

**ATHENS**

OR

**SPARTA**



***How were the governments of  
Athens and Sparta different?***



How was the Athenian government structured?

Democracy: \_\_\_\_\_

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The Assembly: \_\_\_\_\_

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The Council of 500: \_\_\_\_\_

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What role do generals play? \_\_\_\_\_

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How was the Spartan government structured?

Oligarchy: \_\_\_\_\_

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The Assembly: \_\_\_\_\_

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Council of Elders: \_\_\_\_\_

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What role do ephors play? \_\_\_\_\_

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**UNDER WHICH SYSTEM WOULD YOU RATHER LIVE? BACK IT UP WITH AT LEAST 3 EXAMPLES FROM THE TEXT!**

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# ATHENS

# OR

# SPARTA

## How were the governments of Athens and Sparta different?

Hello! It is so nice to meet you! My name is Mr. Athens and I am thrilled to tell you about how the best city-state in all of Greece operates. First and foremost, our government is supreme. In fact, the way we do things became the envy of all other city-states -- we call this system democracy. This is a type of government where the people make decisions for how the government operates! We think it is best that all people have a right to participate in their own government. In our democracy, there is a group called the Assembly. This group makes our laws! How can one get in the Assembly, you ask? By being a free male and being at least 18 years old. If you satisfy those requirements, you are in! Don't meet the requirements to be in the Assembly? No worries! We also have a group called the Council of 500. Any citizen, rich or poor, is free to join this group! But, we have a set number of how many people can be in the Council. Can you guess how many? It's 500! To be one of these 500 you have to win a lottery. If you are lucky enough to get in, let me give you a quick summary of what you would be responsible for. Are you ready? All you need to worry about is proposing the laws that the Assembly votes on. Sounds simple, right? Oh, and did I mention you get paid for serving in the Council? The last thing I have to stress to you before you take off is about our leadership. What scares us Athenians the most is placing all the power of our beloved city-state in the hands of one individual. Just think of what would happen to our beautiful land if he became corrupt? So, we developed a genius plan to avoid having one person in charge! We choose 10 very experienced generals to lead Greece! These generals command the army and the navy. Oh, and you might see them in court too since they also act as our judges. So, what do you think? Athens sounds pretty sweet, right?

"Hey, what's up? My name is Mr. Sparta. So you want to know how the government over here works, do ya? Well, first I want clear up a few things about about Athens. First, you can't trust Athenians. Second, you can't trust Athenians. Have I made myself clear? Why would you trust a system that willingly creates anarchy among its people? I mean, letting the common man, with little education or experience, play important roles in government? Please! In Sparta, we place the power to rule in older, experienced men, since they have the wisdom to know what is best. We choose an oligarchy as our system of government. This means that we have more than one equal ruler -- we actually have two kings that lead us everywhere! In Sparta, we laugh at the idea of letting 18-year old "boys" vote on laws. Ha! We have a Council of Elders made up of 30 of our most respected men. You must be 60 years old to be part this elite group. These wise men write our laws and prepare them for vote by the Assembly. Who do you think will make better laws -- an inexperienced 18 year-old boy, or a wise, experienced, 60 year-old man? I think the answer is simple. Where do laws go once written, you ask? They go to the Assembly where they are voted on to become official. We relax the rules a little bit here - you only have to be 30 years old to join, and all males can participate if they wish to. Now, while we have two Kings in Sparta, we too are concerned that they may become corrupt. After all, once you get that much power it becomes rather easy to make bad decisions. What do we do to prevent this? Each year the Assembly elects 5 men to watch over the kings -- we call them ephors. The ephors have a great deal of power, so don't cross them! They can even ignore laws passed by the Assembly! So what do you think about Sparta? It's the best of both worlds! The kings are kept in check, people are still involved in their government, and we don't let "boys" have great power!

**ATHENS**

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***How were the values of Athens  
and Sparta different?***



What did the Athenians value?

Create a list of things that Athenian society valued:

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What did the Spartans value?

