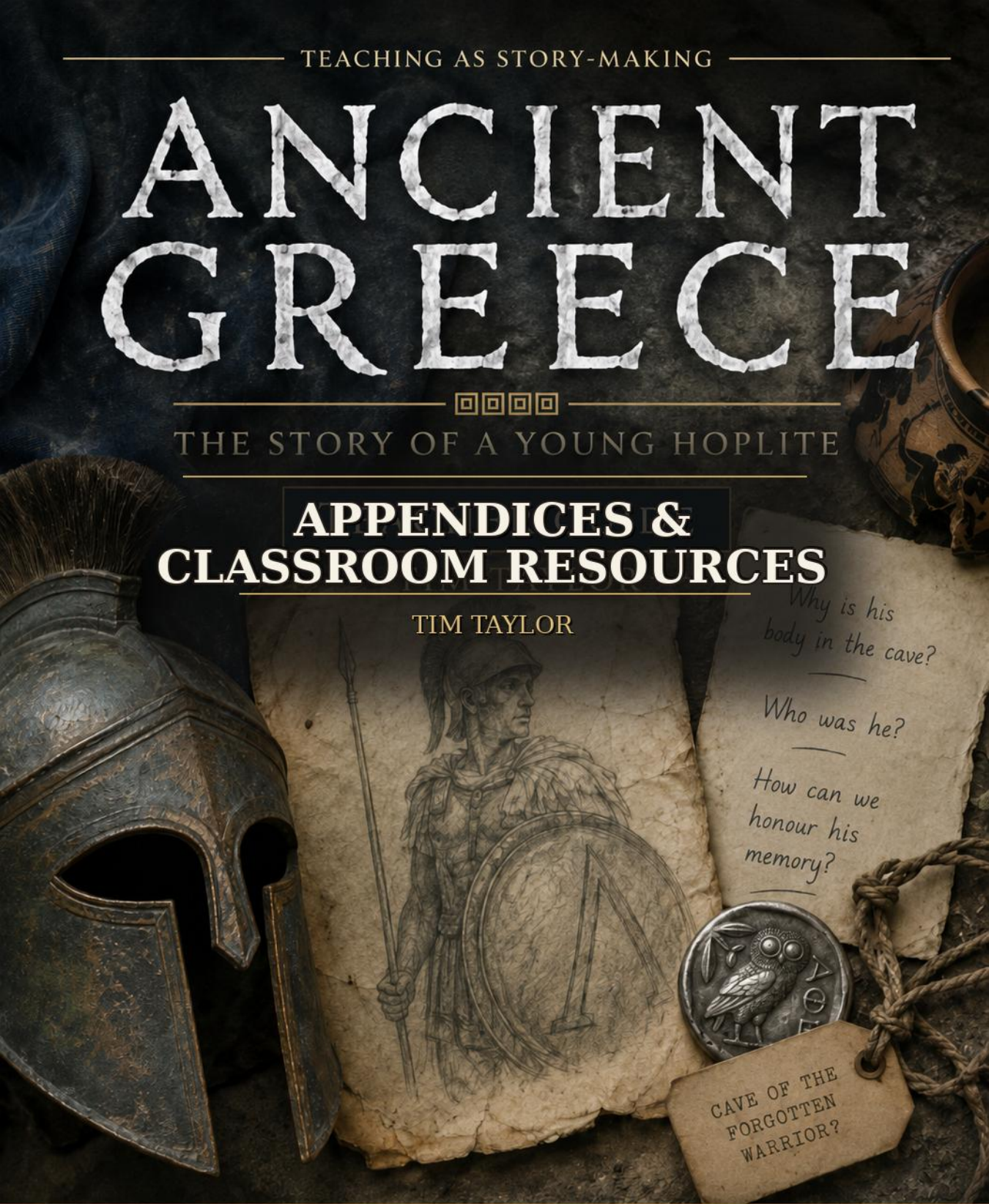
TEACHING AS STORY-MAKING

ANCIENT GREECE

THE STORY OF A YOUNG HOPLITE

APPENDICES & CLASSROOM RESOURCES

TIM TAYLOR



A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

EPISODE OVERVIEWS • TEACHING NOTES • RESOURCES
APPENDICES • ARTIFACTS • PLANNING SUPPORT

History • English • Art & Design • DT • RE / Philosophy and Ethics • Oracy

THE YOUNG SOLDIER

Appendices and classroom resources

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APPENDIX A — PREPARING THE FICTIONAL WORLD

A1. Setting Up the Office — A Note for the Teacher

Do this after Episode 1, before students return for Episode 2. The lesson has done its work: students have heard the commission, taken notes, drawn the cave map, and annotated the inventory. Now the room needs to catch up with the fiction. When students walk in for Episode 2, the world should already be in progress.

What you are making

Not a display. A working wall — the kind of wall a professional team accumulates gradually as a project develops. Things pinned at slightly different angles. Handwriting alongside print. Connections made visible. The test is simple: it should look like someone has been thinking in here.

What to put on the wall

The CCTV image of Dr Voss

Print in greyscale if you can — colour makes it look like a photograph rather than a security still. Pin it without a border or backing. Add a handwritten sticky note in one corner: 11:00 meeting or simply her name. The handwriting signals that someone has already been here, already been thinking.

The cave entrance photograph

Pin this close to the CCTV image. Add a handwritten strip underneath: Site CG-24/7 — central Greek coast. Functional, not decorative. A field note, not a caption.

The cave map

Pin this at roughly eye level for a seated student — it will be referred to and students should be able to see it from their places. Add a small handwritten mark at the chamber: remains found here with an arrow. Field maps always have marks on them.

The commission letter

Print this on something slightly more substantial than plain white paper if you have it — cream or off-white gives it the feel of headed institutional paper. Before you pin it, highlight two or three phrases with a real highlighter. We take that responsibility seriously is worth marking. We do not want visitors to mistake interpretation for fact is worth marking — it is the ethical centre of the commission and students will need to return to it. Pin the letter with the bottom half folded up, so only the opening paragraph is fully visible. It should look like someone put it down in the middle of reading it.

