

## A Greek Soldier

Ancient Greek soldiers, known as **hoplites**, played a vital role in protecting their city-states. Unlike professional armies, hoplites were mostly ordinary citizens — farmers, craftsmen, and merchants — who were expected to serve as soldiers when their city needed them. They provided their own armour and weapons, so wealthier citizens tended to have better equipment.

A hoplite's armour was called a **panoply** and consisted of several parts. A bronze **helmet** protected the head, often with a crest on top to make the soldier look taller and more frightening. A **breastplate** covered the chest and back, while **greaves** were strapped to the lower legs. The hoplite's main weapon was a long spear called a **dory**, and he also carried a short sword called a **xiphos** for close combat. His large round shield, the **aspis**, was made of wood and covered with bronze.

Hoplites fought in a formation called the **phalanx** — tightly packed rows of soldiers whose shields formed a continuous wall. Success depended entirely on every man holding his position. If the line broke, the whole formation could collapse.

Sparta was the most famous Greek city-state for its soldiers. Spartan boys began military training at just seven years old, living and training in army barracks until they became full warriors.

## Questions

1. What were ancient Greek soldiers called?
2. Were hoplites professional soldiers?
3. Why did wealthier citizens have better equipment?
4. What was the name for a hoplite's full set of armour?
5. What was special about some helmets?
6. What were greaves and where were they worn?
7. What was the hoplite's long spear called?
8. What was the xiphos used for?
9. At what age did Spartan boys begin military training?
10. Why do you think it was so important that every soldier held his position in the phalanx?



Text C Quiz



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