

The Ancient Greeks

Lesson 2 Sparta and Athens: City-State Rivals

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why do people form governments?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Which types of government did the Greek city-states have?
2. Why did the Spartans focus on military skills?
3. How did the culture in Athens differ from other Greek city-states?

Terms to Know

tyrant an absolute ruler unrestrained by law

oligarchy a government in which a small group has control

democracy a government by the people

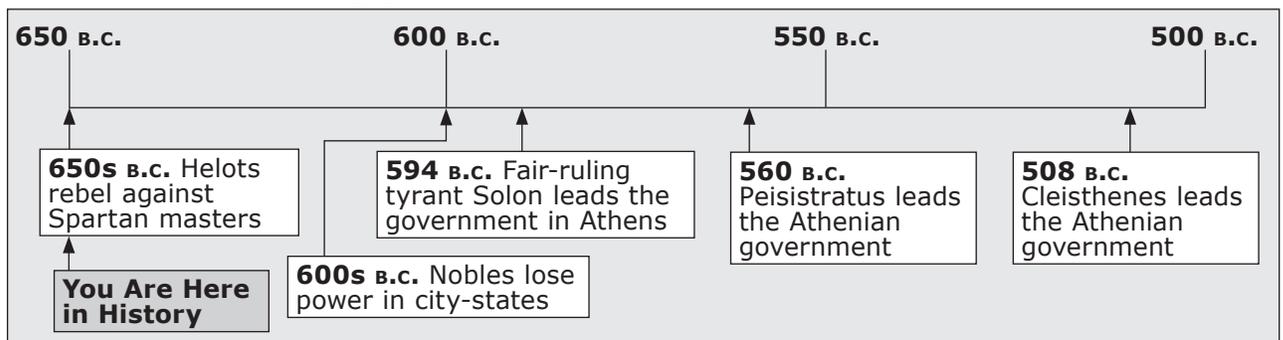
helots enslaved people in ancient Sparta

ephor a high-ranking government official in Sparta who was elected by the council of elders

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



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Lesson 2 Sparta and Athens: City-State Rivals, *Continued*

Political Changes

As the Greek city-states grew, there were political changes. The wealthy nobles had seized power from the kings. Owners of small farms did not like the nobles ruling, however. Many of them had borrowed money from the nobles. When the farmers could not repay their loans, the nobles took their farms.

By 650 B.C. merchants and artisans also wanted change. They were not citizens because they did not own land. That meant they did not have a say in ruling the polis.

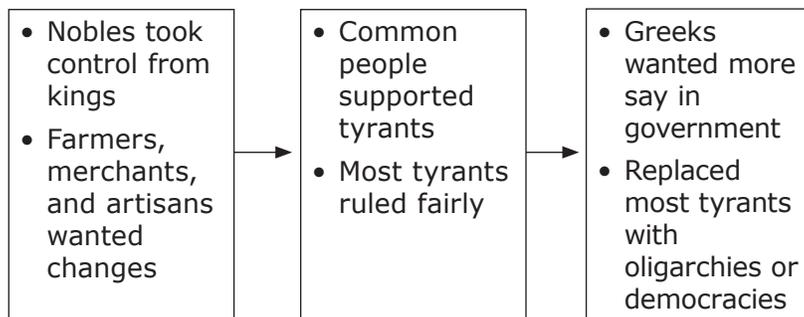
The growing political unrest led to the rise of **tyrants**. A tyrant is someone who seizes power and rules with total authority. Most of the tyrants who controlled city-states ruled fairly. It was the harshness of a few tyrants that gave the word *tyranny* its current meaning; rule by a cruel and unjust person.

The common people and the hoplites, or citizen soldiers, supported the tyrants overthrowing the nobles. Tyrants became more popular by building new marketplaces, temples, and fortresses. Most people in the Greek city-states objected to rule by one person, however. They wanted a government in which all citizens had a say.

Tyrants ruled many Greek city-states until about 500 B.C. Then most Greek city-states changed to either an **oligarchy** or a **democracy**. In an oligarchy, a few wealthy people hold power over the larger group of citizens. In a democracy, all citizens have a say in the government. Each polis chose its own type of government.

