The book is set in the 5th century BC and follows the story of a young woman from a Scythian tribe (from the area north of the Black Sea in modern-day southern Russia). The woman is part of a Scythian family captured by Greek slave traders. After crossing the perilous Black Sea, which is famous for its rough storms and high seas, the woman is sold as a slave in the market in Athens. She is separated from her husband and children – whom she will never see again – and begins a new life as a Greek slave. She works alongside other oiketai (household slaves) cooking, cleaning, caring for her owner’s children day and night, fetching, carrying, weaving, embroidering cloth, doing the laundry, and helping her owner’s wife to bathe, dress and arrange her hair – amongst other tasks. Life as a Greek slave was exhausting. There wasn’t a spare moment, and any disobedience was punished by beating, being locked up, or even sold on to another owner. It’s clear that You Wouldn’t Want to be a Slave in Ancient Greece!

About ancient Greece

The timeline at the start of You Wouldn’t Want to be a Slave in Ancient Greece provides a good overview of the development of ancient Greece.

People first began living in Greece in around 40,000 BC. These early people would have been nomadic hunter-gatherers. Later, a more settled lifestyle emerged in the period of history known as the Neolithic (or New Stone Age), c. 6500 to 3200 BC. People began to build permanent villages and became farmers rather than purely hunting and collecting their food.

The Bronze Age, characterised by the first use of metal, saw the emergence of the earliest Greek civilisations including the Minoans who lived under their legendary king, Minos, on the island of Crete, between around 2200 BC and 1450 BC. The first major civilisation on the Greek mainland was the Mycenaean civilisation; it dated from around 1600 BC to 1100 BC.

When the Mycenaean age ended, Greece entered a time of unrest and hardship, a so-called ‘Dark Age’. Around 300 years later, in 800 BC, Greek civilisation emerged once again, and began to trade with the outside world. It was during this period, called the ‘Archaic period’ by historians, that the first Olympic Games were held in 776 BC.

The final two periods of ancient Greece are the ‘Classical period’ (or golden age) which lasted from around 500 BC to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, and the ‘Hellenistic period’ which continued to around 146 BC when Greece came under Roman rule. It was during the Classical period that ancient Greece’s best-known poets, playwrights, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians and politicians lived.
About ancient Greece (continued)

Rather than being a coherent country in the modern sense, ancient Greece was actually made up of a number of city-states (or poleis) totalling several hundred. These city-states were rivals and were often at war with each other. However, the city-states did operate for mutual benefit too, against foreign enemies such as Persia. The two most famous Greek city-states were Athens and Sparta; other city-states included Thebes, Corinth and Argos.

Each city-state (or polis) was ruled by a body of elected citizens rather than a monarch. The modern English word ‘democracy’ comes from ancient Greek; it is a combination of the two Greek words demos, which means ‘people’, and krátos, which means ‘power’ or ‘rule’ (literally ‘people power’!)

Many historians see the first Olympic Games in 776 BC as a marker for when the city-states recognised a sense of ‘Greekness’. The Greeks even came up with a word for this process of gaining a group identity or sense of ethnicity which is still used in English today: ethnogenesis. The word is a compound of two Greek words ethnós, which means ‘group of people’ or ‘nation’, and genesis, which means ‘coming into being’. However, Greek people would have thought of themselves as Athenian or Spartan (for example) first and Greek second.

The highly civilised ancient Greece city-states had a population made up of four distinct social classes. There were citizens who had both political and legal rights. They were all adult men, and had to have two citizens as parents. They could vote and be elected into public office. They also had the right to bear arms, and had to serve the city-state during times of war. Citizens’ female relatives and underage children were a second social class. They had full legal rights, but were represented by their adult male relatives in the political sphere. A citizen from different poleis could live elsewhere; although they had full political and legal rights in their home polis, they had no political rights where they lived. These people were known as metics. The final social class, which made up around a quarter of the population in some Greek city-states, was slaves. They were the possessions of their citizen owners, and had no rights or privileges other than those granted (and sometimes revoked) by their owners. Thousands of slaves could be sold at the agora (market place) in a large city such as Athens in a day. They were people captured from other areas – such as the woman in You Wouldn’t Want to be a Slave in Ancient Greece – debtors, or members of defeated enemy armies.