Create a list of things that Spartan society valued:

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# ATHENS

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***How are the values of Athens and Sparta different?***

**"Well, hello there! It is good to speak with you again! Trust me, the pleasure is mine! So you want to know about our values, do you? Well, prepare yourself for a life of luxury because we Athenians insist on a very high quality of life.**

**First and foremost, we value our temples here in Athens, and it is our responsibility to protect, defend, and repair them. After all, it was Lady Athena who saved us when she battled Poseidon for control of our city! Oh yeah, Athena also gave us our very first olive tree during this famous battle. I'm sure you understand how important Athena is to us -- and we must do everything possible to respect her!**

**What else do we Athenians value? The short answer would be "anything that involves intellect and wit." And, I'll save you the time...you won't find anything like this in Sparta! We like art. We like learning. We have monuments that attract people from all the way across the Aegean Sea.**

**People throughout the Mediterranean world enjoy our educational institutions. Here, boys are required to be taught at home until they are six years old, then they attend school until they are fourteen. Then, they have the option of four more years after that! Here, boys are trained to become active citizens. Do you like sports too?**

**It is us, the Athenians, who invented the Olympics. While we enjoy competing in races, the long jump, and the javelin throw, we must remember the reason for these games. Do you know why we participate? It is to honor Zeus, the supreme god who rules over all of Greece! Here in Greece we also take great pride in our writers. People would travel far and wide to see the latest drama by Aeschylus, one of our most famous playwrights. I hope you've enjoyed our time together today - I sure have!"**

**"Let me guess - you are sick and tired of that Mr. Athens, aren't you? He's always so snooty and thinks that he's better than me just because he is well-educated. Well you know what, he's not! He may be smarter, but I bet you anything I'm stronger! I'll tell you what we value here in Sparta and I'll let you make the decision on whose lifestyle is better -- although I have a feeling you will choose us! We have absolutely no interest in building huge statues or temples. Also, we think any spending on "art" or "learning" is simply foolish. If a civilization starts throwing their money to these types of things -- things that don't matter -- they will be extinct before they know it!**

**Do you want to know what we value the most? Really? You do? Two simple words: strong military. Our number one goal is to provide a powerful military force that can protect the land of Sparta and all of its citizens. Do we have schools? Of course! But, our schools are very different from those in Athens. When our boys turn seven we send them off to a military school. Here, our boys begin training to become warriors. They learn basic reading and writing skills, but more importantly they learn how to use a weapon, defend themselves and kill! Instead of arithmetic or "poetry", we teach courage, honor, and strength. Because we value strength, we sometimes have to make tough choices. In school, boys are encouraged to steal. If caught, they are whipped. In everyday life, if a woman gives birth to a weak baby, it is left outside to die. We cannot allow this weakness to bring down Sparta. I'm sure you noticed this about Mr. Athens when you spoke to him, but he is weak. Like, really weak. The Athenians' lack of focus on training soldiers will be what dooms them!**

© History with Mr. E - A Social Studies Professional  
Specializing in American and World History for late Elementary, Middle, and early High School

# ATHENS



## ***How were the economies of Athens and Sparta different?***

# SPARTA



**"Hey hey! Let me guess -- that Mr. Sparta has got you down, doesn't he? He always gets me depressed too. Seriously, can you believe that Sparta only focuses on a military education?**

**What a sad, sad way to live. Oh well!**

**Do you want to know how we Athenians pay the bills? It's simple: our economy is based on trade and tourism. Thousands of visitors come to Athens to visit our wonderful temples and schools, and while they are here they spend their money! Woo! The tourists also bring goods from foreign lands to trade, sell, or barter. Since we are located near the sea, trade and tourism are easy for us. Our port cities are well-kept, and our harbors are visited by many other Greek city-states on a daily basis. What do we trade away, you ask? We will trade anything we have in excess. Let me have you guess! We specialize in olive trees, beekeeping, and creating fabulous works of art. What do we think we have 'extra' of? You guessed it, we trade away olive oil, honey, and our fine pottery. We trade these for goods that we need, such as grain and barley for bread and to feed our animals. We also import pork, cheese, glass, and rugs.**

**You should come visit sometime and see this whole "trading" thing take place! Most of it happens in our downtown marketplace -- we call it the agora. It is truly something to see! To make trading easier, we use our own coin system. Many other city states have started to use our coins for their currency too! Since many look to us to lead the Mediterranean world, it just makes things easier! I hope to see you here sometime soon!"**