Sparta and Athens, two important Greek city-states, had different types of government. They also had very different societies.

Political Changes in Ancient Greece



Defining

1. What is a *tyrant*?



Listing

2. List two groups of people who lived in Greek city-states that did not want the nobles to rule.



Marking the Text

3. Underline the definitions of *oligarchy* and *democracy*.



Reading Check

4. Why were tyrants able to hold power in various Greek city-states?

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Marking the Text

5. Circle the word that means "relating to soldiers and war."

Describing

6. What were Spartan women expected to do as adults?

FOLDABLES

Outlining

7. Place a one-tab Foldable along the dotted line to the right. On the anchor tab, write *Military Society*. Use both sides of the tab to outline events in the lives of Spartan boys and men.

Reading Check

8. Why did Sparta fall behind other Greek city-states in many areas?

Sparta: A Military Society

Sparta was located on the Peloponnesus Peninsula in southern Greece. Sparta invaded nearby city-states and enslaved the people who lived there. The Spartans called these enslaved people **helots**.

In about 650 B.C. the helots rebelled. The Spartans crushed the uprising. The leaders decided to make Sparta a military society. The leaders thought this would make citizens more loyal and obedient.

All boys and men were prepared for a life of war. Boys left home at age seven. They lived in harsh military camps where they learned to read, write, and to use weapons. Spartan leaders believed harsh treatment would make boys into adults who could survive the pain of battle.

Life for Men in Sparta

- Age 7: Left home for military camps
- Age 20: Joined the regular army
- Age 30: Could live at home while serving in the military
- Age 60: Finally left military service

Spartan women enjoyed more freedom than women in other city-states because the men were often away from home. Girls were trained in sports such as wrestling. The main role of women was to raise sons for the military.

Sparta's government was an oligarchy. Two kings ruled together, but had little power. The council of elders acted as judges and the assembly made decisions about war and peace. The assembly elected five people each year to be **ephors**. The ephors enforced laws and collected taxes.

Sparta's leaders believed education could lead to unrest. For this reason, the government discouraged people from studying literature and the arts. Foreign visitors were not welcome. People could leave Sparta only for military purposes. Trade was limited. Sparta became isolated.

Athens: A Young Democracy

Athens was another important Greek city-state. It was located northeast of Sparta. The people who lived in Athens were descended from the Mycenaean people.

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The Athenian people had different ideas about government and society than the people of Sparta.

In Athens, boys studied arithmetic, geometry, drawing, music, and public speaking. They also practiced sports. Boys finished school at age 18. At that age, they were expected to be active in public affairs.

Girls in Athens were educated at home.

- They learned spinning, weaving, and other household duties.
- In some wealthy families they learned to read, write, and play music.
- Women were expected to marry and raise children.

About 600 B.C. most Athenian farmers owed money to the nobles. To avoid an uprising, the nobles turned to a respected merchant named Solon. Solon ended the farmers' debts and freed those who had been enslaved.

In 560 B.C. another tyrant took over the government. His name was Peisistratus. He gave citizenship to people who did not own land. He hired the poor to build temples.

After Peisistratus died, Cleisthenes took over. He gave the assembly even greater powers. Cleisthenes also created a new council of 500 citizens to help the assembly manage government business. Each year a lottery was held to choose the council members. Using a lottery meant that every citizen had a chance to be a council member.

Cleisthenes' changes made the Athenian government more democratic. However, people who were not citizens still could not participate in the government. This included all women, foreign-born men, and enslaved people.

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Check for Understanding

Name one way Cleisthenes made the Athenian government more democratic.

1. _____

List the three groups who were not helped by his changes.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Reading Check

9. What did Solon do to help farmers?

Explaining

10. What was the benefit of using the lottery system?

Reading Check

11. Why was Solon chosen to be leader of Athens?



12. Place a one-tab Foldable to cover the Check for Understanding. Write *Cleisthenes* on the anchor tab. Use both sides to list what you remember about Cleisthenes. Use your notes to complete the lists under the tab.