have students locate Marathon.

**SUPPORT**—Discuss the phrase “broke ranks.” Explain that this means to separate, rather than to stay unified. Note that armies are generally more successful when fighters stay together.

**SUPPORT**—Note that the text uses the phrase “according to legend” to introduce the story about the runner. Remind students that a legend may or may not be true. It is a famous story because it illustrates how important the victory was for the Greeks.

After you read the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—Why might it be surprising that the Athenians won at Marathon?

» They were badly outnumbered.

**LITERAL**—What effect did the victory have on Athenians?

» It gave them great confidence and made them feel very powerful.

“Thermopylae,” Pages 33–34

Scaffold understanding as follows:

Have students read this section independently.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Point out the vocabulary word *pass,* and explain its meaning.

**SUPPORT**—Display Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1), and have students locate Thermopylae. Note that the battle at Thermopylae took place ten years after the battle at Marathon.

After students read the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What was Xerxes’s goal?

» He wanted to conquer all of Greece.

**LITERAL**—Which Greek king led the unified army of Greeks?

» King Leonidas of Sparta
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LITERAL—Why did the Greeks decide to attack the Persians at Thermopylae?

» They wanted to delay the Persian army. They thought that by fighting a battle at a narrow pass, there would not be enough room for the whole Persian army.

LITERAL—Why did Leonidas order most of the Greek soldiers to retreat?

» He learned that the Persians were using a path to go around the Greek army.

EVALUATIVE—Why might Leonidas have chosen a small group of Spartans to stay and fight the Persians?

» He was from Sparta. Sparta was known for its military might. Spartans valued never giving up or accepting defeat. Leonidas and his soldiers might have preferred dying in battle to retreating.

“Salamis,” Pages 34–35

Scaffold understanding as follows:

Invite volunteers to read this section aloud.

CORE VOCABULARY—Pause to explain the vocabulary word *evacuate* when it is encountered in the text.

SUPPORT—Display Map of the Persian Wars (AP 5.1), and have students locate Salamis and Plataea.

SUPPORT—Note that the term *fleet* means a group of ships sailing together with the same purpose and under the control of the same leader. The Greeks and the Persians each had a fleet of ships. Explain that *lure* means to trick someone by making them come to a place.

SUPPORT—Explain that the phrase “drove the Persian army out of Greece forever” in the last sentence on page 35 means “forced the Persian army to leave Greece and not come back.”

After the volunteers read the text, ask the following questions:

LITERAL—What did the Persians do to Athens?

» They destroyed it by burning it to the ground.

LITERAL—What strategy did the Greeks use to defeat the Persians near Salamis?

» They lured their boats into a narrow area with shallow water. Then they rammed the Persian ships, sinking them.
EVALUATIVE—What advantage did the Persians have? What advantage did the Greeks have? Why was the Greeks' advantage more valuable in this battle?

» The Persians had big ships. The Greeks knew the area better. The Greeks used their knowledge of the shallow, narrow waters to create a situation in which the Persians' bigger ships were not an advantage.

LITERAL—What was the significance of the battle of Plataea?

» It was the final battle of the Persian Wars. The Spartan general Pausanias led the Greeks in driving the Persians out of Greece forever.

Note: If students have been reading the chapter independently, call the whole class back together to complete the Timeline and Check for Understanding as a group.

Timeline

- Show students the Chapter 5 Timeline Image Card. Read and discuss the caption, making particular note of any dates.
- Review and discuss the Big Question: “Why do you think the Spartans and the Athenians joined together to fight the Persians in the later battles of the Persian Wars?”
- Have a student post the image card to the Timeline under the date referencing the 400s BCE. Refer to the illustration in the Unit 2 Introduction for guidance on the placement of each image card to the Timeline.

✔ Check for Understanding 10 min

Ask students to:

- Write a short answer to the Big Question: “Why do you think the Spartans and the Athenians joined together to fight the Persians in the later battles of the Persian Wars?”
  » Key points students should cite include: They were both Greek, sharing a common language, religion, and traditions; they united against a common enemy; they understood that the Persians wanted to conquer all of Greece; Spartans may have been inspired by the Athenians' victory at Marathon; Athenians may have seen Sparta as an important ally, given Sparta's military strength.

- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary words (pass or evacuate), and write a sentence using the word.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.

Note: Be sure to check students' written responses to Notes on the Persian Wars (AP 5.2) so you can correct any misunderstandings about the chapter content during subsequent instructional periods.