

## PEOPLE TO MEET ACTIVITY 4

### Themistocles

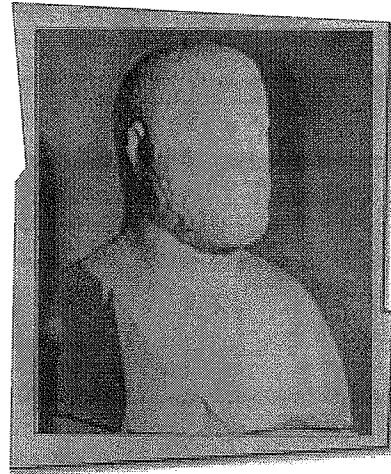
Themistocles (tuh•MIHS•tuh•KLEEZ) was one of Greece's most brilliant generals and politicians. He was born in 524 B.C. He taught himself military tactics and how to give speeches. When he was about 16 years old, the Assembly, or group who made laws, elected him to high office.

#### Building a Navy

After the Athenians defeated the Persians at Marathon in 490 B.C., many Athenians thought the Persians would never come back. Themistocles disagreed. In 483 B.C. he had the Assembly buy *triremes*, or wooden battleships, to strengthen the Athenian navy.

In 481 B.C. the Persians invaded Greece. Themistocles convinced other Greek city-states to ally with Athens against the Persians. Still, the Greeks lost battle after battle.

The Persians had about 1,200 ships. The Greeks had about 400. Themistocles knew he had to trick the Persian navy into attacking in the narrow channel of water between the Greek coast and the island of Salamis. This would force the Persians to fight with only a few ships at



Themistocles

a time. His trick worked, and the Greeks destroyed the Persian navy.

#### Not Long a Hero

The Assembly awarded Themistocles with the city's finest award—a wreath of olive leaves. Unfortunately, Themistocles had made many enemies in the upper class with his support of the lower class. A few years later the Assembly banished him—forced him to leave—and he never returned to Athens.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below in the spaces provided.

1. Who was Themistocles? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What are triremes? \_\_\_\_\_
3. List two ways that Themistocles influenced other people.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. **Writing** Can you think of a time when you had to convince others to accept your point of view? Were you able to do so? Why or why not? On another sheet of paper, write a paragraph about this.