



# Warring City-States

## MAIN IDEA

**POWER AND AUTHORITY** The growth of city-states in Greece led to the development of several political systems, including democracy.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Many political systems in today's world mirror the varied forms of government that evolved in Greece.

## TERMS & NAMES

- polis
- acropolis
- monarchy
- aristocracy
- oligarchy
- tyrant
- democracy
- helot
- phalanx
- Persian Wars

**SETTING THE STAGE** During the Dorian period, Greek civilization experienced decline. However, two things changed life in Greece. First, Dorians and Mycenaeans alike began to identify less with the culture of their ancestors and more with the local area where they lived. Second, by the end of this period, the method of governing areas had changed from tribal or clan control to more formal governments—the city-states.

## Rule and Order in Greek City-States

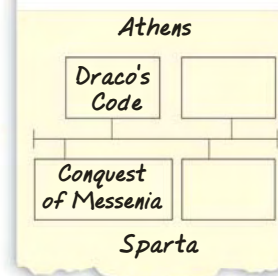
By 750 B.C., the city-state, or **polis**, was the fundamental political unit in ancient Greece. A polis was made up of a city and its surrounding countryside, which included numerous villages. Most city-states controlled between 50 and 500 square miles of territory. They were often home to fewer than 10,000 residents. At the agora, or marketplace, or on a fortified hilltop called an **acropolis** (uh•KRAHP•uh•lihs), citizens gathered to discuss city government.

**Greek Political Structures** Greek city-states had many different forms of government. (See the chart on page 128.) In some, a single person, called a king, ruled in a government called a **monarchy**. Others adopted an **aristocracy** (AR•ih•STAHK•ruh•see), a government ruled by a small group of noble, landowning families. These very rich families often gained political power after serving in a king's military cavalry. Later, as trade expanded, a new class of wealthy merchants and artisans emerged in some cities. When these groups became dissatisfied with aristocratic rule, they sometimes took power or shared it with the nobility. They formed an **oligarchy**, a government ruled by a few powerful people.

**Tyrants Seize Power** In many city-states, repeated clashes occurred between rulers and the common people. Powerful individuals, usually nobles or other wealthy citizens, sometimes seized control of the government by appealing to the common people for support. These rulers were called **tyrants**. Unlike today, tyrants generally were not considered harsh and cruel. Rather, they were looked upon as leaders who would work for the interests of the ordinary people. Once in power, for example, tyrants often set up building programs to provide jobs and housing for their supporters.

## TAKING NOTES

**Following Chronological Order**  
On a double time line, note the important events in the development of Athens and Sparta.



## Athens Builds a Limited Democracy

The idea of representative government also began to take root in some city-states, particularly Athens. Like other city-states, Athens went through power struggles between rich and poor. However, Athenians avoided major political upheavals by making timely reforms. Athenian reformers moved toward **democracy**, rule by the people. In Athens, citizens participated directly in political decision making.

**Building Democracy** The first step toward democracy came when a nobleman named Draco took power. In 621 B.C., Draco developed a legal code based on the idea that all Athenians, rich and poor, were equal under the law. Draco’s code dealt very harshly with criminals, making death the punishment for practically every crime. It also upheld such practices as debt slavery, in which debtors worked as slaves to repay their debts.

More far-reaching democratic reforms were introduced by Solon (SO•luhn), who came to power in 594 B.C. Stating that no citizen should own another citizen, Solon outlawed debt slavery. He organized all Athenian citizens into four social classes according to wealth. Only members of the top three classes could hold political office. However, all citizens, regardless of class, could participate in the Athenian assembly. Solon also introduced the legal concept that any citizen could bring charges against wrongdoers.

Around 500 B.C., the Athenian leader Cleisthenes (KLYS•thuh•NEEZ) introduced further reforms. He broke up the power of the nobility by organizing citizens into ten groups based on where they lived rather than on their wealth. He also increased the power of the assembly by allowing all citizens to submit laws for debate and passage. Cleisthenes then created the Council of Five Hundred. This body proposed laws and counseled the assembly. Council members were chosen by lot, or at random.

The reforms of Cleisthenes allowed Athenian citizens to participate in a limited democracy. However, citizenship was restricted to a relatively small number of Athenians. Only free adult male property owners born in Athens were considered citizens. Women, slaves, and foreigners were excluded from citizenship and had few rights. **A**

**Athenian Education** For the most part, only the sons of wealthy families received formal education. Schooling began around the age of seven and largely prepared boys to be good citizens. They studied reading, grammar, poetry, history, mathematics, and music. Because citizens were expected to debate issues in the assembly, boys also received training in logic and public speaking. And since the Greeks believed that it was important to train and develop the body, part of each day





### Vocabulary

The legal code prepared by Draco was so harsh that the word *draconian* has come to mean “extreme cruelty or severity.”

