

# Democracy in Ancient Athens

**words matter!**

**Ancient** refers to something from a time more than 2500 years ago.

Take a long step 2500 years back in time. Imagine you are a boy living in the **ancient** city of Athens, Greece. Your slave, Cleandros [KLEE-an-thros], is walking you to school. Your father and a group of his friends hurry past talking loudly. They are on their way to the Assembly. The Assembly is an important part of democratic government in Athens. All Athenian men who are citizens can take part in the Assembly. They debate issues of concern and vote on laws. As the son of a citizen, you look forward to being old enough to participate in the Assembly.

## The Birthplace of Democracy

The ancient Greeks influenced how people today think about citizenship and rights. In Athens, a form of government developed in which the people participated. The democracy we enjoy in Canada had its roots in ancient Athens.

- How did men who were citizens participate in the democratic government in Athens?
- Did Athens have representative government? Explain.



## “Watch Out for the Rope!”

Cleandros takes you through the *agora*, a large, open area in the middle of the city. It is filled with market stalls and men shopping and talking. You notice a slave carrying a rope covered with red paint. He walks through the *agora* swinging the rope and marking the men’s clothing with paint. They laugh and move away to avoid him.

Cleandros explains, “They need more people for the Assembly. If the men who are marked with red paint don’t go, they will be fined.”

“Why don’t they want to go to the Assembly?” you ask.

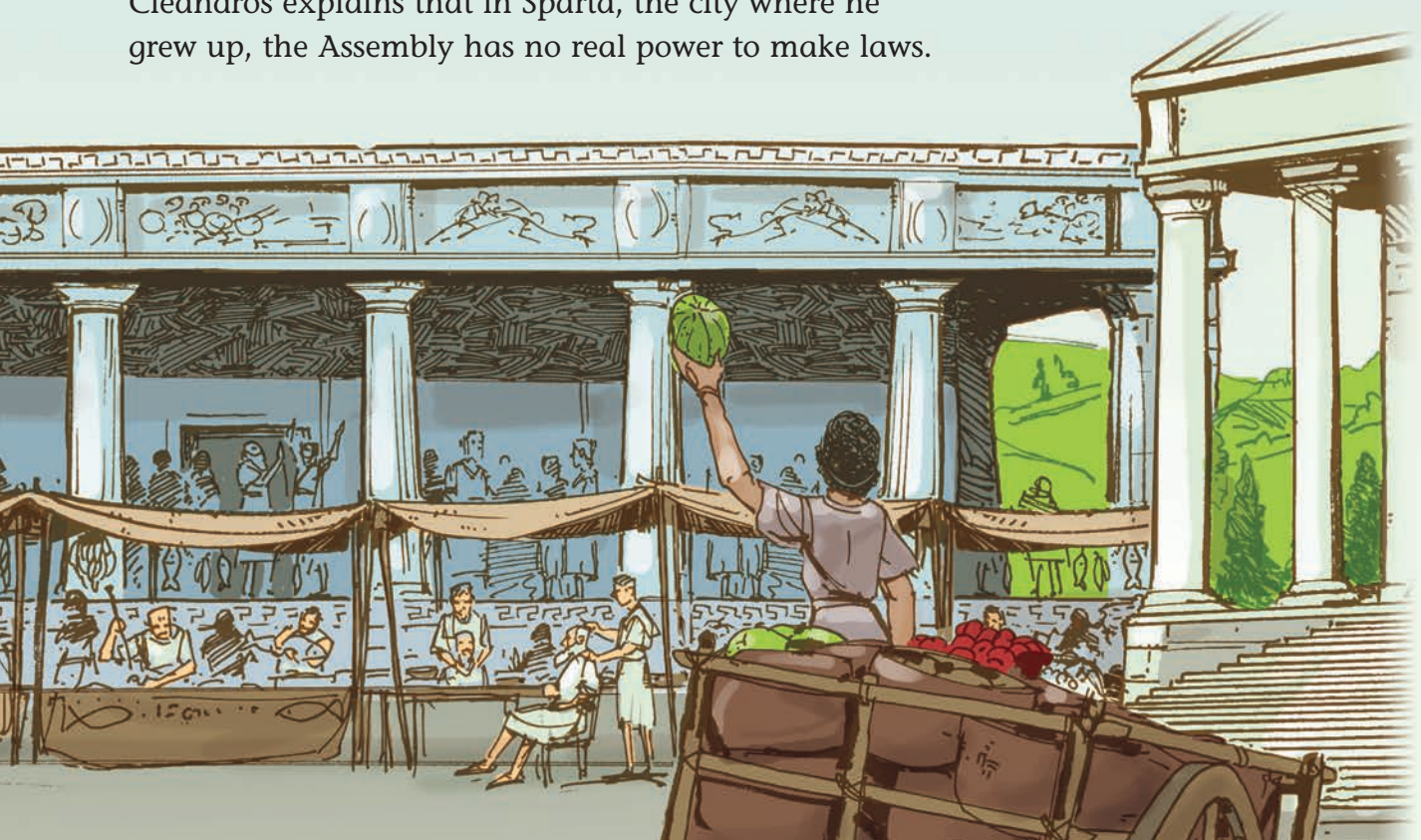
Cleandros shakes his head. “They would rather stay in the market gossiping. They should be happy they live in a place where there is democracy.”

