

Year 6 History Autumn: Did the Ancient Greeks really invent democracy?

To begin our enquiry of “How can we make a change to society?” we will focus on the Ancient Greeks, their empire and their political system. We will compare their political system to that of ancient Rome and question why it was special at the time. To develop our understanding we will analyse and evaluate similarities and differences with modern political systems and question whether lessons in democracy can be learnt from the ancient Greeks.

We will be able to:

Explain how and why the Greek empire was able to grow.
Understand and explain what was special about the Greek democratic system and how it worked.
Compare and contrast ancient Greece’s political system to others e.g. Ancient Rome.
Describe some of Plato’s ideas and their impact on culture in the past and present.

To deepen our learning we will:

Understand how ancient philosophies have helped and contributed to the shaping of modern democratic systems.

Question and evaluate what modern society’s democratic political systems can learn from the Ancient Greeks.

Evaluate and explain how religion, devotion to Gods and Goddesses fit into Ancient Greece’s political system.

Question what modern society could have been like without the advances made in ancient Greece.

Key Vocabulary:

Acropolis - the citadel in ancient Greek towns. **Aegean** - of or relating to or bordering the Aegean Sea.
Aristocracy - a privileged class holding hereditary titles. **Aristotle** - one of the greatest of the ancient Athenian philosophers.
Assembly - a group of persons gathered together for a common purpose. **Athens** - the capital and largest city of Greece; named after Athena. **Citizen** - a native or naturalized member of a state. **City-state** - a state consisting of a sovereign city.
Colony - a geographical area controlled by a distant country. **Deity** - a supernatural being worshipped as controlling the world. **Democracy** - a political system in which power lies in a body of citizens.
Epic - a long narrative poem telling of a hero's deeds. **Fable** - a short moral story.
Homer - ancient Greek epic poet who is believed to have written **the Iliad** and **the Odyssey** (circa 850 BC). **Monarchy** - autocracy governed by a ruler who usually inherits authority. **Mythology** - the body of stories associated with a culture or institution. **Oligarchy** - a political system governed by a few people.
Oracle - an authoritative person who divines the future.
Pericles - Athenian statesman whose leadership contributed to Athens' political and cultural supremacy in Greece; he ordered the construction of the Parthenon (died in 429 BC).
Philosophy - the rational investigation of existence and knowledge. **Plato** - ancient Athenian philosopher. **Polytheism** - belief in multiple gods. **Socrates** - ancient Athenian philosopher; teacher of Plato and Xenophon. **Symposium** - a meeting for the public discussion of some topic. **Tyrant** - in ancient Greece, a ruler who had illegally seized power.

750 BC –
Homer begins to write the Iliad and Odyssey.

508 BC –
Democracy is introduced in Athens by Cleisthenes.

432 BC –
The Parthenon is completed in Athens on the Acropolis.

386 BC - Plato founds the first institution of higher learning in the western world - The Academy.

650 BC –
The Greek Tyrants come into power. Cypselus is the first Tyrant of Corinth.

621 BC –
Draco introduces strict laws in Athens with death sentence. “Draconian Laws”