### MAIN IDEA

### Contrasting

**A** How is Athenian democracy different from modern American democracy?

Forms of Government			
<b>Monarchy</b> 	<b>Aristocracy</b> 	<b>Oligarchy</b> 	<b>Direct Democracy</b> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State ruled by a king</li> <li>• Rule is hereditary</li> <li>• Some rulers claim divine right</li> <li>• Practiced in Mycenae by 2000 B.C.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State ruled by nobility</li> <li>• Rule is hereditary and based on family ties, social rank, wealth</li> <li>• Social status and wealth support rulers’ authority</li> <li>• Practiced in Athens prior to 594 B.C.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State ruled by a small group of citizens</li> <li>• Rule is based on wealth or ability</li> <li>• Ruling group controls military</li> <li>• Practiced in Sparta by 500 B.C.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State ruled by its citizens</li> <li>• Rule is based on citizenship</li> <li>• Majority rule decides vote</li> <li>• Practiced in Athens by about 500 B.C.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts</b></p> <p><b>1. Summarizing</b> Which forms of government feature rule based on wealth or property ownership?</p> <p><b>2. Clarifying</b> In which form of government do citizens have the most power?</p>			

## > Analyzing Primary Sources

### A Husband's Advice

In this excerpt from *The Economist*, the Greek historian Xenophon describes how a husband might respond to his wife's question about how she could remain attractive:

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

I counseled her to oversee the baking woman as she made the bread; to stand beside the housekeeper as she measured out her stores; to go on tours of inspection to see if all things were in order as they should be. For, as it seemed to me, this would at once be walking exercise and supervision. And, as an excellent gymnastic, I recommended her to knead the dough and roll the paste; to shake the coverlets and make the beds; adding, if she trained herself in exercise of this sort she would enjoy her food, grow vigorous in health, and her complexion would in very truth be lovelier. The very look and aspect of the wife.

XENOPHON, *The Economist*, Book 10 (Translated by H. G. Dakyns)



#### DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

1. **Making Inferences** What is the husband suggesting in his advice to his wife?
2. **Synthesizing** How is the husband's advice representative of Athenian attitudes toward women?

was spent in athletic activities. When they got older, boys went to military school to help them prepare for another important duty of citizenship—defending Athens.

Athenian girls did not attend school. Rather, they were educated at home by their mothers and other female members of the household. They learned about child-rearing, weaving cloth, preparing meals, managing the household, and other skills that helped them become good wives and mothers. Some women were able to take their education farther and learned to read and write. A few even became accomplished writers. Even so, most women had very little to do with Athenian life outside the boundaries of family and home.

## Sparta Builds a Military State

Located in the southern part of Greece known as the Peloponnese (PEHL•uh•puh•NEE•sus), Sparta was nearly cut off from the rest of Greece by the Gulf of Corinth. (See the map on page 121.) In outlook and values, Sparta contrasted sharply with the other city-states, Athens in particular. Instead of a democracy, Sparta built a military state.

**Sparta Dominates Messenians** Around 725 B.C., Sparta conquered the neighboring region of Messenia and took over the land. The Messenians became **helots** (HEHL•uhts), peasants forced to stay on the land they worked. Each year, the Spartans demanded half of the helots' crops. In about 650 B.C., the Messenians, resentful of the Spartans' harsh rule, revolted. The Spartans, who were outnumbered eight to one, just barely put down the revolt. Shocked at their vulnerability, they dedicated themselves to making Sparta a strong city-state.

## Festivals and Sports

The ancient Greeks believed that strong healthy citizens helped strengthen the city-state. They often included sporting events in the festivals they held to honor their gods. The most famous sports festival was the Olympic games, held every four years. Records of Olympics winners started in 776 B.C. At first, the festival lasted only one day and had only one contest, a race called the stade. Later, many other events were added, including a long-distance race, wrestling, the long jump, the javelin, and the discus throw. The Olympics was expanded to five days in 472 B.C.

### Women's Sports ►

Women had their own sports festival in ancient Greece. It was the festival devoted to Hera, the wife of Zeus. Like the Olympics, the Hera festival was held every four years. One of the main events was a foot race for unmarried women.



### ◀ Discus Thrower

Ancient athletes, such as this discus thrower, would be considered amateurs today because they received no pay for competing. However, they trained rigorously for months at a time. Victors were given lavish gifts and were hailed as heroes. Many athletes competed full-time.

### ▼ Mount Olympus

The ancient Olympics honored Zeus, the father of all Greek gods and goddesses. According to legend, Zeus hurled a thunderbolt from Mount Olympus at a spot in rural Greece. An altar for Zeus was built on that spot. Eventually, many buildings were erected around the altar. This area was called Olympia and became the site for the Olympic games.

#### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Visual Sources

- Evaluating Decisions** Do you think it was a good decision for the Greeks to add more sporting events to the Olympics? Explain.
- Comparing and Contrasting** How are today's Olympics similar to and different from the Olympics in ancient Greece?

**Sparta's Government and Society** Spartan government had several branches. An assembly, which was composed of all Spartan citizens, elected officials and voted on major issues. The Council of Elders, made up of 30 older citizens, proposed laws on which the assembly voted. Five elected officials carried out the laws passed by the assembly. These men also controlled education and prosecuted court cases. In addition, two kings ruled over Sparta's military forces.

The Spartan social order consisted of several groups. The first were citizens descended from the original inhabitants of the region. This group included the ruling families who owned the land. A second group, noncitizens who were free, worked in commerce and industry. The helots, at the bottom of Spartan society, were little better than slaves. They worked in the fields or as house servants.

**Spartan Daily Life** From around 600 until 371 B.C., Sparta had the most powerful army in Greece. However, the Spartan people paid a high price for their military supremacy. All forms of individual expression were discouraged. As a result, Spartans did not value the arts, literature, or other artistic and intellectual pursuits. Spartans valued duty, strength, and discipline over freedom, individuality, beauty, and learning. **B**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Comparing**

**B** How would you compare the ideals of Spartan and Athenian societies?

Since men were expected to serve in the army until the age of 60, their daily life centered on military training. Boys left home when they were 7 and moved into army barracks, where they stayed until they reached the age of 30. They spent their days marching, exercising, and fighting. They undertook these activities in all weathers, wearing only light tunics and no shoes. At night, they slept without blankets on hard benches. Their daily diet consisted of little more than a bowl of coarse black porridge. Those who were not satisfied were encouraged to steal food. Such training produced tough, resourceful soldiers.

Spartan girls also led hardy lives. They received some military training, and they also ran, wrestled, and played sports. Like boys, girls were taught to put service to Sparta above everything—even love of family. A legend says that Spartan women told husbands and sons going to war to “come back *with* your shield or *on* it.” As adults, Spartan women had considerable freedom, especially in running the family estates when their husbands were on active military service. Such freedom surprised men from other Greek city-states. This was particularly true of Athens, where women were expected to remain out of sight and quietly raise children.

## The Persian Wars

Danger of a helot revolt led Sparta to become a military state. Struggles between rich and poor led Athens to become a democracy. The greatest danger of all—invasion by Persian armies—moved Sparta and Athens alike to their greatest glory.

**A New Kind of Army Emerges** During the Dorian Age, only the rich could afford bronze spears, shields, breastplates, and chariots. Thus, only the rich served in armies. Iron later replaced bronze in the manufacture of weapons. Harder than bronze, iron was more common and therefore cheaper. Soon, ordinary citizens could afford to arm and defend themselves. The shift from bronze to iron weapons made possible a new kind of army composed not only of the rich but also of merchants, artisans, and small landowners. The foot soldiers of this army, called hoplites, stood side by side, each holding a spear in one hand and a shield in the other. This fearsome formation, or **phalanx** (FAY•LANGKS), became the most powerful fighting force in the ancient world.

**Battle at Marathon** The **Persian Wars**, between Greece and the Persian Empire, began in Ionia on the coast of Anatolia. (See the map on page 132.) Greeks had long been settled there, but around 546 B.C., the Persians conquered the area. When

Ionian Greeks revolted, Athens sent ships and soldiers to their aid. The Persian king Darius the Great defeated the rebels and then vowed to destroy Athens in revenge.

In 490 B.C., a Persian fleet carried 25,000 men across the Aegean Sea and landed northeast of Athens on a plain called Marathon. There, 10,000 Athenians, neatly arranged in phalanxes, waited for them. Vastly outnumbered, the Greek soldiers charged. The Persians, who wore light armor and lacked training in this kind of land combat, were no match for the disciplined Greek phalanx. After several hours, the Persians fled the battlefield. The Persians lost more than 6,000 men. In contrast, Athenian casualties numbered fewer than 200.

**Pheidippides Brings News** Though the Athenians won the battle, their city now stood defenseless. According to tradition, army leaders chose a young runner named Pheidippides (fy•DIP•uh•DEEZ) to race back to Athens. He brought news of the Persian defeat so that Athenians would not give up the city without a fight. Dashing the 26 miles from Marathon to Athens, Pheidippides delivered his message, “Rejoice, we conquer.” He then collapsed and died. Moving rapidly from Marathon, the Greek army arrived in Athens not long after. When the Persians sailed into the harbor, they found the city heavily defended. They quickly put to sea in retreat.