The inventory

Pin a copy of the inventory, but treat it differently from the commission letter. The letter is formal correspondence; the inventory is a working document. Before you pin it, circle two or three entries in pencil or biro — not highlighter. The unknown object on the chest. The small disc near the mouth. The possible wreath. Add a handwritten question mark in the margin beside the unknown object. Just a question mark. Nothing else needs to be written there.

Connecting things

A piece of string between the cave map and the cave entrance photograph is a small touch but an effective one — it signals that these two things are already understood to be in relationship. A few small sticky notes near items that feel uncertain add to the impression of a team that has started work and has already found things they cannot explain.

Resist the impulse to add headings or labels that organise the wall into sections. A working office wall does not have an area called Evidence and an area called Key Questions. It has things pinned where they were useful, with marks made by people who were thinking as they went.

One final thing

Write a date somewhere on the wall — on a sticky note, on the corner of the inventory, in the margin of the cave map. Something recent and specific: Thursday 14th or received 09:00. It does not need to correspond to anything precise in the fiction. Its purpose is to make the wall feel like it exists in time — like things have been arriving, and being read, and pinned up as they came in. Not a finished display. A room where work is already underway, and where the team has not yet worked out what it all means.

APPENDIX B — PRINTABLE COMMUNICATIONS AND TEXT ARTEFACTS

B1. The Museum Commission Letter

THE MUSEUM
Office of the Director

To the Exhibition Design Team

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for meeting me today.

I am writing to confirm the details of the Museum's commission.

As you know, archaeologists working near Thermopylae have entered a sealed cave that appears to have remained undisturbed for more than two thousand years. Inside, they discovered the remains of a young man, along with a shield, weapons and a number of smaller personal objects.

The archaeological team is still examining the site, and many questions remain unanswered. We do not yet know who the young man was, why he entered the cave or how the objects found beside him came to be there.

The Museum would like your Team to develop a temporary exhibition based on this discovery.

Your first task will be to study the evidence carefully. You will need to work from the archaeological records, investigate the objects and consider what they may tell us about the young man's life, beliefs and relationships. Some conclusions may be strongly supported. Others will remain possibilities.

As the work develops, we would also like the exhibition to explore the wider world in which he lived. Visitors should learn about hoplite warfare, life in Athens and Sparta, religious belief, the Battle of Thermopylae and some of the ideas, stories and achievements associated with ancient Greece.

The young man should remain at the centre of the exhibition. We do not want him to disappear beneath a general account of Greek civilisation. At the same time, his story offers a way into that larger world.

Please be clear about the difference between evidence and interpretation. Where something is known, say so. Where the evidence only suggests a possibility, visitors should understand that. Where nothing can be known for certain, it is important to leave the question open.

You will be responsible for deciding how the objects, research and possible accounts of the young man's life are presented to the public. The exhibition should be accurate, accessible and respectful.

I look forward to seeing how your initial ideas develop.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Voss

B2. Dr Voss — Brief Notification

From: c.voss@themuseum.org

To: Exhibition Design Team

Subject: Urgent update from site — new discovery

I wanted to reach you before the formal report arrives.

The archaeological team working at site CG-24/7 has been exploring a previously undocumented passage deeper into the cave system, beyond the first chamber. They entered it for the first time yesterday.

In a second, smaller chamber at the end of that passage, they have found a shield.

I will send you the full details as soon as I have them. In the meantime — I think you will understand why I felt this could not wait.

Dr C. Voss

B3. Dr Voss — Full Shield Description

From: c.voss@themuseum.org

To: Exhibition Design Team

Subject: RE: Urgent update from site — shield description and preliminary interpretation

Dear Team,

The shield was found in a second chamber approximately twelve metres beyond the first, accessible through a narrow connecting passage that had not been previously identified or explored. The chamber is smaller than the first — roughly four metres across — and contains no other significant finds at this stage. The shield was lying against the far wall.

It is an aspis — a hoplite shield — or rather, what remains of one. The wooden facing and leather grip have not survived, but the bronze shield boss is substantially intact, though heavily corroded and bearing significant battle damage. There are at least three distinct impact points on the surface, consistent with spear or sword strikes. This shield has seen action.

The most significant detail is this: traces of a lambda device are visible on the inner face of the boss. The lambda — the Greek letter associated with Lacedaemon, the region

controlled by Sparta — was used on Spartan shields. The traces are faint and the field director is cautious about drawing definitive conclusions, but the preliminary interpretation is that this shield is Spartan in origin.

Combined with the location of the cave above Thermopylae, the military equipment in the first chamber, and the age of the remains, the field director believes we are now in a position to say — carefully, and with appropriate qualification — that the young man in the cave was most probably a Spartan soldier.

This changes things considerably. I would welcome your thoughts at the earliest opportunity.

Dr Voss

B4. Commission Update — Object Research

From the Office of the Director

To the Exhibition Design Team

The archaeological team has completed its initial recording of the objects in the cave. We now have full photographic documentation and the field director's preliminary notes. The next stage is yours.

We need, for each object, two things: a clear account of what the historical and archaeological evidence tells us about it, and a short, honest attempt at its personal story — who might have carried it, what it might have meant. These two things must be kept clearly separate in everything you produce. The exhibition's integrity depends on visitors knowing which is which.

Please begin this work as a matter of priority.

B5. Dr Voss's Message — The Wider Greek World

Team —

I've been following your progress closely, and I'm very pleased with what you've created around the soldier and the cave. The object dossiers, the first-person accounts and the possible stories section all show the care and thought the commission was hoping for.

We are now reaching the point where the exhibition needs to begin taking shape as a whole. The commission has always had two parts. You have done substantial work on the first: the man, the cave, the objects and the possible story of his life. The second part now needs to develop alongside it: the wider world he belonged to, what his civilisation produced and why it still matters today.

To support this work, the museum's research department has prepared briefing materials covering six areas:

democracy and citizenship

philosophy

theatre

competitive sport

religious practice

architecture and art

These are not intended as background reading to be filed away. They are working documents: starting points for your own thinking. Use them in whatever way you find most helpful.

As you work, I'd like you to keep one question in mind:

How does the world this young man lived in connect to the world we live in today? Which of its ideas, beliefs, customs and achievements have survived, changed or continued to shape the way we think, live and organise society?

