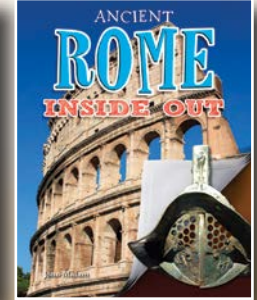
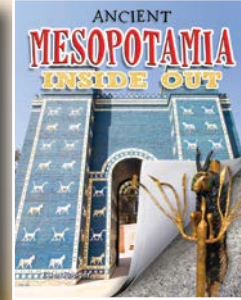
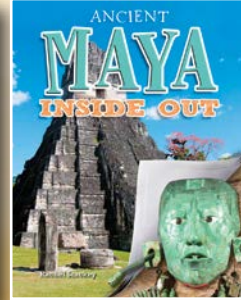
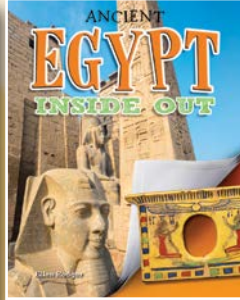
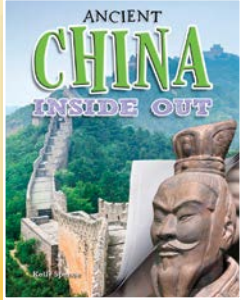


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From Ancient Greece Inside Out

FOOD AND FARMING

Most people in ancient Greece farmed the land. The rich soil along the Mediterranean coast was ideal for growing crops. As the mountains rose farther inland, the soil became poorer and it was more difficult for plants to grow. Grains, such as barley and wheat, and olives were among the most important crops harvested by the ancient Greeks.

Grains
 Demeter is the Greek goddess of farming and grain. In around 700 B.C.E., the poet Hesiod wrote in his poem Works and Days: "Pray to Zeus of the earth and pure Demeter for Demeter's holy grain to ripen heavy ... In this way the ears (of grain) may nod towards the earth with thickness ... Prayers alone did not guarantee a healthy crop. Farmers also used tools to plow the earth and irrigate the fields. Each year they also rotated the kinds of crops they planted in their fields to keep the soil healthy."

Olives
 Olives, and the oil they produce, were highly prized in ancient Greek society. People believed that the olive tree was a gift from Athena, the patron goddess of Athens. The oil in particular had many uses. It was used for cooking and for anointing athletes.

History Up Close
 This vase dates from about 520 B.C.E. It is called an amphora, which means "to carry on both sides." Amphorae were used to store food, such as grains and oils, and drink, such as wine. The scene painted on the side of this vase shows how olives were harvested by the ancient Greeks. One young boy sits high in the tree and uses a stick to knock down olives, while another gathers them in a basket. Two other figures use longer branches to help shake the fruit loose.

Dig Deeper!
 Why might the ancient Greeks...

