

E D U C A T I O N

SCHOOL GROUP
SELF-GUIDE

THE ART OF
ANCIENT
GREECE
AND ROME

Use this guide to prepare for your self-guided visit to the Metropolitan Museum with your students.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



This guide will help you prepare for your self-guided visit to the Metropolitan Museum with your students. Use the links to the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History and to the Department of Greek and Roman Art on the Museum's website to access descriptions of works of art, thematic essays, and other relevant content.

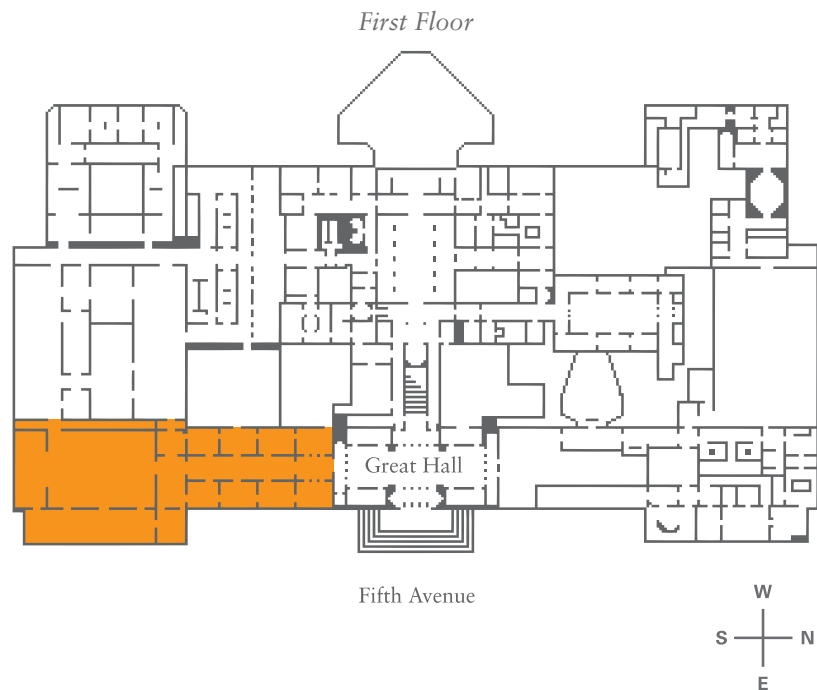
Introduction

The collection of Greek and Roman art includes more than seventeen thousand works ranging in date from the Neolithic period (ca. 7000–3200 B.C.) to the time of Constantine the Great (r. A.D. 305–337), the first Christian Roman emperor. From small, engraved gemstones to black-figure and red-figure painted vases to over-lifesize statues, these works reflect virtually all of the materials in which ancient artists and craftsmen worked: marble, limestone, terracotta, bronze, gold, silver, and glass, as well as ivory, bone, iron, lead, amber, wood, plaster, rock crystal, and semiprecious stones. The principal areas of study are Greece and Italy, as represented by ancient city-states, notably Athens, Sparta, and Rome. The Greek cities established colonies around much of the Mediterranean basin and on the shores of the Black Sea, thereby spreading Greek civilization and art throughout this region. Cyprus had its own culture but became increasingly Hellenized after Alexander the Great (r. 336–323 B.C.). Rome began as a small city in central Italy, much influenced by the more powerful and artistically developed Etruscans. During the second and first centuries B.C., however, Rome grew into an empire that controlled the whole Mediterranean world, thereby extending the influence of Greco-Roman art to western and central Europe, North Africa, and the Near East.

The Galleries

The Robert and Renée Belfer Court, next to the Great Hall on the first floor, contains prehistoric and early Greek art. The adjacent suite of seven galleries displays Greek art of the archaic and classical periods (sixth through fourth century B.C.), embracing such themes as religion, funerary customs, civic life, and athletics. Nearby on the first floor and mezzanine are the galleries for Hellenistic, Etruscan, South Italian, and Roman art, which include the Study Collection and a special exhibition gallery. Upstairs on the second floor are four galleries presenting the art of ancient Cyprus.

Learn more about the [Department of Greek and Roman Art](#).



Planning a Tour

When visiting the Metropolitan Museum with your students, prepare your tour with the following in mind:

- Less is more. Select five or six works of art to discuss over the course of an hour in the galleries.
- Choose works that are located away from doorways and areas that are heavily traversed by visitors.
- Include works that are visible to all students in your group for purposes of discussion and viewing.
- Make sure that there are enough chaperones in your group to divide the students into smaller groups for gallery discussions.
- While touring the galleries, please give priority to lecturers wearing Museum IDs who are guiding groups. If they are discussing a work that you would like your students to see, please select another work to view and discuss in the interim.