I trust your judgement on this.

C. Voss

B6. The Cave Inventory

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD RECORD

Site Reference: CG-24/7

Prepared by: Field Director, Central Greece Archaeological Survey

Status: PRELIMINARY — subject to revision as work continues

The following objects have been identified within the sealed cave at site CG-24/7. All items remain in situ pending full photographic and positional recording. Condition assessments are provisional.

MILITARY EQUIPMENT

• Bronze helmet (Corinthian type). Substantially intact. Some distortion to the cheek guards. Positioned approximately 30cm from the skull, to the right side.

• Bronze shield boss (central boss only; wooden facing and leather rim have not survived). Diameter approx. 90cm. Positioned to the left of the body.

• Iron spear tip. Length approx. 28cm. Significant corrosion. Found parallel to the body, to the right side.

• Iron spear butt-spike (sauroter). Heavily corroded. Found near the feet.

• Short iron sword (xiphos type). Blade partially preserved; handle has not survived. Found beneath the right hand.

PERSONAL OBJECTS

• Small bronze disc, possibly a coin or token. Diameter approx. 2cm. Markings unclear. Found near the mouth. NOTE: Significance uncertain. May be consistent with ritual practice; we cannot confirm this at this stage.

• Fragmentary remains of what may be a small clay figurine. Only partial — fewer than half the pieces appear to be present. Deity unidentifiable from fragments. Found near the left hand.

• Object of unknown type and material. Heavily degraded. Possibly organic in origin (leather or textile). Dimensions approx. 8cm × 4cm. Found on the chest area. NOTE: We do not know what this is.

• Small ceramic oil flask (lekythos). Intact. Decorated with a simple geometric pattern. No figure scene. Found near the right knee.

• Possible remains of a wreath or garland — fragmentary organic material only, consistent with dried plant matter. Found near the head. NOTE: Speculative at this stage; organic material very degraded.

B7. Model Evidential Account — Terracotta Oil Lamp

OBJECT: Terracotta oil lamp

Inventory reference: Not applicable — illustrative example

What the evidence tells us

Small terracotta oil lamps like this were very common in ancient Greece. They have been found in homes, temples and graves. They were filled with olive oil and had a wick made from twisted plant fibres. The light they made was small — enough to see by in a dark room or to carry from place to place.

Lamps seem to have had a meaning beyond just giving light. They appear in graves and sanctuaries, which suggests they were connected to religious practice. We cannot say for certain why this lamp was placed in the cave, or whether it was placed by the soldier himself or by someone else. We cannot say whether it was still full of oil when the cave was sealed, or whether it had been used. Those are questions the evidence raises but cannot answer.

B8. Model Possible Story — Terracotta Oil Lamp

A possible story

It was his younger brother who pressed the lamp into his hands the morning he left. Not a word — just the lamp, wrapped in a piece of cloth, small enough to fit inside a leather bag. Their mother had kept it burning in the entrance of the house every night since their father had gone to sea three years before and not returned. He had watched it from his bed as a child, the small steady flame at the edge of the dark.

He did not know whether he believed it kept anything at bay. He was not sure he believed in much, the way some of the others did — the ones who made offerings at every crossroads, who would not eat before they had spoken to the gods. But the lamp was his brother's, and his brother was seven years old, and the gift had been given in the particular seriousness of a child who has decided something matters.

He carried it without lighting it. He was not sure he would know what to ask for if he did.

APPENDIX C — STUDENT READING TEXTS

C1. The Persian Advance — Poem

Across the trembling earth a tidal wave of gold did stream,
A roaring, multi-nation host, a grand, exotic dream.
From Babylon the wealthy, down to Sardis' glittering floor,
The fairest flower of Asia marched away to distant war.

The King of Kings had cast a yoke across the roaring sea,
And chained the wild Hellespont to serve his tyranny.
A monstrous swarm that drained the land and drank the rivers dry,
They moved as one great leviathan beneath a burning sky.

Now down the mountain's jagged spine, the endless legions pour,
An avalanche of polished shields and chariots built for war.
Their archers draw their heavy bows, a dark and waiting cloud,
Prepared to blot the summer sun and spin a daylight shroud.

The columns flood the rocky coast and choke the narrow way,
Where sulphur springs bubble hot and salt-sprays turn to grey.
They press into the shadows of the high, unyielding pass,
Before the first spear is thrown, or bronze meets woven grass.

C2. Sparta and the Making of a Warrior

In the ancient Greek world, no city was more feared or more admired than Sparta. While Athens was known for its philosophers, its playwrights, and its democratic assembly, Sparta was known for something else entirely: its soldiers. To be Spartan was to be, above all else, a warrior — and the making of that warrior began at birth.

When a Spartan child was born, it was examined by the city's elders. A child judged strong enough was allowed to live and to be raised as a Spartan. A child judged too weak was left on the hillside. This was not considered cruel by the Spartans. It was considered necessary. Sparta could not afford weakness.

At the age of seven, Spartan boys were taken from their families and entered the agoge — the city's system of military training and education. They lived together in groups, slept on rushes they had cut themselves, and were given barely enough food to survive. They were expected to supplement their rations by stealing — and punished not for stealing, but for being caught. The agoge was not designed to make boys comfortable. It was designed to make them hard.

The training lasted until the age of eighteen, when a young man faced the most important test of his life. He was sent alone into the countryside with nothing — no food, no shelter, no weapons. He was expected to survive by his own skill and cunning, living off the land and avoiding detection. Only those who returned were considered ready to take their place in the phalanx. This ritual was called the krypteia.

Spartan women occupied a position unlike women anywhere else in the ancient Greek world. While Athenian women were largely confined to the home, Spartan women ran, wrestled, and trained alongside the young men. They managed the estates while their husbands were at war. They were expected to be strong — because strong mothers produced strong soldiers. When a Spartan mother sent her son to battle, she was said to have handed him his shield with the words: come back with it, or on it.

