

Law Studies Lesson Plan (#1)

Democracy in Ancient Greece

Lesson Objectives:

- Describe how the system of government in Ancient Greece influenced the development of democracy in the United States.
- Define the rule of law and recognize its influence on the development of the American legal, political, and governmental systems.
- Evaluate the obligations citizens have to obey laws, pay taxes, defend the nation, and serve on juries.
- Compare different forms of government (direct democracy, representative democracy, socialism, communism, monarchy, oligarchy, autocracy).
- Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances.

Essential Questions:

- How did earlier systems of government in ancient Greece lead to the development of democracy? What are the main components of Athenian democracy?
- What flaws, if any, do you see in the democracy of ancient Athens?
- How did democracy in ancient Greece influence the establishment of constitutional democracy in the United States?
- What did *rule of law*, *civic participation*, and *civic duty* mean to the citizens of Athens? How did these concepts influence thinking in the modern world?

Key Vocabulary:

aristocrat, assembly, boule, checks and balances, citizen, city-state, civic duty, civic participation, democracy, direct democracy, enact, legislative bodies, monarchy, oligarchy, ostracism, polis, representative democracy, rule of law, veto, voting rights, written constitution

Materials Needed:

- Attachment A: Reading #1: Democracy in Ancient Greece
- Attachment B: Graphic Organizer: Comparing Forms of Government in Ancient Greece
- Attachment C: Post Quiz
- Attachment D: The Leaders/ Reformers in Ancient Greece

Steps to Deliver the Lesson:

Lesson Opening:

- Write the term *democracy* on the whiteboard. Ask students what the term means. Brainstorm and list student ideas. Then ask students where they think democracy originated. Discuss.

Activities:

1. Distribute reading (**Attachment A**): *The Development of Democracy in Ancient Greece*. Use jump in reading or other effective reading strategies appropriate for your class to read the background information contained in the article.
2. Have students define the highlighted vocabulary associated with the lesson.
3. Distribute and discuss (**Attachment B**): *Graphic Organizer - Forms of Government in Ancient Greece*. Instruct students to list the four forms of government in ancient Greece that were mentioned in the reading. They should list them on the provided line in chronological order, beginning with monarchy. Next, they are to list the characteristics of each form of government in the appropriate box. Remind students to include powers the people had under each form of government. Work with students to complete the graphic organizer.
4. As a class, have students choose an issue (global, national, state, local, or school) on which there are divided opinions. Explain to students that they will be role-playing the different forms of government they have been studying in ancient Greece. Divide the class into four groups. One group will be a monarchy, one an oligarchy, one a tyranny, and one a direct democracy. Tell students that when the entire class convenes, each group will role play the

presentation and decision on the issue as it would have happened under their particular form of government. Groups will have fifteen minutes to decide how their government will deal with the issue. They will assign roles within their group – monarch, aristocrats, nobles, archon, etc., appropriate to their assigned form of government. They will also decide who will present the issue and how it will be presented. Students may use their reading, graphic organizer, and other online resources for background information. They may also choose to write scripts. Circulate and make sure each group is on track. Remind the direct democracy group that only males may participate. When the entire class reconvenes, each group will make their presentation (approximately 3-5 minutes). The rest of the class will participate as citizens under each particular form of government. Follow-up with discussion on how students felt as citizens under each of the four different governments.

5. Have students take the post-quiz associated with this lesson (**Attachment C**). Go over the quiz with students. Check for understanding and re-teach any concepts not understood.

Lesson Closure:

After completing and reviewing the post quiz with students, ask students the following questions to conclude the lesson:

- What were the four types of government that developed in ancient Greece?
- How did being governed by a monarchy, oligarchy and tyranny contribute to the development of democracy in ancient Greece?
- What are the characteristics of a direct democracy? Do you think a direct democracy would work well in the United States today? Why or why not?

Differentiated Instruction Strategies:

How to accommodate a variety of student learning needs, remediation strategies as well as enrichment strategies

- As students are completing the graphic organizers, work individually with students who are having difficulty with this task.
- For students who are struggling readers and/or English Language Learners, pair them with another student for assistance.
- Circulate the room to monitor students' abilities during the debate activity. If students have difficulty with the assignment, guide them

as to where to find key points for their group.

Technology Integration:

Activities incorporating technology, e.g., address lesson content through online resources.