**Thermopylae and Salamis** Ten years later, in 480 B.C., Darius the Great’s son and successor, Xerxes (ZURK•seez), assembled an enormous invasion force to crush Athens. The Greeks were badly divided. Some city-states agreed to fight the

Persians. Others thought it wiser to let Xerxes destroy Athens and return home. Some Greeks even fought on the Persian side. Consequently, Xerxes’ army met no resistance as it marched down the eastern coast of Greece.

When Xerxes came to a narrow mountain pass at Thermopylae (thur•MAHP•uh•lee), 7,000 Greeks, including 300 Spartans, blocked his way. Xerxes assumed that his troops would easily push the Greeks aside. However, he underestimated their fighting ability. The Greeks stopped the Persian advance for three days. Only a traitor’s informing the Persians about a secret path around the pass ended their brave stand. Fearing defeat, the Spartans held the Persians back while the other Greek forces retreated. The Spartans’ valiant sacrifice—all were killed—made a great impression on all Greeks.

Meanwhile, the Athenians debated how best to defend their city. Themistocles, an Athenian leader, convinced them to evacuate the city and fight at sea. They positioned their fleet in a narrow channel near the island of Salamis (SAL•uh•mihs), a few miles southwest of Athens. After setting fire to Athens, Xerxes sent his warships to




**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps**

- 1. Movement** By what routes did the Persians choose to attack Greece? Explain why.
- 2. Location** Where did most of the battles of the Persian Wars occur? How might their citizens have been affected?


block both ends of the channel. However, the channel was very narrow, and the Persian ships had difficulty turning. Smaller Greek ships armed with battering rams attacked, puncturing the hulls of many Persian warships. Xerxes watched in horror as more than one-third of his fleet sank. He faced another defeat in 479 B.C., when the Greeks crushed the Persian army at the Battle of Plataea (pluh•TEE•uh). After this major setback, the Persians were always on the defensive.

The following year, several Greek city-states formed an alliance called the Delian (DEE•lee•uhn) League. (The alliance took its name from Delos, the island in the Aegean Sea where it had its headquarters.) League members continued to press the war against the Persians for several more years. In time, they drove the Persians from the territories surrounding Greece and ended the threat of future attacks.

**Consequences of the Persian Wars** With the Persian threat ended, all the Greek city-states felt a new sense of confidence and freedom. Athens, in particular, basked in the glory of the Persian defeat. During the 470s, Athens emerged as the leader of the Delian League, which had grown to some 200 city-states. Soon thereafter, Athens began to use its power to control the other league members. It moved the league headquarters to Athens, and used military force against members that challenged its authority. In time, these city-states became little more than provinces of a vast Athenian empire. The prestige of victory over the Persians and the wealth of the Athenian empire set the stage for a dazzling burst of creativity in Athens. The city was entering its brief golden age. 

**MAIN IDEA**

**Recognizing Effects**

 How did the Persian Wars affect the Greek people, especially the Athenians?



**Modern Marathons**

Pheidippides' heroic act in the Persian Wars inspired officials at the first modern Olympic Games—held in Athens in 1896—to add a 26-mile race to their competition. The course of the race ran from Marathon to the Olympic Stadium in Athens.

Today, most of the world's major cities stage marathons every year. Many, like the one held in Boston, attract wheelchair competitors.

**INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY**

**INTERNET ACTIVITY** Create an illustrated history of the marathon. Go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com) for your research.

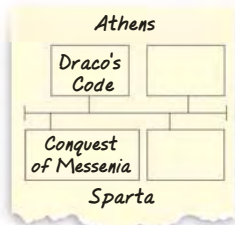
**SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT**

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- polis
- acropolis
- monarchy
- aristocracy
- oligarchy
- tyrant
- democracy
- helot
- phalanx
- Persian Wars

**USING YOUR NOTES**

2. Which of the events on your time line do you think was the most important for life today? Explain.



**MAIN IDEAS**

3. How does an aristocracy differ from an oligarchy?
4. What contributions did Solon and Cleisthenes make to the development of Athenian democracy?
5. How did Athens benefit from victory in the Persian Wars?

**CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING**

6. **CONTRASTING** How was living in Athens different from living in Sparta?
7. **MAKING INFERENCES** The introduction of cheap iron weapons meant that ordinary Greek citizens could arm themselves. How might the ability to own weapons change the outlook of ordinary citizens?
8. **ANALYZING MOTIVES** Why were the Spartan soldiers willing to sacrifice themselves at Thermopylae?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **POWER AND AUTHORITY** Write a brief political **monologue** about democracy from an Athenian slave's point of view.

**INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY INTERNET ACTIVITY**

New England town meetings are similar to the kind of democracy practiced in Ancient Greece. Use the Internet to find information on the town meeting. Present your findings to the class in a brief **oral report**.

**INTERNET KEYWORD**  
*town meeting*