To be Spartan was to belong entirely to the city. Your body, your training, your courage, your death — all of these were owed to Sparta. In return, Sparta gave you something no other city could offer: the certainty that you would be remembered. A Spartan who died in battle was buried with his name on the stone. That was not common in the ancient world. Most soldiers — most people — disappeared without a trace. The Spartans believed that a good death was the only monument a person needed.

C3. Athens and the Making of a Citizen

In the ancient Greek world, no city was more celebrated for its ideas than Athens. While Sparta was known for its warriors, Athens was known for something else entirely: its citizens. To be Athenian was to be, above all else, a participant in public life — and the making of that participant began in childhood.

Athenian boys were educated at home until the age of six or seven, when they were sent to school. Unlike Sparta, where the city took control of a child's upbringing, Athenian education remained in the hands of the family. Boys learned to read and write, to play music, and to develop the physical strength that would make them useful soldiers. They were trained to argue, to persuade, and to speak in public — skills that would matter as much as physical courage in Athenian life.

At the heart of Athens was the agora — the public square where citizens gathered to trade, to meet, and above all to talk. It was in the agora that democracy was practised and debated. Every male citizen of Athens had the right to speak in the assembly and to vote on the decisions that shaped the city. That right was not merely permitted — it was expected. A citizen who took no part in public life was regarded with suspicion.

Athenian soldiers — hoplites, like those of every other Greek city — were citizen-soldiers. They fought because the city needed them to, and they returned home when the fighting was done. Unlike Spartan soldiers, who belonged entirely to the state, Athenian soldiers retained their individual lives, their families, and their property. The city asked for their courage. It did not ask for everything.

Athenian society was not equal. Women played no part in public or political life. Enslaved people — who made up a significant portion of the population — had no rights at all. The democracy that Athens celebrated was available only to free male citizens. That limitation is part of the honest account of what Athens was.

APPENDIX D — OBJECT RESEARCH CARDS

D1. BRONZE HELMET (Corinthian type)

What we know: The Corinthian helmet was the standard hoplite helmet of the classical period, cast in a single piece of bronze and designed to cover the entire face except for the eyes and mouth. It offered significant protection but severely limited hearing and peripheral vision — a deliberate trade, since the phalanx formation made individual awareness less important than collective protection. This helmet is substantially intact, with some distortion to the cheek guards. It was found approximately thirty centimetres from the skull, to the right side — not on the head.

What we are still asking: Why was the helmet not on his head when he died? Was it removed deliberately — by him, or by someone else? Does its position suggest he was resting, or that someone arranged him after death? The inventory cannot answer these questions. The exhibition will need to acknowledge them.

D2. BRONZE SHIELD BOSS

What we know: The hoplite shield — the aspis — was the defining piece of equipment of Greek citizen-soldiers. The central bronze boss is all that survives here; the wooden facing and leather rim have decayed. A full aspis weighed between six and eight kilograms and was carried on the left arm, with a leather strap at the elbow and a grip at the rim. The shield was not merely personal protection — in the phalanx formation, each soldier's shield protected the soldier to their left. To abandon your shield was a serious act of cowardice in Greek civic culture. The phrase come back with your shield, or on it is associated with Spartan mothers.

What we are still asking: The shield was found to the left of the body. Is that consistent with how a soldier at rest would place it, or does it suggest something else? We do not know.

D3. IRON SPEAR TIP AND SAUROTER

What we know: The hoplite spear — the doru — was the primary weapon of the phalanx, typically between two and three metres long. The iron tip (found parallel to the body, to the right) was used for thrusting in formation. The sauroter — the bronze or iron butt-spike at the other end — served as a counterbalance and as a secondary weapon if the shaft broke. It could also be driven into the ground to brace the spear. Both tip and

sauroter show significant corrosion, which is consistent with long burial in a sealed environment.

What we are still asking: The spear shaft has not survived — wood rarely does over two millennia. The tip and sauroter are all that remain. Does the position of the tip, parallel to the body, suggest the spear was placed deliberately alongside him? Or is this simply where it fell?

D4. SHORT IRON SWORD (xiphos type)

What we know: The xiphos was a short, double-edged iron sword used as a secondary weapon when the spear was lost or broken. It was typically between forty-five and sixty centimetres long. The blade here is partially preserved; the handle has not survived. It was found beneath the right hand — a placement that has been noted specifically by the field director.

What we are still asking: The sword beneath the right hand is a detail the field director has flagged. Is this consistent with how a soldier died — still holding his weapon — or does it suggest the sword was placed there deliberately? The exhibition will need to address this honestly.

D5. SMALL CERAMIC OIL FLASK (lekythos)

What we know: The lekythos was a common vessel in ancient Greek life, used to store olive oil for personal use — anointing the body, caring for equipment, ritual purposes. In the context of burials and grave goods, lekythoi were frequently associated with offerings to the dead and with preparation of the body. This one is intact — unusual, given the fragility of ceramic — and decorated with a simple geometric pattern rather than a figure scene. It was found near the right knee.

What we are still asking: The lekythos is one of the most legible objects in the cave — its association with burial ritual is well established. But we do not know whether it was placed by the soldier himself or by someone else. We do not know what it contained. We do not know whether the geometric decoration had personal significance or was simply the style available to him.

D6. SMALL BRONZE DISC

What we know: The disc is approximately two centimetres in diameter, with markings that are currently unclear. It was found near the mouth. In ancient Greek funerary practice, it was customary in some traditions to place a coin in or near the mouth of the dead — an obol for Charon, the ferryman who carried souls across the river Styx to the underworld. The field director has noted that this object may be consistent with ritual practice but cannot confirm this.

What we are still asking: Is this a coin? Is it a token of some other kind? The markings are unclear. If it is an obol for Charon, who placed it — him, or someone else? And if someone else placed it, what does that tell us about how he came to be in the cave? The field director cannot answer these questions. Neither can we, yet.

D7. FRAGMENTARY CLAY FIGURINE

What we know: Small clay figurines of deities were common personal objects in ancient Greece, used in household worship and carried as protection or devotion. Only partial fragments survive here — fewer than half the original pieces — and the deity cannot be identified from what remains. The figurine was found near the left hand.