Cleandros explains that in Sparta, the city where he grew up, the Assembly has no real power to make laws.

### ? Inquiring Minds

Ancient Athens was the birthplace of democracy. As you read this chapter, think about the following questions:

1. What are the beliefs and values that shaped democracy in Athens?
2. What role did citizens play in Athenian democracy?





This is Athens today. How do you think living among ancient ruins might affect your attitude toward the history of your city?

### words matter!

A **city-state** is made up of a city and the surrounding countryside that controls it. It is independent of other cities.

### Skill Smart

Locate the following features:

- The **title** tells what the map is about.
- The **compass rose** shows north, south, east, and west on the map.
- The **legend** explains the meaning of colours, lines, and symbols.
- The **scale** shows distance on the map.

In what direction would Athenians travel to reach the island of Crete? Approximately, how far is it between Athens and Crete?

# Who Were the Ancient Athenians?

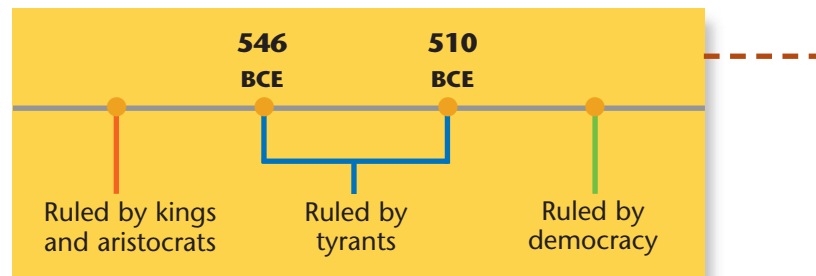
In Greece today, cities like Athens have modern transportation systems, schools, and hospitals. In some of these cities, you would also see ruins that remind us that people have been living in Greece for thousands of years.

Greece is a mountainous country, and communities were isolated from one another by the rugged landscape. Because of this isolation, each ancient Greek city developed its own style of government, its own laws, and built up its own army. Independent communities like these are called **city-states**.

## Map of Ancient Greece



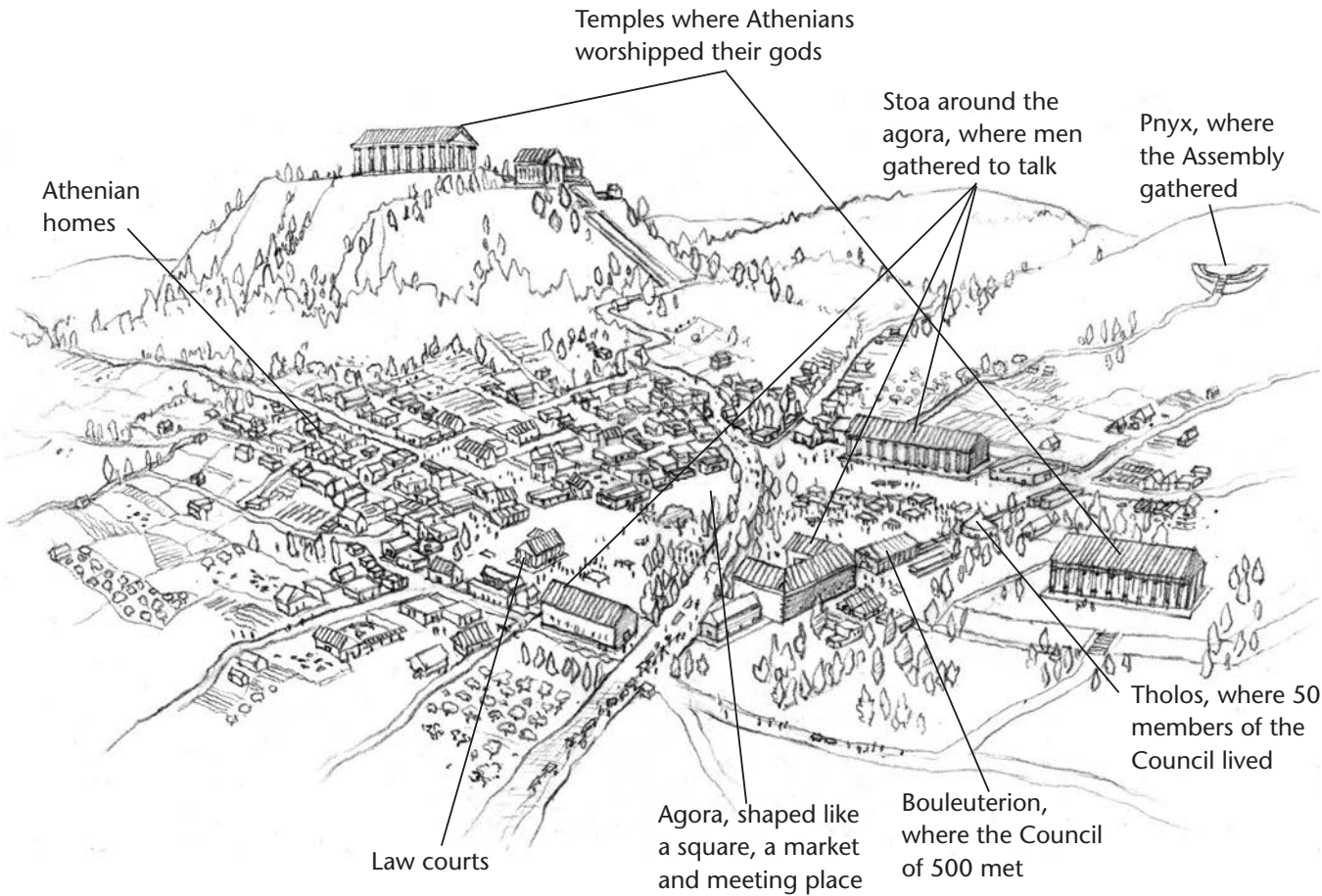
This map shows what Greece looked like almost 3000 years ago. It shows some of the city-states, the boundaries at that time, and the names of the surrounding countries and bodies of water.



