

The Greek City-States

GUIDE TO READING

The BIG Idea

Ideas, Beliefs, and

Values Differences between Athenian and Spartan values led to different forms of government.

Content Vocabulary

- polis (p. 112)
- acropolis (p. 112)
- agora (p. 112)
- hoplite (p. 113)
- phalanx (p. 113)
- tyrant (p. 114)
- democracy (p. 114)
- oligarchy (p. 114)
- helot (p. 115)
- ephor (p. 116)

Academic Vocabulary

- assemble (p. 112)
- implies (p. 114)

People and Places

- Hellespont (p. 114)
- Bosphorus (p. 114)
- Byzantium (p. 114)
- Sparta (p. 115)
- Athens (p. 117)
- Solon (p. 117)
- Cleisthenes (p. 117)

Reading Strategy

Categorizing Information As you read, create a chart like the one below to help you study. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three types of government used in Greek city-states.

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Tyranny		
Democracy		
Oligarchy		

INDIANA ACADEMIC STANDARDS World History and Civilization

2.5 Identify and explain the significance of the achievements of Greeks in mathematics, science, philosophy, architecture, and the arts and their impact on various peoples and places in subsequent periods of world history.

2.7 Compare and contrast the daily life, social hierarchy, culture, and institutions of Athens and Sparta; describe the rivalry between Athens and Sparta; and explain the causes and consequences of the Peloponnesian War.

Greece slowly recovered during the late part of the Dark Age. Several Greek centers of trade established themselves during the ninth century B.C., and population growth in the following century fueled a growth in agriculture. Increased trade stimulated craftwork and shipbuilding. Greek communities were growing and gaining wealth.

Polis: The Center of Greek Life

MAIN IDEA The polis or city-state was the central focus of Greek life. The citizens of a polis had defined rights and responsibilities, as well as a strong identity and loyalty that kept the city-states divided.

HISTORY & YOU How is your community organized? Read about the organization of the Greek polis.

By 750 B.C., the city-state—or what the Greeks called a **polis**—became the central focus of Greek life. Our word *politics* is derived from the Greek word *polis*. In a physical sense, the polis was a town, a city, or even a village, along with its surrounding countryside. The town, city, or village served as the center of the polis where people could meet for political, social, and religious activities.

Organization of the City-State

The main gathering place in the polis was usually a hill. At the top of the hill was a fortified area called an **acropolis**. The acropolis served as a place of refuge during an attack and sometimes came to be a religious center on which temples and public buildings were built. Below the acropolis was an **agora**, an open area that served as a place where people could **assemble** and as a market.

City-states varied greatly in size, from a few square miles to a few hundred square miles. They also varied in population. Athens had a population of more than 300,000 by the fifth century B.C., but most city-states were much smaller, consisting of only a few hundred to several thousand people.

Community of the City-State

The polis was, above all, a community of people who shared a common identity and common goals. As a community, the polis consisted of citizens with political rights (adult males), citizens with no political rights (women and children), and noncitizens

Ancient Athens

Temples and public buildings were located within the acropolis. The Parthenon, a temple dedicated to the goddess Athena, is part of the ancient Athenian Acropolis.

Athens was built near a rocky hill that could be easily fortified and defended.

The acropolis, or fortified area, provided a place of refuge for people in times of war.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Ancient Athens was a powerful Greek city-state and is considered to be the birthplace of Western civilization.

1. **Describing** Describe the location of the Agora in relation to the Acropolis.
2. **Drawing Conclusions** Why were temples and public buildings located within the Acropolis?

The agora, an open area in the polis, was used as a gathering place for people and as a marketplace. The Athenian Agora is located north of the Acropolis and is largely in ruins.

(including agricultural laborers, slaves, and resident aliens).

Citizens had rights, but these rights were coupled with responsibilities. The Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that a citizen did not belong just to himself or herself: "We must rather regard every citizen as belonging to the state." However, the loyalty that citizens had to their city-states had a negative side. City-states distrusted one another, and the division of Greece into fiercely patriotic, independent units helped to bring about its ruin.