What we are still asking: Which deity was this? The fragments do not tell us. The choice of deity — had we been able to identify it — might have told us something about the soldier's beliefs, his city of origin, or the specific protection he sought. Without that identification, we have an object that tells us he carried devotion with him, but not the object of that devotion.

D8. POSSIBLE WREATH REMAINS

What we know: Fragmentary organic material — dried plant matter — was found near the head. The field director describes this as speculative at this stage, since organic material degrades significantly over two millennia and positive identification is not possible. Wreaths were significant objects in ancient Greek culture: awarded to victors in athletic and military contests, used in religious ceremony, and placed on the dead. If this is a wreath, it raises questions the inventory cannot answer.

What we are still asking: Is this a wreath? If so, what kind — olive, laurel, myrtle? Was it placed on him, or did he bring it? Was it an award, a gift, or part of a ritual preparation? The field director is cautious. The exhibition should be too.

D9. OBJECT OF UNKNOWN TYPE — FOUND ON THE CHEST

What we know: This object is approximately eight centimetres by four centimetres. It is heavily degraded. It may be organic in origin — leather or textile — but this has not been confirmed. It was found on the chest area. The field director's note reads simply: We do not know what this is.

What we are still asking: Everything. What is it made of? What was its function? Was it placed deliberately on his chest, or did it end up there by accident? Is it a personal object — something folded, something wrapped, something sewn? Is it connected to the other personal objects, or is it entirely separate in its significance? This object is the most important unanswered question in the cave. The exhibition cannot ignore it and cannot explain it.

APPENDIX E — MUSEUM RESEARCH BRIEFINGS

E1. DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP

In the fifth century BCE, Athens and Sparta offered very different answers to the question of who should govern a city. In Sparta, political power rested largely with a small group of kings, elders and officials. Ordinary Spartan citizens had only a limited role in shaping decisions. Athens developed a more direct form of democracy, in which male citizens met, debated and voted on the laws and policies of the city.

The Athenian assembly — the ekklesia — met on the Pnyx, a hillside open to the sky. Any free male citizen could attend, speak and vote. In Athens, citizenship involved public participation: a citizen was expected not only to fight for the city when required, but also to argue, listen, judge and help decide its future. The word democracy is Greek: demos, the people; kratos, power.

This idea did not remain confined to Athens. Although modern democracies are very different, their parliaments, assemblies and voting systems still carry traces of the Athenian belief that citizens should have a voice in government.

The contrast with Sparta should not make Athens appear entirely free or equal. Athenian democracy excluded women, enslaved people and those who were not citizens by birth. Most people living in Athens could neither speak nor vote in the assembly. The demos did not mean everyone.

E2. PHILOSOPHY AND PUBLIC REASONING

Ancient Greece produced something that had not existed before in quite this form: a tradition of asking questions in public, rigorously, and following the argument wherever it led. Socrates walked the agora — the marketplace and civic heart of Athens — and asked questions of anyone who would engage with him. He did not lecture. He questioned. What is courage? What is justice? What do we actually know, as opposed to what we merely believe?

His student Plato, and Plato's student Aristotle, built on that questioning tradition to produce bodies of thought that shaped science, ethics, politics, and the theory of knowledge for two thousand years. The medieval universities of Europe taught Aristotle. The scientific method carries the inheritance of Greek reasoning. So does the practice of asking what a word really means before using it.

The tradition is also humbling. Socrates was tried and executed by the Athenian democracy for corrupting the young and failing to honour the gods. The city that invented public reasoning also silenced its most famous practitioner.

E3. THEATRE AND STORYTELLING

In the ancient Greek world, stories were one of the main ways people understood their gods, their heroes and themselves. Long before the great Athenian theatres were built, poets recited myths about the Trojan War and the dangerous journeys that followed it. The most famous of these stories were collected in two epic poems attributed to Homer: the Iliad and the Odyssey.

The Iliad tells of anger, honour and loss during the final years of the Trojan War. The Odyssey follows Odysseus as he struggles for ten years to return home. His journey brings him into conflict with gods, monsters and his own weaknesses. He escapes the Cyclops through cunning, resists the song of the Sirens, survives shipwreck and temptation, and returns to a home that has changed in his absence. Odysseus is not simply a warrior. He is a storyteller, a deceiver, a husband, a father and a survivor. His story asks enduring questions about identity, loyalty, courage and the meaning of home.

In the fifth century BCE, the Athenians transformed this rich tradition of myth into public theatre. They built large open-air theatres and held festivals at which playwrights competed before thousands of citizens. Writers such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides retold familiar myths, but changed the emphasis, questioned the heroes and explored the consequences of their choices. Tragedy and comedy developed as distinct forms of dramatic storytelling.

Greek theatre was therefore more than entertainment. It was a public way of examining difficult questions: What makes someone heroic? Can cleverness become dishonesty? Which duty matters most when family, city and conscience pull in different directions? The stories of Odysseus and the other heroes survived because each generation found new meanings in them.

E4. COMPETITIVE SPORT AND THE GAMES

Every four years, athletes and spectators travelled from across the Greek world to Olympia for a religious festival held in honour of Zeus. The earliest recorded Games, traditionally dated to 776 BCE, consisted of a single short foot race. Over time, the programme expanded and the festival grew from one day to five.

Events included several running races: the short stadion, the longer diaulos and dolichos, and a race in which competitors carried shields and wore armour. Athletes also competed in wrestling, boxing and the pankration, a fierce contest combining wrestling and striking. The pentathlon included running, jumping, discus, javelin and wrestling. Horse and chariot races took place in the hippodrome, while religious processions, sacrifices and feasting remained central to the festival.

Competitors were generally freeborn Greek males. Women did not compete in the main athletic events, although a woman could be declared an Olympic victor if she owned the horses that won a chariot race. The Spartan princess Kyniska became the first recorded female Olympic champion in this way. Women also held a separate festival at Olympia in honour of Hera.

The victors received no gold medals. Their official prize was a wreath of wild olive, but victory brought lasting fame to the athlete, his family and his city. Some champions became legendary. Milo of Croton won the Olympic wrestling contest six times, while Leonidas of Rhodes achieved twelve victories in running events. Their names were remembered for centuries as examples of extraordinary strength, discipline and endurance.