**"Welcome back! I hope Mr. Athens didn't bore you too much! Are you ready to hear how we Spartans do business? While Athens relies on things outside of their control -- like trade and tourism -- we go to great lengths to make sure our citizens are taken care of! We specialize in two things: farming and conquering. We farm the land to produce crops to feed our growing population, and we conquer other people nearby to ensure we have enough land to support our growing population. Is this wrong? The way I see it, it's either them or us! What happens to the people living in the areas we conquer, you ask? Well, they become our slaves. We call these people helots. These slaves are extremely important to Spartan society. The Spartan men often spend their lives away from home being warriors, so the helots are used to farm the land. We treat these helots very well -- we let them stay in their homes they originally lived in, but they have to give us the majority of food they produce. This is fair, right? We also have a group of people that don't qualify for citizenship -- we call these people perioikoi. These people are active in Spartan society but aren't true Spartans. Many of them make the goods our soldiers use, such as shoes, cloaks, knives, and spears.**

**Do we trade with the rest of the world like Athens? Absolutely not. We use our own currency -- iron bars -- and most people aren't too thrilled about receiving iron as a form of payment. Oh well, we don't care! If other city-states don't want to trade with us, we'll just stick to our own business!**

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***How did Athens and Sparta treat  
women and slaves?***



How did Athens treat women and slaves?

In the space provided, can you explain how Athens treated its women and its slaves?

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How did Sparta treat women and slaves?

In the space provided, can you explain how Sparta treated its women and its slaves?

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## ***How did Athens and Sparta treat women and slaves?***

**“Welcome back! I sure enjoy speaking with you and helping you become enlightened about life in Athens. I bet you are starting to see that Athens’ way of life is clearly superior to that of those horrid Spartans. So, you want to hear about our non-citizens? Well, don’t let this area of our civilization shock you. After all, most civilizations around the world have people who aren’t considered citizens!**

**Here in Athens we have two groups of people who don’t qualify for citizenship: women and slaves. I hate to say it, but women in Athens are treated much differently than men. Take my wife for example -- she is not allowed to inherit my property when I die, nor is she ever allowed to own property. She is never allowed in the Assembly and certainly isn’t allowed vote. This is okay, right? Oh, and there are only a few jobs open to women here in Athens. Some women -- but only important ones -- are allowed to be a priestess in a temple. A priestess is a female priest. What else are women restricted from, you ask? Don’t get mad at me because I don’t make the rules, but women aren’t allowed to leave their homes without a male companion! Crazy, right?**

**We also have slaves here in Athens, but we treat them very, very well! Slaves do most of our farming work since men are often engaged in educational or political matters, but they can also do household work or can serve as a clerk in an office. But, these jobs are only for the lucky ones. What happens to the unlucky ones? They work underground in the silver mines.”**

**“Aren’t you a little shocked to hear how the Athenians treat their women? They talk about how superior they are with their art and education, then they don’t even let women leave the house alone? Please! In Sparta, women are equal citizens to men. Women can own property and are even allowed to speak to their husband’s friends -- something forbidden in Athens! Do you want to know something really interesting? Say a Spartan man is away at war for a long time. Do you know what his wife could do? She could marry someone else while he is away at war! I think it’s fair to say that we treat women much better than Athens!**

**What about slaves, you ask? Well, yes, we have slaves. But, we don’t call them slaves. We call them helots. Earlier I said we treat our helots very well -- but some say we are very mean to them. Put yourself in our shoes for second -- how would you treat people you just conquered? We want to be nice to them, but many people are afraid they will revolt, so we have to keep them in line! In fact, one time we told the helots to round up their best fighters. We told them that if these fighters fought for Sparta, then all helots would go free! Do you know what we did? We killed all of them! Good luck leading a revolt against us without your best men! Some call this a trick, but we call it genius! Helots are allowed to marry. In fact, we encourage it! Helots who marry and have children mean more helots to take care of Sparta! We let helots sell their crops and even buy their own freedom. See, we aren’t all bad!”**