As the polis developed, so too did a new military system. In earlier times, nobles on horseback fought wars in Greece. These aristocrats, who were large landowners,

also dominated the political life of their city-states.

By 700 B.C., however, the military system was based on **hoplites**, who were heavily armed infantry soldiers, or foot soldiers. Each carried a round shield, a short sword, and a thrusting spear about 9 feet (2.7 m) long. Hoplites went into battle as a unit, marching shoulder to shoulder in a rectangular formation known as a **phalanx**. This close formation created a wall of shields to protect the hoplites. As long as they kept their order, it was difficult for enemies to harm them.

Reading Check Defining Describe the characteristics of a Greek city-state.

Greek Expansion

MAIN IDEA The search for farmland and the growth of trade resulted in colonization and the spread of Greek culture and political ideas.

HISTORY & YOU How does your community choose its leaders? Read about how new leaders came to power in Greek city-states.

Between 750 B.C. and 550 B.C., large numbers of Greeks left their homeland to settle in distant lands. A desire for good farmland and the growth of trade were important factors in the people's decisions to settle in new places. Each Greek colony became a new polis, independent of the polis that had founded it.

Greek Colonies

Across the Mediterranean, new Greek colonies were established along the coastlines of southern Italy, southern France, eastern Spain, and northern Africa west of Egypt. At the same time, to the north the Greeks set up colonies in Thrace, where they sought good farmland to grow grains. The Greeks also settled along the shores of the Black Sea, setting up cities on the **Hellespont** and the **Bosporus** straits. The most notable of these cities was **Byzantium** (buh•ZAN•shuhm), the site of what later became Constantinople and is now Istanbul. In establishing these colonies, the Greeks spread their culture and political ideas throughout the Mediterranean.

Securing control of the straits and waterways between the Mediterranean and Black Seas also gave the Greeks great economic advantages. Colonization in these prime port locations led to increased trade and industry. The Greeks on the mainland exported pottery, wine, and olive oil. In return, they received grains and metals from the west and fish, timber, wheat, metals, and slaves from the Black Sea region.

The expansion of trade and industry created a new group of wealthy individuals in many of the Greek city-states. These men wanted political power, but found it difficult to gain because of the power of the ruling aristocrats. The landowners

would not willingly give up their political power to the newly rich merchants.

Tyranny in the City-States

The creation of this new group of rich men fostered the rise of tyrants in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Tyrants were not necessarily oppressive or wicked, as our word *tyrant* implies. Greek **tyrants** were rulers who seized power by force from the aristocrats. They were unique in Greek history, and in fact, the Greeks did not have a word for them: the Greek term *tyrannos* was developed from another language, probably one from Asia Minor.

Support for the tyrants came from the newly rich who had made their money in trade and industry. These people were hungry for the social prestige and political influence that aristocrats had denied them. Poor peasants who were in debt to landholding aristocrats also supported the tyrants. Both the newly rich and the peasants were tired of aristocratic domination of their city-states.

The tyrants gained power and kept it by using hired soldiers. Once in power, the tyrants tried to help the poor and launched public works projects. They built new marketplaces, temples, and walls. These efforts glorified the city but, more importantly, increased the tyrants' popularity. Despite their achievements, however, the tyrants eventually came to be seen as oppressive. The tyrants had fallen out of favor by the end of the sixth century B.C. Greeks believed in the rule of law, and tyranny was an insult to that ideal.

Although tyranny did not last, it played an important role in Greek history. The rule of the tyrants ended the rule of the aristocrats in many city-states. The end of tyranny then allowed many new people to participate in government. In some Greek city-states, this led to the development of **democracy**, which is government by the people or rule of the many. Other city-states remained committed to government by an **oligarchy**, rule by the few.

Reading Check Evaluating What role did tyrants play in the development of Greek forms of government?