During the festival, a sacred truce was announced to allow athletes and pilgrims to travel safely. The Games did not end Greek rivalries, but for a few days competition replaced warfare, and excellence in sport became an offering to the gods.

E5. RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND BELIEF

The ancient Greeks understood the world as a place shaped by powerful gods who behaved in recognisably human ways. They loved, argued, deceived, competed and took revenge. Zeus ruled from Mount Olympus as king of the gods, but his authority did not prevent conflict within his own family. His wife Hera was frequently angered by his affairs and sometimes punished the mortal women and children connected to them. His brothers Poseidon and Hades governed the sea and the underworld, while Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite and the other Olympians each held power over different parts of human life.

The gods were not distant. They intervened in wars, journeys, marriages and family disputes. Athena protected some heroes and guided Odysseus on his return home. Poseidon opposed him and prolonged his voyage. Apollo could bring healing or disease. Ares represented the violence of battle, while Zeus was believed to oversee justice, oaths and hospitality. People made offerings, performed sacrifices and consulted oracles because divine favour could bring success, while offending a god might bring disaster.

Greek myths explored these unpredictable relationships between gods and humans. They told of Heracles completing impossible labours, Perseus defeating Medusa and Theseus entering the labyrinth on Crete to kill the Minotaur — a creature with the body of a man and the head of a bull. The Minotaur was not a god, but part of a story about punishment, power and the consequences of human and divine actions. Such myths were retold in homes, temples, poetry, pottery and theatre.

Religion was woven into everyday and civic life. Before battle, sacrifices were made and omens interpreted. A soldier might carry a figurine, amulet or small offering connected to a protective deity. Burial practices also reflected beliefs about the afterlife. A coin placed near the mouth of the dead could be connected to Charon, the ferryman believed to carry souls across to the underworld, although this practice varied across regions and periods.

For the team: look again at what the soldier carried. The bronze disc near the mouth. The fragmentary figurine. The possible wreath. The lekythos. Does this briefing change what we think we might be able to say about those objects — carefully, in the language of might?

E6. ARCHITECTURE, ART AND AESTHETIC LEGACY

The ancient Greeks developed ideas about art and architecture that have influenced buildings for more than 2,000 years. Greek architects wanted their temples to look balanced, strong and beautiful, so they used careful measurements, symmetry and repeating proportions.

Greek buildings are often recognised by their columns. Doric columns are plain and sturdy. Ionic columns are slimmer and have curled shapes at the top. Corinthian columns are more decorative, with carved leaves. These styles are still used on museums, banks, universities and government buildings today.

Greek architects also studied mathematical proportion. Some buildings, including the Parthenon in Athens, have been linked to the Golden Section, a ratio believed to create a pleasing balance between different parts. Historians debate exactly how deliberately the Greeks used it, but proportion was clearly very important to them.

The Greeks also created sculptures showing idealised human bodies and painted pottery with stories of gods, heroes, war and everyday life.

However, most surviving objects belonged to wealthy or powerful people. The possessions and stories of ordinary people, including soldiers like the young man in the cave, were less likely to survive or be studied.

For the team: the objects in the cave are not grand. A plain lekythos with a geometric pattern. A fragmentary figurine. A corroded spear tip. What does it mean to put these objects in a building whose architecture may itself carry the inheritance of the world that produced them?

APPENDIX F — IMAGE, SLIDE AND SOURCE GUIDE

F1. Episode 1 — Slides and Images

Slide 2 — Four buildings in the neoclassical style

Search term: “neoclassical architecture public buildings”. Suggested sources: Wikimedia Commons, the Getty Images editorial collection and the British Library image archive. Look for a museum, theatre, court building and parliament that draw on the same visual language. The British Museum, the Panthéon in Paris, the Lincoln Memorial and St George’s Hall in Liverpool would work well together.

Slide 3 — The Parthenon

Search term: “Parthenon Athens photograph”. Suggested sources: Wikimedia Commons and the UNESCO World Heritage image library.

Slide 4 — Museum exterior

AI image prompt: A photograph-style image of the exterior of a large neoclassical museum building, daytime, clear sky. Wide stone steps lead up to a portico with tall Ionic columns. The building is pale stone, slightly weathered. A banner hangs between two columns, too small to read. A few figures are visible on the steps — small, suggesting scale. Landscape format, taken from street level, slightly to one side so the columns recede into the frame. The atmosphere is institutional and serious, with a quality of something important happening inside.

Slide 6 — CCTV image of Dr Voss at reception

AI image prompt: A grainy CCTV footage still image, 16:9 format, high angle looking down, timestamp visible in the bottom corner, monochrome with slight green tint. A tall woman stands at a reception desk in what appears to be a museum or professional building. She is leaning slightly forward over the counter. A leather satchel sits on the desk beside her, listing to one side, overfull, with a rolled document jutting from the top. She is looking down at something small in her hand — a card. Her hair is loosely pinned up. Her jacket is slightly creased. The reception desk is clean and institutional. The corridor behind her is empty. The image has the slightly blurred, wide-angle distortion characteristic of security camera footage. Overhead fluorescent lighting. The atmosphere is quiet and functional.

Slide 7 — Cave entrance photograph

Search term: "limestone cave entrance Greece". Suggested sources: Wikimedia Commons and Getty Images editorial. Look for a realistic cave mouth in a rocky hillside rather than a dramatic or cinematic image.

Slide 8 — Cave map

AI image prompt: A hand-drawn schematic map of a small cave system, black ink on cream paper, slightly aged. The map shows a main entrance tunnel leading to a narrow passage marked with an arrow and the label "tight squeeze". Beyond the passage is a wider chamber, roughly oval, with a simple sketch of a prone figure inside it. The scale is approximate and the style suggests a field drawing made by a caver or archaeologist — functional rather than decorative. Small annotations indicate north, approximate measurements and a note reading "chamber undisturbed". Landscape format.

F2. Episodes 2 and 5 — Artefact Reference Images

Corinthian bronze helmet: Search "Corinthian helmet ancient Greece". Suggested sources: British Museum online collection and Wikimedia Commons.

