

Notes on illustration on facing page

Ancient Greek ship

Based on an Attic stamnos (pot), late 6th-early 5th century BC, British Museum, London

Larger ancient Greek ships had a steering rudder on one, or both, sides towards the rear of the ship. In addition to the main sail, the ship shown here has space for a bank of six oars on each side (only five of which are used in the image), allowing it to be rowed when there was no wind and more easily manoeuvred in confined spaces. The oarsmen would sit facing towards the back of the boat, so only the steersman, standing up at the back, would be able to see where the ship was going. The ship has an eye painted on the front, helping to bring it to life, and a battering ram at water level. The raised wooden construction at the front might provide protection for the crew against waves and sea-spray, and perhaps against arrows or spears during fighting. The relatively long, thin hull of the ship further suggests that it is a war ship rather than a trading ship (which tended to be shorter and more rounded).

Suggested activities

For teaching ideas see notes for Episode 4.

