Lesson 1 Rise of Greek Civilization

Understanding Location: The Greek Peninsula

Geography
Two aspects of geography greatly influenced the development of the Greek civilization. The first is the location of the peninsula. It sticks out into the Mediterranean Sea between the eastern and western ends of the Mediterranean.

The second influence is the rugged, mountainous land of the peninsula itself. About 70 percent of the peninsula consists of mountains. Mount Olympus is the highest mountain. It is located on the eastern side of the peninsula near the Aegean Sea. The Pindus mountain range runs south to north on the western side of the peninsula.

The mountains separated the cities on the peninsula and people developed a strong loyalty to their city. Eventually each city became a city-state, also called a polis, with its own political leaders and government.

Climate
The peninsula has always had a moderate climate because it borders the Mediterranean Sea. It is pleasantly warm and dry in the summer. It is cool, but not severely cold, in the winter. The early Greeks did not have to deal with harsh weather.

Trade and Culture
The peninsula was a crossroads for trade throughout the Mediterranean region. Its location allowed ships to sail to the islands in the Mediterranean as well as the ancient countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea—Syria, Egypt, and what is now Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Israel. When different people travel to trade, they exchange ideas and traditions. The Greeks formed many colonies along the shores of the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. Trade and colonies helped Greek culture and ideas spread throughout the Mediterranean area.
Directions: Answer the following questions.

Understanding the Concept
1. Identifying What geographic feature covers most of the Greek peninsula?

2. Describing What was the climate of the Greek peninsula like?

3. Explaining How was the peninsula’s location connected to its economic importance?
Applying the Concept

4. **Making Inferences** Based on the text and map above, what role do you think the sea played in the Greek economy?

5. **Drawing Conclusions** How did the geography of Greece affect the development of its civilization?