Activity 1: A new life awaits

In the book, the woman is captured from her home village by Greek slave traders and taken by boat across the Black Sea to be sold in the agora (market place) in Athens.

Challenge your pupils to produce a piece of creative writing which describes how they would be feeling heading towards a new life as a slave in ancient Greece. They could set their writing on board the slave traders’ boat, or it could be set in the agora as they are waiting to be sold.
Activity 2: A slave’s day

A slave’s day in ancient Greece was full from dawn till nightfall, and could even continue through 24 hours if they were responsible for looking after their owner’s children. It would have been a packed schedule!

Oiketai (household slaves) would have been responsible for:
• cooking
• cleaning
• lighting fires and collecting firewood
• doing the laundry
• taking care of children
• helping the owner and his wife to bathe, dress and arrange their hair
• fetching and carrying, including errands to the market place and collecting water
• weaving and embroidery
• and much more!

A slave working on a farm would have been involved in different tasks depending on the season. Responsibilities would have included:
• preparing and ploughing the soil
• planting, caring for and harvesting crops
• winnowing wheat and barley (separating the grain from the chaff to use in making bread)
• crushing olives to make olive oil
• haymaking
• caring for animals
• gathering wild foods such as nuts, berries and mushrooms
• making cheese
• and much more!

Ask your pupils to create an itinerary of a slave’s day; they could pick being a household slave in a city like Athens or a slave working on a farm. There is an activity sheet in the pupils’ pack that you can use.

Talking point: how does an ancient Greek slave’s day compare to your pupils’ daily itinerary?

Activity 3: Slavery discussion

If you are working with older pupils, you could use this topic as a way in to a discussion of modern slavery and people trafficking. Obviously this is a very difficult and complex topic, which needs to be handled with sensitivity.
Begin by asking your pupils to work in small groups to come up with a definition of a slave. Their ideas might include someone who is forced to work; someone who is bought and sold like property; and someone who is controlled by physical violence or emotional threat.

Talking point: The transatlantic slave trade was abolished over 200 years ago. Do your pupils think that there are still people living in conditions of slavery today?

Traffickers take vulnerable people often from places of conflict, usually by promising them a ‘way out’ or a better life. Instead, they are exploited and forced to work. In 2005, statistics from the ILO (the International Labour Organisation, the UN agency working on labour rights) estimated that there were at least 12 million men, women and children in slavery around the world.

The United Nations agreed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10th December 1948. It is a set of fundamental human rights that should be universally protected across the world. Several of the ‘articles’ of the UDHR are pertinent to a discussion of modern slavery:

- Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
- Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Article 13: Everyone has the right to freedom of movement.
- Article 23: Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Talking point: does your school have an agreed set of ‘rights and responsibilities’?

Challenge your pupils to write a letter to Amnesty International, or produce a poster, to show their support for the anti-slavery movement.

Activity 4: Olympic Games

The ancient Greeks are famous as the founders of the Olympic Games. The first Games were held in 776 BC at the Greek city of Olympia (hence Olympics). They were open to male athletes from all Greek city-states; women weren’t even allowed to watch! The Games took place every four years, and by the time You Wouldn’t Want to be a Slave in Ancient Greece is set in the 5th century BC, over 20,000 (male) athletes and spectators travelled to Olympia from right across Greece for the Games. During the Games, the athletes and spectators were protected by the ‘Olympic Peace’; priests warned people that anyone who broke the peace would be punished by the King of the Greek gods, Zeus.

In most sports, the competitors took part naked! Events included: running (both naked and in armour), jumping, throwing the discus and javelin, wrestling, boxing, and chariot racing.
There was also a form of fighting called **pankration**, which was basically uncultured brawling. Competitors could punch, wrestle and choke each other – but a line was drawn at actually killing your opponent! This was forbidden, as was eye gouging and biting or breaking your opponent’s fingers.

Winners in the ancient Greek Olympic Games received pottery, olive oil and fine cloth – as well as a horseshoe-shaped wreath made of olive leaves called a **kotinos**.

The modern Olympics, which were first held in 1896, were inspired by the Greek Olympics. They too are held every four years, but both men and women take part – and nakedness is not encouraged!