- Have students visit the website below to learn information on Democracy in Ancient Greece - link: <https://greece.mrdonn.org/athensdemocracy.html>
- For an overview of Ancient Greece with links to all aspects of the society (history, architecture, science, religion, etc.), have student access – History for Kids- Ancient Greece: <https://historykids.net/greece/>
- Have students access History.com for additional in-depth information about democracy in ancient Greece:
<http://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece-democracy>
- For background information on Pericles, visit *Pericles* at History.com:
<http://www.history.com/topics/pericles>

Extension/Home Learning Activity:

Distribute and discuss (**Attachment D**): – *Leaders/Reformers in Ancient Greece* graphic organizer. After a brief discussion, instruct students on the use of the graphic organizer and how they will use the Reading (**Attachment A**) to complete the graphic organizer. Students should be prepared to share their work with the class on how these three ancient leaders helped reform ancient Greece and move towards democracy.

The Development of Democracy in Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece is often referred to as “The cradle of democracy.” In the late 500’s to early 400’s BCE, **democracy** developed in the city-state of Athens. The word democracy comes from the Greek words: *demos*, meaning “the people,” and *kratein* or *kratos*, meaning “to rule.” Combined, the two words form *democracy* (*demokratia*), a form of government which puts the power to rule in the hands of all the people.

Ancient Greece was not always a democracy. Because Greece is made up of many islands and a mountainous peninsula, the villages that developed in the area were isolated from one another. As the villages grew into larger communities, they each developed their own government, economy, and way of life. The communities developed into city-states which also controlled the surrounding countryside. The **city-states**, or **polis**, as they were called in Greek, were intensely independent of one another. The early city-states (100-800 BCE) were ruled by hereditary kings. This type of government is a **monarchy**. The kings were advised by wealthy nobles, or **aristocrats**.

As many Greeks grew tired of the kings, the richer, more powerful landowners were able to overthrow the kings and seize power. By the eighth century BCE many of the Greek city-states were ruled by aristocratic landowners. This type of government is called an **oligarchy**, which means “ruled by a few.” The aristocratic landowners had many of the powers that had been granted to the king. The common people had no power or say in the government.

During the sixth and seventh centuries (BCE), there were many middle-class uprisings against the aristocrats and nobles. A new group of rulers emerged, the “**tyrants**” (in Greek, tyrannos). Greek tyrants seized power from the aristocrats by force, or military strength. In the beginning the tyrants were popular. They helped rid the people of the unpopular oligarchies and made many promises. At first the tyrants seemed to try to make life better with new building projects and employment. After a time, they began to rule as a king. They kept power by using fear and military force. As the time of **tyranny** was about to end, the tyrants had done a service to the city-states by getting rid of the aristocrats and setting the stage for a new form of government... democracy.

Solon, one of the earliest **reformers** took power in Athens in 594 BCE and made some of the first strides towards democracy. He cancelled land debts and freed many people who had been made slaves because of debt. He set up a new code of laws and the first court system for all citizens. Solon’s reforms didn’t solve all the problems in Athens, which led to a return to tyranny.

In 510 BCE, Cleisthenes overthrew the tyrants and turned to the people of Athens for support. He believed in equal rights for all citizens and is considered by many to be the founder of Athenian democracy. Cleisthenes proposed a constitution that made Athens a democracy. He divided the population into ten tribes and created the **boule** (council of 500) to oversee the government and propose laws and an **assembly** to debate and vote upon the laws. Cleisthenes called his new political structure *demokratia*, or **democracy** – rule by the entire body of citizens.

The type of government in which all citizens participate in mass meetings and vote on all issues is known today as a **direct democracy**. Democracy continued in Athens and spread to many other city-states in ancient Greece. By the time Pericles became the leader of Athens, democracy was considered the way of life. Pericles expanded the democracy to allow more citizens to participate by making all classes eligible for **archonships** and compensating people for serving in public office and jury duty. This compensation allowed the poorer citizens of Athens to participate.

The **boule**, or Council of 500, was selected by drawing of names from all of the citizens of Athens. The 500 chosen would serve on the Council for one year. The council met every day unless there was a festival. It was the job of the council to manage the daily affairs of the city-state. The boule proposed laws and decided what the assembly would discuss. After the assembly approved a law, it was the job of the council to **enact**, or carry it out.

The citizen's **assembly**, on the other hand, was not limited to a defined number, but open to all adult male citizens. Each had the right to speak and vote in the assembly. Each man had one vote. The assembly set all of the laws for the city-state and was allowed to **veto** any proposal from the council. The assembly was also the only branch of government in Athens that had the power to declare war. Through public debate and voting, citizens were able to create new laws, revise laws, and set foreign policy. The first system of **checks and balances** was also created in ancient Athens. This process was developed to keep politicians from gaining too much power. Assembly members could write the name of a person they considered a threat, or harmful to Athens on a piece of broken pottery (called an ostrakon). Any person who was named by at least 6,000 members was **ostracized or** banished from Athens for ten years.

