

Corinthian capitals were fancy. They were covered with carved acanthus leaves. According to one Greek writer, a basket someone left on the grave of a young girl inspired this kind of capital. Architects modeled it after an acanthus plant growing through a woven basket. No one knows if this story is true, but like many Greek myths, it is fun to think about.

⁸ Telling stories and myths was a favorite activity of the ancient Greeks. Their stories even became part of their architecture. The band around the upper part of the temple wall was called the frieze. Sculptors decorated the frieze of the Parthenon with pictures of musicians, animals, and horsemen. They also added pictures of busy gods and goddesses.

⁹ The Greeks felt that the outside of their temples were important, which is why they put so many pictures on their friezes. They also used colors on the outer temple walls. The Parthenon was painted in brilliant reds, blues, and golds. Today, the building looks just plain and cream-colored, but Greek citizens had a much brighter temple to enjoy.

¹⁰ The Greek architects, like everyone else in ancient Greece, wanted their work to look perfect. They insisted that the columns of the temples look straight. The problem was that straight columns looked curved from far away. To solve this problem, masons built the columns with slightly fat middle sections. This fat middle made the vertical lines look straight from far away instead of curved. They called this *entasis*, which means "to strain" in Greek. This optical illusion tricked people. Greek buildings are beautiful because of it. The Greeks used complicated math to figure this out.

¹¹ The Greeks built many other temples in Greece and along the Mediterranean coast. They also built other gigantic buildings. Greek citizens liked education and sports. So the Greeks also built amazing stadiums so everyone could attend the Olympic Games every four years. Their shape inspired our stadiums today.

¹² Other buildings you see today were also influenced by the ancient Greeks. You might be amazed at how many columns are used in buildings in your own town. Look closely and you might see a Greek superhero peeking out at you from behind one!