

Architecture

The word *architecture* comes from a Greek word that means “master builder.” Greek architecture was one of the achievements of the Golden Age of Athens. One feature was the way that the Greeks used columns to make their temples look balanced and stately. Another feature was the pediments, the triangular shapes where roof lines come together. And a third architectural feature was the decorated bands called friezes.

Today, Greek styles are still used in many buildings. They are common in public structures such as government buildings, schools, churches, libraries, and museums. The U.S. Capitol has elements of Greek architecture, such as columns and pediments. The building that houses the U.S. Supreme Court is another example of a public structure inspired by Greek architecture.

You can also see Greek building styles in homes and stores. For example, many houses have covered porches. The design of these porches reflects a feature of Greek architecture called a stoa. This is a covered line of columns.

Sports

Many modern sports trace their roots back to ancient Greece. The most famous example is the Olympic Games.

The first Olympics were held in 776 B.C.E. to honor the Greek god Zeus. Today’s Olympic Games reflect ancient Greek customs. During the opening ceremony, an athlete lights the Olympic flame. This custom comes from the time in ancient Greece when the first Olympic athletes lit a fire on the altar of Zeus.

Many modern Olympic events grew out of Greek contests. One example is the pentathlon. *Pentathlon* is a Greek word that means “five contests.” The Greek pentathlon included the footrace, discus throw, long jump, javelin throw, and wrestling. The Greeks invented this event as a test of all-around athletic skill. Although the five contests are different today, the pentathlon is still an Olympic event.

