Growing up in Ancient Greece

DIRECTIONS: Read the article. Answer the questions.

When a baby was born in ancient Greece, the family held a celebration. Part of the celebration was a special dance that the father did, while holding his newborn child. The mother would make and hang a wreath on their door to announce the birth. Soon, friends and family would arrive with gifts. The exception to this was the city of Sparta. The Spartans were strong, ruthless warriors. Every child born in Sparta was carefully inspected at birth. If there was anything wrong with it, it was taken outside of the city and left to die. The Spartans wanted all of their children to grow up to be formidable warriors.

Like in other cultures you may have studied, many Greek parents hoped that their children would be boys. While a daughter would usually leave the family home when she got married, a boy was a guarantee that his parents would be cared for in their old age. Greek parents also had to prepare for their daughter’s wedding. When a young woman married in ancient Greece, her parents were obliged to provide a wedding gift or a dowry. If a family had many daughters, this could be very expensive. It was always up to the father whether or not to keep a newborn baby. Sometimes an unwanted baby was simply left alone to die; it might be found and adopted, or it might be taken and trained as a slave. Rich parents sometimes hired poor neighbors or used slaves to nurse a new baby.

Unless a family was rich enough to afford slaves, Greek children began to help out in the fields not long after they could walk. They were taught at home by their mother until they were 6, at which point the boys would then be sent to school, while the girls continued to be homeschooled.

And of course, Greek children played. They had toys, though they were not like the toys that you have today. They enjoyed a sport that was a lot like our modern basketball, and they played games like tossing sticks into buckets to see who had the most skill. Though there were no books for children in ancient Greece like there are today, Greek children a listened to stories, fables and legends.
1. What did the father of a newborn baby do with it soon after its birth?

2. Why would the Spartans sometimes leave a baby to die?

3. Why did most Greek parents hope that their baby would be a boy?

4. At which age did Greek children begin to help out in the field?
   A. toddler  B. four  C. six  D. eight

5. At which age did Greek boys begin to go to school?
   A. toddler  B. four  C. six  D. eight

5. Greek children played a game that was a lot like modern:
   A. football  B. hockey  C. basketball