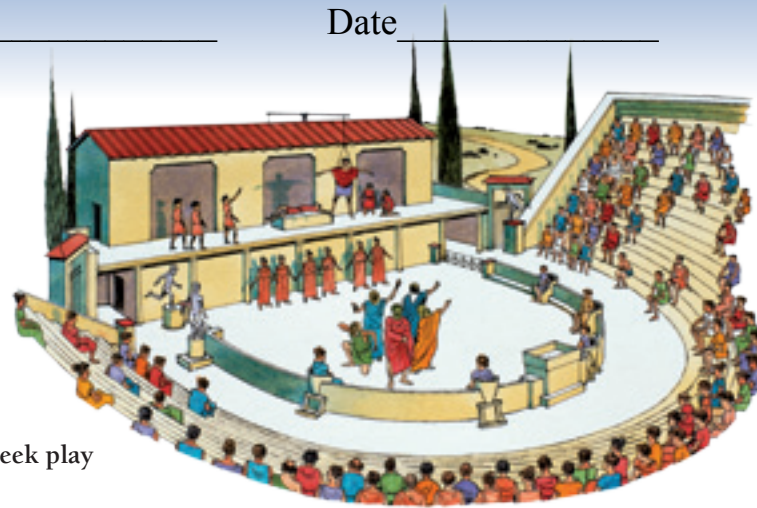


# Greek theater

Many words that we use to describe elements of the theater—including drama, scene, comedy, and tragedy—come from Greek. This is because the Greeks invented theater in Athens over 2,500 years ago.

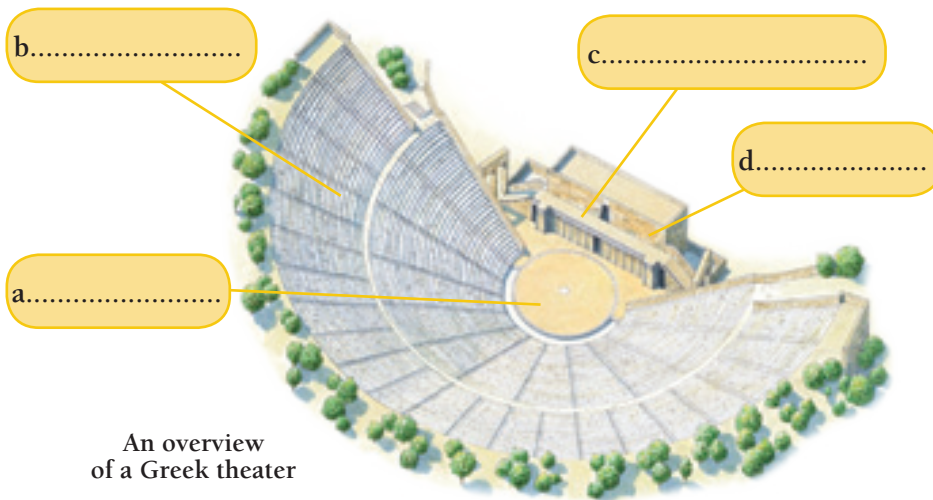


A Greek play

## At the theater

Greek theaters were always built in a semicircle. They were open air and set into a hillside with fantastic views of the countryside behind the stage.

The picture shows an aerial view of a theater. Read the description of a theater, then add the labels to the picture.



An overview of a Greek theater

## Theater facts

- The circular **orchestra** in the center was used for dancing and singing, often performed by a chorus.
- The actors performed on a **stage**, which was a raised platform above the orchestra.
- The building behind the stage was called the **skene**. It had at least one doorway through which the actors could enter and exit. It was decorated to suit the play being performed.
- Passageways, called **paradoi**, from the sides on to the stage and orchestra were used by the actors and by the audience when they wanted to enter or leave the theater.
- The sloping viewing area was called the **theatron**. The seats were the stone steps, and viewers would bring their own cushions.

## All the world's a stage

Greek plays had certain rules. There were just two forms of play—tragedy and comedy. All the actors were men. They wore masks with exaggerated expressions. The play had a chorus—a few actors who sang and danced. Plays began with a prologue and ended with an exodus sung by the chorus.

1. In what season did the festival of Dionysus take place?  
.....
2. What is the name of the group of actors who sang and danced?  
.....
3. Where did the audience sit?  
.....
4. Who was the founder of comedy?  
.....
5. What started a Greek play?  
.....



## Did you know?

The playwright Sophocles decided to paint the skene with images from nature to suit a play he was presenting. This started the art of theater scenery.

# Activity Answers

Greek theater

All the world's a stage

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

*webbv*

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