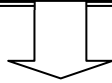
Not all residents of Athens were considered citizens. Citizenship was limited to those whose parents were also citizens. Slaves, former slaves, and foreign residents were not considered citizens. Women whose parents were citizens were classified as "citizens," but were not allowed to participate in government or politics. With these restrictions, only about 30,000 to 40,000 of the approximately 250,000 residents of Athens were actually eligible to participate in **politics**.

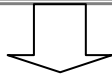
Rule of law was an important value in Athens. It was the duty of all citizens to obey the law. Athens had courts of law and trial by jury. The juries were much larger than the ones we have today and were picked from a group of 6,000 volunteers. Juries might range from a few hundred to a thousand. Juries always had an odd number, 301, 601, etc. This ensured that the vote would never end in a tie. Most trials were completed in one day with the jury also deciding the sentence if the defendant was found guilty, Jury members received pay for their service.

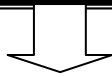
Athenians also viewed **civic participation** as an important part of their democracy. They considered this participation both an honor and their **civic duty**. Male citizens discussed and debated politics, spoke, and voted in the assembly, served on juries, and served in the military. Although democracy did not last long in Ancient Greece, it had a lasting impact on the world. Over two thousand years later, it would serve as a foundation for U.S democracy.

Directions: List the four forms of government in ancient Greece mentioned in the reading. List the 4 forms in the rectangles provided in chronological order, beginning with monarchy. Next, list the characteristics of each form of government in the box. Make sure to include powers the people had under each form of government.

Monarchy







Attachment C

Democracy in Ancient Greece Post Quiz

Low Complexity Items:

1. During the sixth and seventh centuries (BCE), a new group of rulers overthrew the nobles. They seized power by force and ruled by using fear and military strength. What was this group of rulers called?
 - a. Aristocrats
 - b. Boules
 - c. Romans
 - d. Tyrants

2. The people of Athens were the first to believe in which of the following?
 - a. Rule by oligarchy
 - b. Rule by democracy
 - c. Rule by monarchy
 - d. Rule by tyranny

3. Which group was eligible to be “voting citizens” under democracy in ancient Greece?
 - a. Females whose parents were citizens
 - b. Slaves
 - c. Foreign residents
 - d. Males whose parents were citizens

Moderate Complexity Items

4. Which of the following was caused by the geography of ancient Greece?
 - a. The development of the polis (independent city-states)
 - b. The development of a common language throughout the civilization
 - c. The development of a strong economy
 - d. The reforms of Cleisthenes.

5. How was the government filled under the leadership of Pericles?
 - a. by appointment
 - b. by trial and error
 - c. by lottery
 - d. by election

6. Which of the following activities demonstrate that “rule of law” was an important value in ancient Athens?
 - a. The tyrants of Athens were able to overthrow the oligarchy.
 - b. Athens had courts of law and trial by jury.
 - c. All male citizens of Athens were allowed to vote.
 - d. Athens had courts of law and permitted foreign residents to vote.

High Complexity Items

“We do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all.”

7. The statement above is an historical quote by Pericles. The statement clearly demonstrates Pericles' opinion on which of the following?
 - a. Representative democracy
 - b. Popular court
 - c. Civic participation
 - d. Rule of law

8. Which of the following represents the correct chronological sequence for the development of the four types of government in ancient Greece?
 - A. tyranny, democracy, monarchy, oligarchy
 - B. monarchy, oligarchy, tyranny, democracy
 - C. oligarchy, monarchy, democracy, tyranny
 - D. democracy, tyranny, oligarchy, monarchy



9. By writing names on an ostrakon like the one pictured above, the Athenian assembly could ostracize a person from Athens for ten years. This is an example of an early form of which of the following?
- a. checks and balances
 - b. veto power
 - c. tyranny
 - d. slavery
10. Why was Athens considered a direct democracy?
- a. because women and slaves had the same voting rights as everyone else
 - b. because representatives were elected fairly by all citizens
 - c. because all male citizens were expected to take part in government
 - d. because all citizens were eligible for election to the senate

Answers to Post Quiz

1. D
2. B
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. B
7. C
8. B
9. A
10. C

Leaders/Reformers in Ancient Greece

The reading for this lesson mentioned three leaders in ancient Greece who were reformers: Cleisthenes, Pericles, and Solon. Their ideas and reforms helped ancient Athens move towards democracy. In the chart below list the leaders/reformers in chronological order with the earliest on the left. In the space below each name, list the ideas and reforms that contributed to the development of democracy.

Leader/ Reformer	Cleisthenes	Pericles	Solon
Ideas			
Reforms			