Please Note: Although most of the suggested works in this guide will be on view when you visit the Museum, some gallery installations may be subject to change. We recommend that you use [Search the Collections](#) online or come to the Museum to verify that the objects you want to discuss are on display prior to bringing your group.

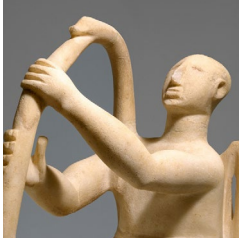
Questions for Discussion in the Galleries

- What underlying meanings do you think the artist intended in this work of art?
- How does the work of art indicate its function?
- What does the work of art tell us about its audience and original context?

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's school tour program is made possible by the generosity of Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman.

Suggested Works of Art to Explore

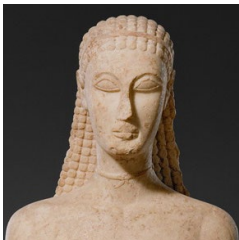
Please note that titles, dates, and other object information on the website and on gallery signage may vary as the result of ongoing research.



Seated harp player, ca. 2800–2700 B.C.; late Early Cycladic I–Early Cycladic II
Marble; H. with harp 11 1/2 in. (29.2 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1947 (47.100.1)



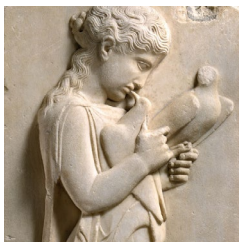
Krater, ca. 750–735 B.C.; Geometric
Greek, Attic
Attributed to the Hirschfeld Workshop
Terracotta; H. 42 5/8 in. (108.25 cm); diameter 28 1/2 in. (72.4 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1914 (14.130.14)



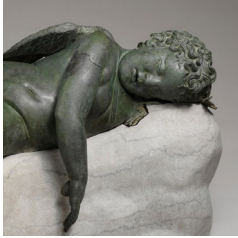
Statue of a kouros (youth), ca. 590–580 B.C.; Archaic
Greek, Attic
Naxian marble; H. without plinth 76 in. (193.04 cm); H. of head 12 in. (30.5 cm); length of face 8 7/8 in. (22.6 cm); shoulder width 20 5/16 in. (51.6 cm)
Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.11.1)



Amphora, ca. 490 B.C.; Late Archaic
Attributed to the Berlin Painter
Greek, Attic
Terracotta; H. 16 5/16 in. (41.5 cm)
Fletcher Fund, 1956 (56.171.38)



Grave stele of a little girl, ca. 450–440 B.C.
Greek
Parian marble; H. 31 1/2 in. (80 cm)
Fletcher Fund, 1927 (27.45)



[Statue of Eros sleeping](#), 3rd century B.C.–A.D. early 1st century;
Hellenistic or Augustan
Greek or Roman
Bronze; L. 33 9/16 in. (85.24 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1943 (43.11.4)



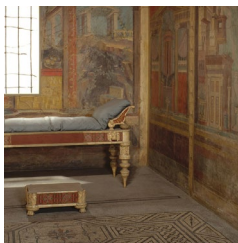
[Statuette of a veiled and masked dancer](#), 3rd–2nd century B.C.;
Hellenistic
Greek
Bronze; H. 8 1/16 in. (20.5 cm)
Bequest of Walter C. Baker, 1971 (1972.118.95)



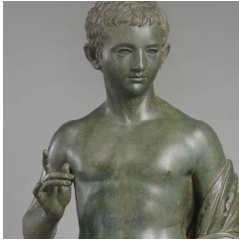
[Chariot inlaid with ivory](#), 2nd quarter of the 6th century B.C.
Etruscan; from Monteleone, Italy
Bronze, ivory; H. 51 9/16 in. (130.9 cm); L. of pole 82 1/4 in. (209 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.23.1)
Learn more about [Etruscan Art](#).



[Polyphemus and Galatea in a landscape, from the imperial villa at Boscotrecase](#), last decade of 1st century B.C.; Augustan
Roman
Fresco; 73 3/4 x 47 in. (187.33 x 119.38 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.192.17)
Learn more about [The Augustan Villa at Boscotrecase](#).



