

**ASSIGNMENT: Greek Vase Paintings: Using Visual Evidence**

Like detectives, historians examine many kinds of evidence for clues to the past. One valuable source of information is visual evidence like paintings, statues, drawings, and photographs. The ancient Greeks left many written records communicating to us how they lived. They also left a visual record of their lives in their pottery, buildings, and stone carvings. The Greeks decorated their pottery with scenes from daily life as well as stories of gods and goddesses. Paintings on Greek vases are useful because they show how the Greeks saw themselves, how they dressed, what games they played, and what events they thought were important. When studying visual evidence, remember you are seeing only what the artist wants us to see. So study each piece carefully. Follow the steps below to conduct your study.



**Assignment Purpose:** to gain experience using visual evidence to construct a picture of the past.

**Procedure**

1). Create a *Google Doc*. Name it Unit\_5\_Greek\_Paintings. Share the document with your teacher giving them full editing privileges ([rdelaine@lcbi.sk.ca](mailto:rdelaine@lcbi.sk.ca)). Create written answers for each of the questions below. Ensure answers are sufficiently detailed (do not try to pass off any single word answers and always write using complete sentences). Make sure you organize your answers according to the headings below.

1). **Identify the subject of the painting.** Sometimes when you look at a picture two or three times, you see details you did not notice at first. a). Who is shown in the painting? b). What do you think the people are doing?

2. **Study the visual evidence to learn about a particular people, event, or development.** As you look at details in the painting, think about what they tell you about the subject. a). What does the vase painting tell you about the clothing worn by Greek women? b). What do the carvings on the wall suggest about water fountains in Greek towns?

3. **Evaluate the visual evidence to decide if it is a reliable source.** One picture or one piece of evidence seldom tells all there is to know about a subject. An artist may have painted it with a specific purpose and left out some details. You have to decide if the evidence is a reliable source. a). Based on what you know about Greek life, does the vase painting seem accurate? b). In what way is this vase a form of “limited evidence”<sup>1</sup> about Greek life? c). Using the painting as evidence, draw two conclusions (insights) about what life was like in ancient Greece.

<sup>1</sup> Limited evidence suggests the absence of a complete picture and that any conclusion reached using this evidence is bound to be incomplete.