

Excerpt where the student places the event in context:

The plain of Marathon was backed by two ranges of mountain which the Greeks used to their advantage. At their arrival they set up camp between those two ranges. This followed by a five day wait between the two armies. Miltiades, having received charge, sent some brave warriors to charge at the Persians who seem them arrive were ready yet surprised at their boldness *"It seemed to them that the Athenians were bereft of their senses, and bent upon their own destruction"* (Herodotus). (1)

Excerpt where the student explains the significance of the event:

The Battle of Marathon was just the first of the Greco-Persian encounters. Xerxes succeeded Darius and in 480 BC, with the aim of crushing the Greeks, he led the army to Greece. The events of the first Persian wars led to the second Persian wars, particularly the Battle of Thermopylae (480 BC), this time led by the Spartans against a Persian army under the rule of Xerxes. While the Spartans were of little support to the Athenians during the Battle of Marathon, their presence at the the "hot gates" revealed the extent to which this was a pan-Hellenic defense, rather than city-state by city-state (2). This battle was lost by the Spartans but provided time for the Athenians to prepare for attack at the Battle of Salamis. The Athenians were successful here due to the leadership of Themistocles (2). He used his strategy of the "wooden wall of ships" to lure to Persian fleet up the strait of Salamis where they were defeated. Had the Battle of Marathon not been won it is fair to say that the battles that followed would not have been the same or maybe not even existed as Greece would have struggled to resist the Persian army any further and ended up as a part of the Persian empire.

After the Battle of Marathon, Athens was overjoyed at their victory against an army that was equal to no other. The odds having not been in their favour with the Spartans not being able to supply men, therefore outnumbering them to approximately 3 Persians to 1 Greek. The Athenians believed that the gods were on their side. The whole city was filled with pride and self-confidence (2), they had proved that the Persians were not invincible and had been successful, without the help of the military Sparta. This boost to confidence reassured the Athenians that their recent political shifts under Kleisthenes resulted in a stronger city-state (2). This victory brought them to create many artefacts (2) in glory of the event. In commemoration of the 192 dead a marble column and burial mound were built and still stand on the plain of Marathon. On the Acropolis a great temple, the Hekatompedon, had been started to show the splendour of Athens at their time of triumph. This "pre-Parthenon" was burnt down when the Persians ravaged the whole city in 480BC.