[Cubiculum \(bedroom\) from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale](#),
ca. 50–40 B.C.; Republican
Roman
Fresco; room: 8 ft. 8 1/2 in. x 10 ft. 11 1/2 in. x 19 ft. 7 1/8 in.
(265.4 x 334 x 583.9 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.14.13a–g)
Learn more about [Boscoreale: Frescoes from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor](#).



[Statue of an aristocratic boy](#), 27 B.C.–A.D. 14; Augustan

Roman

Bronze; H. 52 1/8 in. (132.4 cm); length of face 5 1/8 in. (13 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1914 (14.130.1)

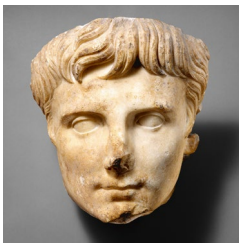


[Statue of an old woman](#), 14–68; Early Imperial, Julio-Claudian

Roman

Pentelic marble; H. 49 5/8 in. (125.98 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1909 (09.39)



[Portrait head of the emperor Augustus](#), ca. 14–37; Early Imperial, Julio-Claudian

Roman

Marble; H. 12 in. (30.48 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.286.115)



[Sarcophagus with the Triumph of Dionysos and the Seasons](#), ca. 260–270;

Late Imperial, Gallienic

Roman

Marble; overall: 34 x 85 x 36 1/4 in. (86.4 x 215.9 x 92.1 cm)

Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1955 (55.11.5)

Learn more about [Roman Sarcophagi](#).



[Sarcophagus](#), second quarter of 5th century B.C.; Archaic

Cypriot; from Amathus

Limestone; H. 62 in. (157.5 cm)

The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.2453)

Learn more about [Geometric and Archaic Cyprus](#).

Background and Themes to Consider

Use the following selected links to thematic essays in the Museum's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History to access further background information.

Architecture

[Architecture in Ancient Greece](#)

[The Idea and Invention of the Villa](#)

[Roman Housing](#)

Artists and Materials

[Athenian Vase Painting: Black- and Red-Figure Techniques](#)

[Roman Copies of Greek Statues](#)

[Roman Portrait Sculpture: Republican through Constantinian](#)

[The Technique of Bronze Statuary in Ancient Greece](#)

Everyday Life in Greece

[Ancient Greek Dress](#)

[Athletics in Ancient Greece](#)

[Music in Ancient Greece](#)

[Scenes of Everyday Life in Ancient Greece](#)

[Theater in Ancient Greece](#)

[Women in Classical Greece](#)

Religion and Mythology

[Death, Burial, and the Afterlife in Ancient Greece](#)

[Eastern Religions in the Roman World](#)

[Greek Gods and Religious Practices](#)

Selected Resources

These and many more resources are available in Nolen Library in the Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education.

Teachers

Michael Norris, Carlos Picón, Joan Mertens, Elizabeth Milleker, Seán Hemingway, and Christopher Lightfoot. [Greek Art from Prehistoric to Classical: A Resource for Educators](#). New York: MMA, 2000. Written specifically for K–12 teachers and includes lesson plans and classroom activities.

Nancy L. Thompson. [Roman Art: A Resource for Educators](#). New York: MMA, 2007. Written specifically for K–12 teachers and includes lesson plans and classroom activities.

Students

Aesop's Fables. New York: Dover Publications, 1994. Highly readable version of Aesop's moral lessons presented in entertaining stories about animals and others; illustrated by Pat Stewart.

d'Aulaire, Ingri, and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. *Book of Greek Myths*. New York: Bantam, Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1962. Energetically illustrated volume that clearly brings to life the myths of the ancient Greeks.

Korres, Manolis. *From Pentelicon to the Parthenon*. Athens: Melissa, 1995. The story of a single stone's progress from the quarry to the Athenian akropolis. A delightful description of Greek building methods, illustrated with line drawings.

Moulton, Carroll, ed. *Ancient Greece and Rome: An Encyclopedia for Students*. 4 vols. New York: Scribner, 1998. A broad resource, with entries on historical figures and mythological beings, historical events and places.

James, Simon. *Ancient Rome*. Eyewitness Books. Rev. ed. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2004. An excellent introduction for adult and young person alike and very well illustrated.

Students and Teachers Who are Blind or Partially Sighted

Bird, Susan, Ian Jenkins, and Fabio Levi. *Second Sight of the Parthenon Frieze*. London: British Museum Press, 1998. Braille images of the Parthenon frieze.