Encourage your pupils to create a poster or programme for either the ancient Greek Olympics, or the modern Olympics. In 2016, the Olympic Games will be held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

**Research challenge:** ask your pupils to choose one sport from the ancient Greek Olympics, and one sport from the modern Olympics to research. Can they present their research as a PowerPoint presentation?

**Talking point:** which sport from both the Greek and modern Olympics would your pupils most like to take part in? You could conduct a survey amongst your pupils and use the results to create bar graphs or pie charts.

***Why not try***... hosting your own ancient Greek Olympics? Choose events that you can recreate safely, such as discus, javelin and running races, and make olive wreaths for the winners!

In the modern Olympics, the most iconic event is probably the 100m sprint; in the Greek Olympics, the equivalent was the **stade** race, which took place over one length of the stadium at Olympia and covered around 192m. Can you measure out one **stade** on your school playing field?

Other distances in the Greek Olympics included the **diaulos** (which was two **stades**) and longer-distance **dolichos** (which ranged between 7 and 24 **stades**).

**Extension activity:** the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games in 2016 are officially known as the Games of the XXXI Olympiad. Challenge your pupils to discover where the modern Olympic Games have been held since 1896, and to undertake a research project about one of the host cities.

**Activity 5: Greatest Greek!**

Ancient Greece was a hotbed of political, literary, philosophical, mathematical, scientific, artistic and architectural advancement.

Many ideas that shape the modern world, such as democracy, emerged in ancient Greece.
Your pupils have been asked to work on a new ‘reality’ TV show called Greatest Greek! They will need to work in groups to research one of the following great Greeks using the internet or other resources:

- Alexander the Great
- Plato
- Archimedes
- Hippocrates
- Pythagoras
- Herodotus
- Homer
- Aesop
- Sophocles
- Aristotle
- Socrates

Each group needs to create a presentation to share with another class or an invited audience of parents. Their presentation should focus on the achievements of their Greek citizen, and why they deserve the title Greatest Greek!

Why not try... getting one member of each group to act as their Greek for the presentation, and giving it in the first person? The groups would also need to research and make a Greek costume for their candidate for the Greatest Greek!

After each of the presentations has been made, your audience should be given the chance to vote for the winner.

Activity 6: The Greeks have a word for it!

Lots of common words in the English language have their roots in ancient Greek.

Begin by challenging your pupils to match the selection of common English words that have Greek origins with their correct definition. There are five activity sheets with Greek-origin words; some pupils may manage one sheet, some may complete all five.

Extension activity: for more able pupils, you could simply provide a list of words (taken from the sheets) and ask them to write their own definitions using a dictionary to help them.

Talking point: can you identify some common prefixes and suffixes used in English words that have an ancient Greek origin? Examples include: anti, ology, photo, tele, graph(y). Can your pupils think of any other words in modern English that include these elements?

Why not try... a game of Greek word bingo? Each pupil should choose 20 words from the ‘The Greeks have a word for it!’ activity sheets to include in their blank grid on the ‘Eureka bingo!’ activity sheet. Call out the Greek-origin words from the activity sheets one at a time at random to complete a game of bingo (or ask one of your pupils to act as caller).
For Greek authenticity, rather than using ‘bingo’ as the winning call, use ‘Eureka’! It was used in ancient Greece to celebrate a discovery, and it can be translated to “I have found!” The exclamation was made famous by Greek mathematician Archimedes. He worked out whilst taking a bath that the displaced water must be equal to the volume of the part of his body he had submerged. He was so excited by what he had discovered that he allegedly got straight out of the bath and ran through the streets of Syracuse, naked, shouting “Eureka!”

Extension activity: with more able pupils, or once you have played a simple game of Greek word bingo and your pupils are confident that they know the words, try using the definitions, rather than the words themselves.

Activity 7: Greek maths – Pythagoras’ theorem

Greek mathematician Pythagoras discovered that for all right-angled triangles, “The square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides”. The hypotenuse is the longest side of a right-angled triangle, and is always opposite the right angle. There are some mathematical challenges (for your more able mathematicians) that use the Pythagoras’ theorem on the activity sheets.

Activity 8: Arty challenges

Ancient Greeks were famous for their pottery. The most common forms of Greek pottery used two colours – red and black. So-called ‘black figure’ pottery is the type most people think of when imagining Greek pottery. This used black figures on a red background. (‘Red figure’ was the inverse of this; i.e. red figures on a black background.) Greek pottery often featured scenes of people at work, rest and play. Other Greek pottery featured geometric patterns. Challenge your pupils to design their own Greek ‘black figure’ pot. They could even make their pots using clay, or papier-mâché over a balloon.

