War Against Persia

1. Outbreak of the War:

- Persians controlled entire Middle East, including the Greek colonies on the coast of Asia Minor.

- In 500 B.C., these colonies **revolted** and received military aid from Athens.

- After suppressing the revolt, **Darius**, king of Persia, determined to punish Athens and annex all of Greece.
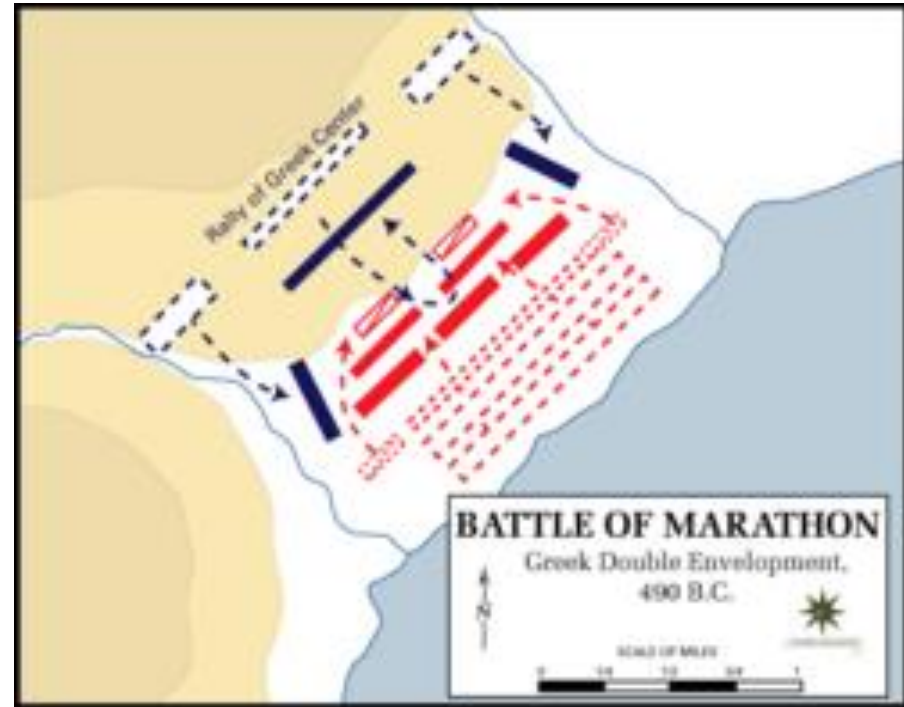
Ancient Greece and Vicinity @ 400 BCE

- 490 B.C. Darius' huge army invaded Greece but was defeated by a smaller Athenian force at the **Battle of Marathon**.
- Legend: Greek runner carried the news running the 26 miles from Marathon to Athens. Nike!
- Led by Themistocles, Athens prepared to repel further Persian attacks. Themistocles a)rushed the construction of 200 additional warships(triremes)for the Athenian navy and b)organized most Greek city-states, including Sparta into a defensive alliance

Marathon

Battle of Marathon

Second Round!

- In 480 B.C. King **Xerxes**, the son of Darius, launched another Persian invasion. At the **Pass of Thermopylae** in northern Greece, the Persians overwhelmed a small band of gallant Spartan warriors led by King **Leonidas**.

- The Persians then marched southward and **captured Athens.**

- Although Greece seemed doomed, the Greeks rallied their forces to win **two great naval engagements** off **Salamis**(480 B.C.) and Mycale(479 B.C.) and a land battle at **Plataea**(479 B.C.). The Persians withdrew and Greece was saved.

Significance of the War Against Persia

- Greeks preserved their political independence and individual freedom;

- Unlike Persian despotism, Greek democracy, typified by Athens, permitted individuals to develop their abilities and interests.

- With the Persian threat removed, the Greeks directed their energies to building a rich and varied civilization.