The Persian Wars
Despite their cultural ties, the Greek city-states were often in conflict with one another.

The threat of the powerful Persian empire united the Greek city-states.
The Persian Wars: Overview

United, the city-states defeated the Persians and ended the threat of Persian invasions.
The First Persian War
546 B.C. E.

• Cause
  – Persian Empire conquers Greek colonies in Ionia

• Response
  – Ionians refuse to pay tribute and begin to rebel
  – Secretly the Athenians send weapons and a ship to aid the rebellion
The First Persian War
546 B.C. E.

• Result:
  – Darius I of Persia crushes rebellion
  – He leaves Athens alone but...

Greeks vs. Persians
The Second Persian War 490 B.C. E.

• Cause
  – Revenge for Athenian interference
    • Every day, a servant said, “Master, Remember the Athenians”, to King Darius!
The Second Persian War 490 B.C.E.

• **Results**
  – Battle of Marathon
    • Outnumbered Greeks defeat Persians
    • 6,400 Persians die
    • Pheidippides carries message of victory home to Athens 26 miles
    • This is the distance of a marathon today.
    • He shouted,
      
      “Rejoice, we conquer.”
      
      Then he died.
The Second Persian War 490 B.C.E.

• Results
  – Built a fleet of faster ships to prepare for another attack
  – Athens asks other city-states to form an alliance (1st ever in Greek history)
Third Persian War 480 B.C.E.

- **Cause**
  - Persians want revenge
  - They come after Athens by land and by sea

**Major Battles**
- **Battle of Thermopylae**
  - Led by Spartan King Leonidas
  - 6,000 Spartans vs. 200,000 Persians
  - Athens is burned
Third Persian War 480 B.C.E.

Major Battles

– Strait of Salamis: Naval Battle where the Persian fleet sunk. They are forced to retreat!

– Battle of Plataea

A year later, final Persian forces defeated
Third Persian War: The Outcome!

**Results**

- Athens increases its status among the city-states.
- Athens wants a permanent alliance with the city-states but with them remaining in charge.
- Sparta is upset!
The Delian League Formed

- Alliance headed by Pericles of Athens
- To defend further Persian invasion
- Collected dues from members
- Problems
  1. Forced members to remain
  2. Used money to rebuild Athens
  3. Promoted democracies only

Sparta is jealous!
The Impact of the Persian Wars

1. Athens emerged as the most powerful city-state.
2. Athens organized the Delian League, an alliance with 150 Greek city-states and colonies in the Aegean region.
3. Athens used the Delian League to create an Athenian empire.
4. With Pericles as its leader, Athens enters into its Golden Age! But who was paying the bill?
5. Sparta will eventually form an opposing alliance with the neutral city-states