**Greek Geography simulation (adapted from History Alive!)**

VASOL: WHI.5 -- The student will demonstrate knowledge of ancient Greece in terms of its impact on Western civilization by

a) assessing the influence of geography on Greek economic, social, and political development, including the impact of Greek commerce and colonies.

**Synopsis** – Students are divided into “city-states,” plant and harvest crops, participate in trade, and discover the unique challenges posed by Greece’s geography.

**I. Room Set up**

* The afternoon before this activity, I stack the desks on each other so they resemble a mountain.
* Use masking tape to lay out the coastline of Greece and the island of Crete.
	+ Do not leave too much space between the desks and the tape – you want the students to get a sense of crowding.
	+ Seas and mountains are labeled (I tape construction paper signs to the mountain of desks and on the floor for the seas)
* I warn students about this activity the class before and advise against wearing skirts/dresses.

**II. The activity**

1. Students are divided into “city-states” and assigned a location in “Greece.”

* They immediately notice there’s not much room between the mountains and the sea.
* I stress the importance of keeping everyone in the group on dry land- we don’t want people in the sea.
* Discussion of challenges posed by the geography.
* Discussion of development of city-states as it relates to geography.
* 1 group is assigned to Crete and they get a rolling chair (ship)

2. Each city-state is given crops to plant – I cut construction paper in half and give each group about 20 pieces. They have to plant the “crops” by putting them on the ground (but not in the sea). This makes them have to squeeze together a little more & they realize that they lose some living space for fields.

* Discussion of how land is used

3. City-states “harvest their crops” by picking them up off of the floor.

* Discussion of how land is used

4. City-states trade their crops with each other. The goal is for each city-state to trade with every other city-state and to acquire as much as possible.

* Students cannot trade over the mountain, they must trade around the mountain by passing their goods through other city-states.
* Crete uses the rolling chair to trade.
* This is the most chaotic part of the activity.
* I have had some groups who try to steal from each other; I do not interfere unless necessary.
* Discuss challenges of trade in this manner.

5. Students sit with their city-state group and answer the following questions:

* How did geography affect our crops?
* How did geography affect our trade?
* How did geography affect Greece’s development of city-states?
* How different would this experience have been if there were no mountains?