ВАХΚΣΤΟΡΨ
Backstory

The year was 480 B.C.E. and Persian king Xerxes amassed a gigantic army to continue his father, Darius's, quest to conquer Greece to add to the Persian empire and get revenge for past defeats. (War 2003.) When Athens got word of the impending attack, it called on all Greek city-states for help. Seven thousand soldiers from various city-states formed an army led by Spartan king, Leonidas. (Fields, 13-14.)
ΔΟΧΑΤΙΟΝ
Location

Thermopylae was a smart choice of location by Leonidas due to its natural topography. The narrow pass of land was lined on one side by the Kallidromos mountain range and on the other by the Maliakos Gulf (fields, 48). This configuration made it impossible for Xerxes to use his full force of soldiers to attack. The Greeks were able to use their effective phalanx formation with each flank protected by a natural barrier.
“The Great King Xerxes’ arrows will block the light of the sun.”

~ A Persian herald

“All the better, we’ll fight in the shade”

~ Dieneces

“Lay down your weapons!”

~ Persian messenger

“ΜΟΛΩΝ ΛΑΒΕ” (“Come and take them!”)

~ Leonidas

**Before the Battle**

Xerxes failed to recognise the significance of the superior Spartan position and held his men back for four days thinking the Greek soldiers’ small army was a joke. But, he gravely underestimated the Spartan devotion to battle.

**DAY I**

Xerxes sent his men forward to try and breach the Greek line, without success. Leonidas used the natural landform of Thermopylae to his advantage - it was a perfect choke point, and prevented Xerxes’ troops from using their massive numbers in the attack. The Greek soldiers took down great numbers of Persian fighters.

**DAY II**

The second day continued the massive number of Persian casualties and practically none for the Greeks. But that evening a traitor told Xerxes of a secret and lightly guarded mountain pass. The Persians immediately set off for the path to attack the Greek Army from behind.

**DAY III**

When Leonidas heard the Persians had discovered the secret pass he sent more of his men to stop the Persians. The Persians, hearing the noise of the Greek Army, threw their forces out and began to retreat. Leonidas and his 3,000 soldiers followed in pursuit and routed them.
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**DAY III**
When Leonidas heard the Persians had discovered the secret pass he sent most of his 7,000 soldiers home, while he and 300 of his elite Spartan soldiers stayed back to fight to the death. By the time the Spartans were finally defeated by Persian arrows, they had inflicted almost 20,000 casualties and greatly demoralized the Persian army.

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**Greeks**
- Inferior Numbers
- Bronze armor
- Battering shields
- Phalanx formation
- Diversionary archers
- Long spears & swords

**Persians**
- Massive army
- Leather armor
- Wicker shields
- Mass infantry
- Skilled bowmen
- Short spears, axes, & swords
ΤΗΣΙΣ
Thesis

The Battle of Thermopylae epitomized conflict when a brave group of Greek warriors used strategy, patriotism and self-sacrifice to protect the early ideals of democracy against Persian imperialism, setting in motion the basis for the government we have today and numerous contributions passed down by Greek innovators that are still relevant in our modern societies.

ΕΦΕΧΣΣ
Effects

Thermopylae represented a pivotal moment in morale, for both the Greeks and the Persians. The conflict left the Persians in disarray. Had the Spartans not been betrayed they might have won the battle; even so, for the Greeks, Thermopylae became a symbol of patriotism and bravery. It inspired subsequent victories that expelled the Persians from Greece once and for all. As a result, democracy, science, architecture, literature and much more evolved into what we know today. (Mark, 2009).
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