If you are planning an ancient Greek Olympics, you may like to make your own olive or laurel wreaths for the winners. Use a band of cardboard to create a horseshoe or circular shape that fits around the head, and then add leaves cut out of green paper stuck on with glue. You may like to try using real leaves on a band of garden wire or pipe cleaners for a more authentic look!

Pupils’ pack contents

- ‘A new life awaits’ creative writing sheets (2)
- ‘A slave’s day’ creative writing sheet
- ‘The Greeks have a word for it’ activity sheets (5)
- Eureka bingo! grid
- Greek maths sheets (2)
- Design your own Greek pot
- Blank sheet with the border top and bottom for your pupils’ own artwork and writing
The Greeks have a word for it!

Below you will find the correct definitions for each of the Greek-origin words in modern English. There are five sheets of words and definitions to mirror the five activity sheets in the pupils’ pack. You can use this word list and/or the definitions for your game of Eureka bingo. You could even use just the ancient Greek root word(s) once your pupils have really got the hang of the game (e.g. ‘From akros and bat’)

Sheet 1

**Abacus**  A simple counting machine that uses beads that are slid along rods  
From the Greek word *abax* meaning ‘counting board’

**Acrobat**  A performer who does physical tricks such as somersaults and cartwheels  
From the Greek words *akros* meaning ‘high’ and *bat* meaning ‘walk’

**Aerial**  Relating to, or in, the air  
From the Greek word *āerios* meaning ‘air’

**Agony**  Very bad pain  
From the Greek word *agōn* meaning ‘struggle’

**Allergy**  A high sensitivity to a specific thing, such as a food type, which causes a person to become ill  
From the Greek words *allos* meaning ‘other’ and *ergon* meaning ‘action’

**Alphabet**  The usual order of letters in a language  
From the first and second letters in the Greek alphabet: *alpha* and *beta*

**Anagram**  A word or phrase made by rearranging all the letters in another word or phrase. For example, lemon and melon  
From the Greek words *ana* meaning ‘from bottom to top’ and *grammat* meaning ‘letter’

**Anonymous**  Having an unknown name or author, or being completely without character  
From the Greek word *anōnumos* meaning ‘nameless’

**Antibiotic**  A medicine used to fight illnesses caused by bad bacteria  
From the Greek words *anti* meaning ‘against’ and *biōtikos* meaning ‘fit for life’

**Apology**  An acknowledgement of being in the wrong or being sorry  
From the Greek words *apo* meaning ‘away from’ and *logos* meaning ‘speech’
Sheet 2

Archaeology  The study of human life in the past
From the Greek words *arkhaios* meaning ‘ancient’ and *logia* meaning ‘study of’

Astronaut  A person who pilots a spacecraft
From the Greek words *astron* meaning ‘star’ and *nautēs* meaning ‘sailor’

Athlete  A person who takes part in sport or exercise
From the Greek word *āthlētēs* meaning ‘contestant’

Bible  The religious book of Christian stories
From the Greek word *biblion* meaning ‘book’

Biography  A person’s life story
From the Greek words *bios* meaning ‘life’ and *graphiā* meaning ‘to write’

Butter  A yellow fat made from cow’s milk that is spread on bread or used in cooking
From the Greek words *bous* meaning ‘cow’ and *tūros* meaning ‘cheese’

Catastrophe  A terrible event
From the Greek word *katastrophē* meaning ‘ruin’

Chaos  A state of disorder or confusion
From the Greek word *khaos* meaning ‘gaping void’

Circus  A travelling show which usually takes place in a large tent called a Big Top, and which features acrobats and clowns
From the Greek word *kirkos* meaning ‘ring’

Comma  A punctuation mark used to separate clauses within a sentence
From the Greek word *komma* meaning ‘piece cut off’

Crisis  A difficult situation often leading to a change
From the Greek word *krisis* meaning ‘to separate, judge’
You Wouldn’t Want to Be a Slave in Ancient Greece!