Hoplite shield boss: Search "hoplite shield bronze boss ancient Greece". Suggested source: Wikimedia Commons. Students should see only the bronze boss rather than a complete aspis.

Iron spear tip and butt-spike: Search “ancient Greek spear tip iron” and “sauroter spear butt spike”. Suggested sources: Wikimedia Commons and Olympia Archaeological Museum collection images.

Xiphos short sword: Search “xiphos ancient Greek sword”. Suggested source: Wikimedia Commons. Note that the handle has not survived.

Lekythos ceramic flask: Search “lekythos geometric ancient Greece”. Suggested source: Metropolitan Museum of Art online collection. Look for early geometric examples rather than white-ground lekythoi.

Small bronze disc: Search “ancient Greek bronze coin” or “ancient Greek bronze coin obol”. Suggested sources: Wikimedia Commons and British Museum online collection.

Clay figurine fragment: Search “ancient Greek terracotta figurine fragment”. Suggested source: Ashmolean Museum online collection.

Possible wreath remains: No reference image is needed. Students work from the inventory description.

Unidentified object on the chest: No reference image should be provided. Students work from the inventory description alone.

F3. Episode 7 — Athens and the Field Archaeologist

Images of Athenian civic life

Search term: “ancient Athens agora citizens pottery red figure”. Suggested sources: British Museum online collection and Wikimedia Commons. Look for citizens in discussion, in the assembly and in daily life rather than architecture alone.

Dr Alexios Papadimitriou

AI image prompt: A photograph-style image of a Greek man in his mid-forties, standing in what appears to be a professional office or meeting room. He is wearing practical fieldwork clothing — a dark shirt and light jacket. He carries a worn leather bag over one shoulder. His expression is focused and serious, the expression of someone who has come

a long way to say something carefully. He has dark hair, slightly greying at the temples, and the weathered look of someone who works outdoors. Portrait format, natural light from one side.

The following four texts are the drafts read to the team in Episode 9 for review and editorial comment. They are reproduced here exactly as they appear on the slides, for ease of reference during the editorial meeting. The teacher should read them aloud, not display them, unless the class cannot follow the reading.

G1 — The Entrance Narrative

THE YOUNG SOLDIER

In 480 BCE, a Persian army invaded Greece. At a narrow coastal pass in northern Greece called Thermopylae, a small force of Greek soldiers held it for three days. On the third day, they were outflanked and overwhelmed. Most of the soldiers who stayed to make the final stand at the pass did not survive.

Recently, archaeologists excavating in the mountains above Thermopylae discovered a sealed cave. Inside were the remains of a young man — probably between eighteen and twenty years old — who had died there, alone, with a small collection of personal objects.

In the connected chamber, they found a shield.

We do not know who he was. We do not know why he was in the cave. We do not know what happened between the battle and the cave, or how long he survived after the battle ended.

What we know is what the evidence tells us. What we imagine is clearly labelled as imagination. The visitor who moves through this exhibition will encounter both — and will be trusted to tell the difference.

G2 — Statement of Approach

HOW WE HAVE APPROACHED THE EVIDENCE

This exhibition distinguishes throughout between three kinds of statement.

What the evidence tells us: statements grounded in the physical evidence from the cave, the field documentation, and the archaeological and historical record. These are things we can say with reasonable confidence.

What the evidence suggests: statements that are consistent with the evidence and with what we know about the ancient world, but that go beyond what the evidence directly confirms. These are things that could be true.

Possible stories: imaginative writing that is historically honest — nothing in it that could not have happened — but that is explicitly imagined. These are things we have invented, carefully, in order to give the young man in the cave a human presence in the exhibition.

These three kinds of statement are clearly identified throughout. The visitor is not asked to accept any of them without knowing which kind it is.

G3 — A Note on the Soldier

THE YOUNG SOLDIER — A NOTE

The young man in the cave was between eighteen and twenty years old when he died. He was a trained soldier — the equipment confirms that. He died in a sealed cave above one of the most significant battlefields in the ancient world.

The shield in the connected chamber carries the device of Sparta. We have not concluded from this that he was Spartan. The evidence does not confirm it. But we have considered what it would mean if he were — what his city would have made of his situation, and what he might have made of it himself.

He had a bronze disc near his mouth. He had a fragmentary figurine near his left hand. He had an object on his chest that we still cannot identify.

We do not know his name. We have not given him one.

G4 — A Note on the Unknown Object

THE OBJECT WE CANNOT IDENTIFY

Object TY-009 was found on the chest of the young soldier, between the sternum and the left shoulder. It has a metal component — bronze — and an organic component that has partially survived. It does not match any known item of military equipment, personal adornment, or ritual use in the archaeological record of the period.

We do not know what it is.

We have displayed it exactly as it was found. We have not attempted to reconstruct it. We have not attempted to name it.

> Someone put it on his chest. Or he put it there himself. Either way, it was the thing closest to his heart when he died.
>
> If you have seen an object like this before, we would like to hear from you.

APPENDIX H — FULL ORACY OBJECTIVES

H1. Episode 1 — The Meeting

Cognitive: Students organise inferences from the CCTV image and Dr Voss's description, holding conclusions provisionally. When annotating the inventory, they prioritise details, justify choices and explain why one object may be more significant than another.

Linguistic: Students work within a professional register, distinguishing what the commission letter states from what it implies and selecting vocabulary carefully when taking notes and discussing evidence.

Social and Emotional: Paired discussion requires students to listen, combine perspectives into a shared question and represent that question to the group. Open discussion asks them to commit tentatively while remaining willing to revise their thinking.

H2. Episode 2 — Inside the Cave

Cognitive: Students organise observations into a line of reasoning, moving from individual details to patterns and then to provisional interpretation without closing the question too quickly.

Linguistic: Students use accurate names for artefacts and the language of uncertainty: might suggest, could indicate, one possibility is, and we cannot yet say.

Social and Emotional: Students contribute to a shared reading of the reconstructed cave and revise interpretations when others notice details they have missed.

H3. Episode 3 — The Pass

Cognitive: Twilight-voice prompts ask students to organise sensory and emotional experience into language. They make selective judgements while annotating the poem and choose one sentence that feels true when sharing.