Two Rival City-States

MAIN IDEA Sparta and Athens developed different systems of government.

HISTORY & YOU How can strict rules affect people? Read about the Spartans' strict rules.

The differences in the Greek city-states can be understood by examining the two most famous and powerful city-states, Sparta and Athens.

Sparta

Like other Greek city-states, **Sparta** needed more land. Instead of starting new colonies, as some states did, the Spartans conquered the neighboring Laonians. Later, beginning around 730 B.C., the Spartans undertook the conquest of neighboring Messenia despite its larger size and population.

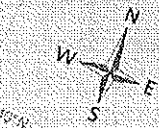
After their conquest, the Messenians and Laonians became serfs and were made to

work for the Spartans. These captured people were known as **helots**, a name derived from a Greek word for "capture." To ensure control over the conquered helots, the Spartans made a conscious decision to create a military state.

Between 800 B.C. and 600 B.C., the lives of Spartans were rigidly organized and tightly controlled—thus, our word *spartan*, meaning "highly self-disciplined." Males spent their childhood learning military discipline. Then they enrolled in the army for regular military service at age 20. Although allowed to marry, they continued to live in the military barracks until age 30. All meals were eaten in public dining halls with fellow soldiers. Meals were simple: the famous Spartan black broth consisted of a piece of pork boiled in animal blood, salt, and vinegar. A visitor who ate some of the black broth once remarked that he now understood why Spartans were not afraid to die. At 30, Spartan males were allowed to vote in the assembly (discussed later).

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

GREEK COLONIES AND TRADE, 750–550 B.C.



ATLANTIC OCEAN

EUROPE

Massilia

Corsica

Sardinia

Carthage

ITALY

Neapolis

Sicily

Syracuse

Trade route
Greece
Greek colonies

THRACE

Byzantium

ATHENS

Sparta

IONIA

Knossos

Crete

Cyrene

Black Sea

ASIA MINOR

Cyprus

Tyre

AFRICA

Arabian Peninsula

0 300 600 kilometers
0 300 600 miles
Lambert Azimuthal Equal-Area projection

Geography SKILLS

- 1. Movement** Analyze the relationship between Greek trading routes and Greek colonies.
- 2. Location** Find a map of the contemporary world. Name all the modern countries where Greece had colonies.

They could live at home, but they stayed in the army until the age of 60.

While their husbands lived in the barracks, Spartan women lived at home. Because of this separation, Spartan women had greater freedom of movement and greater power in the household than was common elsewhere in Greece. Spartan women were expected to remain fit to bear and raise healthy children.

Many Spartan women upheld the strict Spartan values, expecting their husbands and sons to be brave in war. The story is told of a Spartan mother who, as she

handed her son his shield, told him to come back carrying his shield or being carried on it. In other words, he was not to drop his shield in retreat, but to be victorious or to die bravely.

The Spartan government was an oligarchy headed by two kings, who led the Spartan army on its campaigns. A group of five men, known as the **ephors** (EH•fuhrs), were elected each year and were responsible for the education of youth and the conduct of all citizens. A council of elders, composed of the two kings and 28 citizens over the age of 60, decided on the issues that would be

HISTORY & ARTS

PRIMARY SOURCE

Everyday Art in Athens

The Greeks made pottery for every possible use. The best Greek pottery came from Athens because the clay found there was easy to bake in a kiln. At first, the pottery was decorated with geometric shapes. Later scenes from everyday life, stories of the gods, wars, and Olympic events decorated the pottery. Before 500 B.C., the pottery was red with figures that appeared black after they were baked. After 500 B.C., craftsmen discovered how to create red figures on a black background.



The kylix was a type of two-handled drinking cup. Potters decorated the inside and outside of the kylix.



The amphora, a jar to store wine, oil, and grain, came in all sizes. Winners of athletic contests in Athens won an amphora filled with olive oil. This black-figured amphora shows people gathering olives.