Sheet 3

Democracy  A country where the people vote for the government  From the Greek words *demos* meaning ‘people’ and *krátos* meaning ‘power or rule’

Demon  An evil being or devil  From the Greek word *daimôn* meaning ‘divine power’

Dialogue  A conversation between two or more people  From the Greek word *dialogos* meaning ‘conversation’

Dilemma  A situation that requires a person to choose between two or more difficult options  From the Greek word *dilemma*

Dinosaur  An extinct reptile from the Mesozoic era  From the Greek words *deinos* meaning ‘monstrous’ and *sauros* meaning ‘lizard’

Eclipse  Where one thing or person is hidden or obscured by another  From the Greek word *ekleipsis* meaning ‘to fail to appear’

Encyclopaedia  A book giving information about a wide range of different subjects  From the Greek words *enkuklios paideia* meaning ‘all-round education’

Energy  To have lots of capacity for work or activity; or power  From the Greek word *energeia* meaning ‘active work’

Enigma  Something or someone that is puzzling or hard to explain  From the Greek word *ainigma* meaning ‘to speak in riddles’

Geography  Learning about the earth and its physical properties, and about the effects that people have had on the earth  From the Greek words *geō* meaning ‘earth’ and *graphiā* meaning ‘to write’

Gigantic  Really big; huge; colossal  From the Greek word *gigantikos* meaning ‘giant’
Grammar
The study or system of how language is constructed to make sentences, including the use of different types of words and punctuation
From the Greek word *grammatikē* meaning ‘of letters’

Guitar
A popular stringed musical instrument, played by strumming the fingers across the strings
From the Greek word *kithara* for a stringed musical instrument

Hierarchy
An order of things or people arranged according to importance
From the Greek word *hierarkhiā* meaning ‘rule of a high priest’

Hippopotamus
A large African animal that spends a lot of time in rivers
From the Greek words *hippos* meaning ‘horse’ and *potamos* meaning ‘river’

Idiot
Someone who is stupid or silly
From the Greek word *idiotēs* meaning ‘private person’

Mathematics
The study of measurement and relationships using numbers
From the Greek word *mathēmatikē*

Metre
A unit of distance that equals 100cm
From the Greek word *métron* meaning ‘measure’

Museum
A building full of objects of interest that people can visit
From the Greek word *Mouseion* meaning ‘shrine of the Muses’

Myth
A traditional story
From the Greek word *mythos* meaning ‘story’

Octopus
An eight-legged sea creature
From the Greek word *oktōpous* meaning ‘eight-footed’

Pantomime
The telling of a story using different faces and gestures, without words; a traditional funny play usually performed at Christmastime
From the Greek words *panto* meaning ‘all’ and *mīmos* meaning ‘mime’
Phobia  A very strong feeling of fear
   From the Greek word *phobos* meaning ‘fear’

Photograph  An picture taken by a camera
   From the Greek words *phos* meaning ‘light’ and *graphiā* meaning ‘to write’

Pirate  A person who attacks and robs ships at sea
   From the Greek word *peirātēs* meaning ‘to attempt’

Poem  A piece of creative writing often in verses and which sometimes rhymes
   From the Greek word *poiēma* meaning ‘to create’

School  A place where children go to learn
   From the Greek word *skholē*

Skeleton  The complete set of bones of a person or animal
   From the Greek word *skeletós* meaning ‘dried up’

Stadium  A place where sporting events take place
   From the Greek word *stadion* meaning ‘racetrack’

Sympathy  Feeling sorry for someone else when they are upset
   From the Greek words *syn* meaning ‘with’ or ‘together’ and *pathos* meaning ‘emotion’

Telescope  A tube-shaped object using mirrors and lenses for seeing distant things
   From the Greek word *tēleskopos* meaning ‘far-seeing’

Theatre  A building with a stage where plays are performed
   From the Greek word *theatron* meaning ‘place for viewing’

Thesaurus  A reference book for finding alternative words with a similar meaning
   From the Greek word *thēsauros*

Zoo  A place where wild animals are kept so that people can see them
   From the Greek word *zōion* meaning ‘animal’
Answers: Greek maths – Pythagoras’ theorem (1)

1) Side $c$ is 13cm long

2) Side $b$ is 15cm long

Greek maths – Pythagoras’ theorem (2)

The two correctly labelled right-angled triangles are $C$ and $E$