

Title: 6th Grade History Lesson: Peloponnesian War and the End of the Polis Era (Block 9) Materials Needed World Map or large laminated map focusing on Greece and the area immediately north (Macedonia). Printouts/Digital images illustrating the devastation of the Peloponnesian War (e.g., besieged city walls, Athenian plague). Printouts/Digital images of Philip II or Alexander the Great's military technology (e.g., Sarissa—long spear, siege engines). INSPECT Civilization Tracker (specifically columns for Athens, Sparta, and a new section for Macedon/Alexander). Timeline Template: A strip of paper or digital tool to sequence key events: Persian Wars → Delian League → Peloponnesian War → Rise of Macedon. Reference materials/notes on previous empires (Assyria, Persia) to compare political strategies. Learning Objectives (Success Criteria) Building on the understanding of Athenian imperial behavior and the limits of Greek unity (Lesson 3), by the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to: Political Analysis (P): Analyze the Peloponnesian War as the inevitable conflict arising from the rivalry between Athenian maritime empire (P/E) and Spartan land power (P/E), demonstrating the internal decay of the *polis* system. Social Consequence (S/P): Explain how the prolonged warfare and internal conflict (e.g., the plague, disruption of democratic process) critically weakened the social and political fabric of Greece. Progression Synthesis (P/T): Evaluate the political model of Macedon (Philip II and Alexander the Great) as a re-emergence of the centralized monarchy (P), utilizing superior military organization and technology (T) to successfully unify (conquer) the fragmented Greek city-states. Block 9: The Collapse and the Conqueror (50 Minutes) Introduction (5 min) Review & Reinforcement (Connecting to Previous Lessons) Educator Prompt: Last time, we concluded that Athens, through the Delian League, had begun acting like an empire, demanding tribute and controlling other *poleis*. What evidence did we find that Athenian political (P) behavior started to mirror that of the Persian or Assyrian Empires? (Answer Focus: Using military force to extract economic resources (E) from subjugated states.) Hook: The Self-Destruction Educator Prompt: Athens and Sparta fought side-by-side to defeat the massive Persian Empire. But immediately afterward, their deep differences resurfaced. This led to a devastating, 27-year war between them. How could a civil war between these two powers be worse for Greece than the Persian invasion? (Focus: Internal division destroys infrastructure and culture, making them vulnerable.) Objectives Review Today, we witness the tragic failure of the independent *polis* system during the Peloponnesian War. We will see how this conflict ended Greek independence and paved the way for a powerful new centralized monarchy from the North: Macedon. Body: The War, The Weakness, and the Conqueror (40 min) I Do: The Peloponnesian War—Tragedy of the Polis (15 min) Content Delivery: P/E (Political/Economic Causes): Explicitly state the war was caused by Spartan fear of Athenian dominance (P) and Athenian attempts to control vital trade routes (E). Show how the geographic specialties dictated their strategies: Athens relied on its navy and surrounding walls; Sparta relied on its army and devastating land invasions. S/C (Social/Cultural Cost): Discuss the devastating impact. Describe the Athenian Plague (S) which killed a massive percentage of the population and leaders, severely undermining democratic stability (P). Bridge Language: "The Athenians had defeated the external empire (Persia), but their internal conflict brought the kind of social devastation that even the great river valley empires rarely faced—a loss of faith in their own system." Technology (T): The war became a contest of siege warfare and naval blockades, showing a shift toward sustained, professional conflict, unlike the quick, decisive battles of the Persian Wars. We Do: The Power Vacuum (15 min) Activity: Sequencing the Decline and Predicting the Future (P, E) Interactive Discussion: The war ended with Sparta winning, but Greece was utterly exhausted, culturally bankrupt, and economically drained (E). The next 50 years saw various *poleis* (Sparta, Thebes) try to establish dominance, but none succeeded in restoring stability. Timeline Activity: The learner places markers on the timeline: *Athens is strongest* → *Peloponnesian War* → *Greece is exhausted*. Educator Prompt: If the strongest political systems (Athens and Sparta) destroyed each other through prolonged conflict, what is the only way a lasting, large-scale political order (P) can be imposed on Greece now? (Answer Focus: An outside, centralized power, because internal attempts failed.) Formative Assessment: Learner identifies that the war reinforced the centralized model's advantage: *internal conflict* weakens decentralized states, while large empires maintain command structure (P) even during conflict (connecting back to Persia's unity). You Do: The Macedonian Solution—Philip and Alexander (10 min) Application: The Return of

Centralized Power (P, T) P (Political Systems): Introduce Philip II of Macedon (a kingdom north of Greece). Emphasize that Macedon was a centralized monarchy, similar in structure to the Assyrian/Persian Empires, but highly influenced by Greek culture (C). T (Technology/Innovation): Discuss Philip's military reforms—the professional, year-round Macedonian army and the use of the *Sarissa* (an extremely long spear). This innovation gave the centralized Macedonian army a decisive technological (T) advantage over the fragmented Greek hoplite phalanx. Explicit Connection: Ask the learner to look at the P column of the INSPECT Tracker. The political journey has now come full circle: From centralized empire (Assyria) → fragmented citizen power (Athens) → self-destruction → back to centralized empire (Macedon). Activity: Contrast Macedon (P) with Athens (P). What did Philip offer that the Athenian democracy, weakened by war and plague, could no longer provide? (Focus: Stability, professional military protection, centralized decision-making, and unity.) Conclusion & Summative Assessment (5 min) Recap the Journey We have witnessed the ultimate failure of the decentralized political experiment (the *polis*) due to internal conflict. The devastation of the Peloponnesian War led to Greek weakness, which was immediately exploited by the centralized, professionally militarized kingdom of Macedon. The era of independent Greek self-governance ended, replaced by a new imperial structure. Update the INSPECT Tracker for Macedon (P: Centralized Monarchy; T: Professional Army/Sarissa). Summative Assessment: Progressive Political Evaluation Educator Prompt: Compare the political structure of Philip II of Macedon (P) with that of the Assyrian Emperor (P). In what ways did Philip's method of conquering Greece benefit from the lessons learned by previous empires, and in what ways was his military technology (T) superior? (Success: Learner highlights the centralized command and professional army lineage, but notes that Macedonian technology/discipline (Sarissa, professional training) was an advancement over older imperial armies.) Next Steps (Bridge to Next Lesson) Philip II conquered Greece, but it was his son, Alexander the Great, who took the Macedonian empire far beyond the previous borders of Persia, fundamentally changing the cultural landscape of the ancient world. Next time, we will follow Alexander's massive conquest, his interactions with the cultures we first studied (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia), and the lasting legacy of Hellenistic culture (C)—the blending of Greek and Eastern ideas—which will set the stage for the rise of Rome.