The krater was a wide-mouthed mixing bowl used to mix water with wine—the most popular beverage with meals. A special krater on a stand was part of the wedding ceremony. This red-figured krater depicts the winner of a music contest.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

1. **Making Inferences** Based on the information provided, which pot was most likely produced after 500 B.C.? Explain.
2. **Drawing Conclusions** What conclusions can you draw about Greek life from the scenes depicted on the pottery?

presented to an assembly made up of male citizens. This assembly did not debate; it only voted on the issues.

To make their new military state secure, the Spartans turned their backs on the outside world. Foreigners, who might have brought in new ideas, were discouraged from visiting. Except for military reasons, Spartans were not allowed to travel abroad, where they might encounter ideas dangerous to the stability of the state. Likewise, Spartan citizens were discouraged from studying philosophy, literature, or the arts. The art of war was the Spartan ideal. All other arts were frowned upon.

Athens

By 700 B.C., **Athens** had become a unified polis on the peninsula of Attica. Early Athens was ruled by a king. By the seventh century B.C., however, Athens had become an oligarchy under the control of its aristocrats. These aristocrats owned the best land and controlled political life. The assembly of all the citizens had few powers.

Near the end of the seventh century B.C., Athens faced political turmoil because of serious economic problems. Many Athenian farmers were sold into slavery when they were unable to repay their debts to their aristocratic neighbors. Over and over, there were cries to cancel the debts and give land to the poor. Civil war seemed likely.

The ruling Athenian aristocrats reacted to this crisis in 594 B.C. by giving full power to **Solon**, a reform-minded aristocrat. Solon canceled all land debts and freed people who had fallen into slavery for debts. He refused, however, to take land from the rich and give it to the poor. Despite Solon's reforms aristocrats were still powerful and poor peasants could not obtain land. Internal strife finally led to the very thing Solon had hoped to avoid—tyranny.

Peisistratus (pih • SIHS • truh • tuhs), an aristocrat, seized power in 560 B.C. He then aided Athenian trade as a way of pleasing the merchants. He also gave aristocrats' land to the peasants in order to gain the favor of the poor.

The Athenians rebelled against Peisistratus's son, who had succeeded him, and ended the tyranny in 510 B.C. Two years later, with the backing of the Athenian people, **Cleisthenes** (KLYS • thuh • NEEZ), another reformer, gained the upper hand.

Cleisthenes created a council of 500 that supervised foreign affairs, oversaw the treasury, and proposed laws. The Athenian assembly, composed of male citizens, was given final authority to pass laws after free and open debate. Because the assembly now had the central political role, the reforms of Cleisthenes created the foundations for Athenian democracy.

Reading Check **Contrasting** How was a Spartan man's life different from an Athenian man's?

SECTION 2 REVIEW

Vocabulary

1. Explain the significance of: polis, acropolis, agora, assemble, hoplite, phalanx, Hellespont, Bosphorus, Byzantium, implies, tyrant, democracy, oligarchy, Sparta, helot, ephor, Athens, Solon, Cleisthenes.

Main Ideas

2. Summarize how the city-states' military system had changed by 700 B.C.
3. Sequence the causes and effects of Greek colonization, trade, and industry. Create a cause-and-effect sequence chart like the one below to record your answer.



4. Explain the different political systems in Athens and Sparta.

Critical Thinking

5. **Big Idea Making Generalizations** Discuss the ideas, beliefs, and values that are implied in forms of government that the Spartans and Athenians adopted.
6. **Comparing and Contrasting** In what way(s) is Athenian democracy similar to American democracy? In what way(s) is it different?
7. **Analyzing Visuals** Examine the photograph of the Acropolis on page 113 of your text. Why do you think the Athenians decided to place their important buildings on top of a hill?

Writing About History

8. **Descriptive Writing** Imagine that you are a 25-year-old male living in Sparta in 700 B.C. Create a diary in which you record your activities for one week. Write one diary page for each day.

(ISTORY / . . .) %

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