Linguistic: Students move from external observation to immediate first-person experience, using different registers for different phases of the writing.

Social and Emotional: The shared reading asks students to listen without evaluation and to receive each contribution respectfully.

H4. Episode 4 — The Night and the Stone

Cognitive: Students evaluate Ephialtes's account and decide whether it is trustworthy. They make and justify design decisions when developing a memorial.

Linguistic: The inscription task requires precise selection, revision and economy within a formal, permanent register.

Social and Emotional: Students interpret memorials without prior explanation from their makers and articulate what they see honestly and sensitively.

H5. Episode 5 — Stories the Objects Carry

Cognitive: Paired discussion asks students to reason about what an object can and cannot reveal before committing ideas to writing. Sharing requires them to defend the distinction between evidence and invention.

Linguistic: Students deliberately separate evidential language from imaginative language and use professional phrases such as may have been, the evidence suggests, and we cannot confirm.

Social and Emotional: Students present their work as part of a curatorial meeting and respond to questions and observations without defensiveness.

H6. Episode 6 — The Spartan

Cognitive: Students revise a working hypothesis in response to the discovery of the shield, updating rather than abandoning what they previously thought.

Linguistic: Students move from the authoritative third person of the museum text to the intimate first person of remembered experience.

Social and Emotional: Group enactment requires negotiation over which detail matters, how the moment is represented and how the group commits collectively to the work.

H7. Episode 7 — Two Cities

Cognitive: Students formulate precise questions for the field archaeologist, listen to incomplete answers and decide how to work with remaining uncertainty. They test possible stories against the evidence.

Linguistic: Students write and speak in a register that is honest about uncertainty while remaining useful and authoritative for a public audience.

Social and Emotional: Groups listen to competing proposals, test them against evidence and commit collectively to one possible version while acknowledging alternatives.

H8. Episode 8 — What This World Gave Us

Cognitive: Students evaluate which links between the soldier's world and the modern world are supported and which overreach the evidence.

Linguistic: Students use precise vocabulary including democracy, agora, phalanx, polis, symposium, oracle and theatrical mask, while maintaining appropriate tentativeness.

Social and Emotional: Team deliberation requires students to challenge claims, defend positions and revise ideas in response to colleagues.

H9. Episode 9 — The Exhibition

Cognitive: Students critically evaluate draft exhibition texts, identifying where claims overstep evidence, where framing is insufficient and where revisions are needed.

Linguistic: Students adjust register for a public audience, speak precisely about historical material and respond to visitors' questions.

Social and Emotional: The public exhibition creates genuine accountability to an audience beyond the classroom.

APPENDIX I — USE OF THE KEYS FROM TRY THIS

Each episode draws on one or more of the practical dramatic inquiry keys described in Try This: Unlocking Learning with Imagination by Tim Taylor and Viv Aitken. The keys are embedded in the teaching sequence rather than listed separately in this planning. Teachers who want further explanation of a particular convention, its purpose and how it can be adapted should refer to the relevant sections of Try This.

The world-building artefacts are the physical and written objects students produce across the arc that accumulate into the exhibition. This appendix describes what should be produced in each episode, how it should be stored and displayed during the arc, and how it contributes to the exhibition.

J1 — Episode 1: The Commission

- The cave inventory: a printed or handwritten copy of the inventory from the commission letter, annotated by students during Episode 1. Store in the evidence file.
- First questions: student inquiry book entries recording the team's first questions about the commission and the evidence. These will be returned to in Episode 9.

J2 — Episode 2: What the Inventory Tells Us

- The working wall: a class display accumulating images, maps, copies of key documents, and student annotations. Begin in Episode 2 and add to it across the arc. It should be visible and accessible throughout.
- Object investigation sheets: student notes and sketches from the inventory analysis. Store in the evidence file.

J3 — Episode 3: Inside the Cave

- The cave reconstruction: the physical space built during Episode 3. Photographs of the reconstruction should be taken and added to the working wall. If the reconstruction is dismantled, the photographs become the record.
- The cave map: a large-format drawing of the cave layout, showing the position of each object and the location of the soldier. Display on the working wall.

J4 — Episode 4: The Night Before

- Written accounts: individual student pieces produced in Episode 4. Display selected accounts on the working wall. All accounts are stored in the evidence file and are candidates for inclusion in the exhibition.

J5 — Episode 5: Stories the Objects Carry

- Object dossiers: the two-part documents produced in Episode 5. These are the primary object label content for the exhibition. Store in the evidence file.
- Film clip descriptions: brief written descriptions of the film clips enacted in the sharing session. Store in the evidence file.

J6 — Episode 6: The Spartan

- Annotated museum text: student copies of the Sparta text with annotations. Store in the evidence file.
- Drawn moments: student drawings from the enactment. Display on the working wall.
- First-person rewrites: individual student pieces produced in Episode 6. Store in the evidence file.

J7 — Episode 7: Two Cities

- Comparison notes: student inquiry book entries comparing Athens and Sparta. Store in the evidence file.
- Film-clip descriptions: written descriptions of the Episode 7 film clips. Store in the evidence file.
- Possible-story exhibition texts: the primary possible story content for the exhibition's possible stories section. Store in the evidence file.

J8 — Episode 8: What This World Gave Us

- Briefing annotations: student-annotated copies of the legacy briefings (E1–E6). Store in the evidence file.
- Religious practice notes: student inquiry book entries following the return to the cave objects. Store in the evidence file.
- Myth panels: student exhibition panel drafts from Episode 8. These go into the mythic images section of the exhibition. Store in the evidence file.

J9 — Episode 9: The Exhibition

- All materials from J1–J8 are candidates for inclusion in the exhibition. The team selects, edits, and organises them.
- Exhibition design board: a floor plan of the exhibition drawn by the team, showing the sequence of sections and the position of major displays.
- Exhibition guide: a short folded document for visitors, containing the entrance narrative, the statement of approach, a map, and brief section notes.
- Acknowledgements panel: a panel naming all contributors to the exhibition.

The inquiry books themselves — the record of the arc from Episode 1 to Episode 9 — are not displayed in the exhibition, but they are the most complete record of the team's process. They should be available for visitors to look through if they wish.