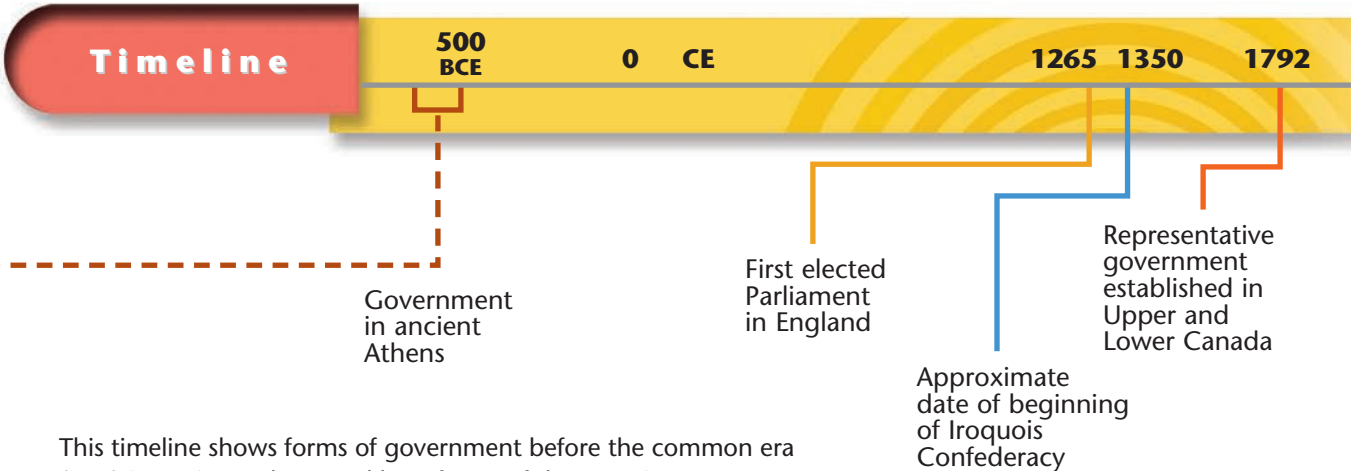
Some of the city-states were controlled by rich and powerful rulers called **tyrants** who demanded obedience from the people. Athens was different. Over time, the Athenians developed a system of government that allowed citizens to participate in making important decisions. Eventually many other Greek city-states also became democracies.

**words matter!**

**Tyrants** are rulers who seize power and govern in a harsh, cruel way.



Athens during the time of Athenian democracy



This timeline shows forms of government before the common era (BCE) in ancient Athens and later forms of democratic government.

# Who Were Citizens in Ancient Athens?

## Thinking It Through

1. How did people's place of birth, age, position in society, and gender affect their citizenship and participation in government in ancient Athens?
2. Many societies in ancient times limited the right of citizenship to people who were born there. Why do you think this is not true in Canada today?

Slaves like Cleandros, whom you met in the opening story, did not have the right to participate in Athenian democracy. Citizens were the only members of society who could vote and take part in government. Athenian citizenship was limited to one class or group in society. Citizens were proud of their position at the top of the social structure. The Athenian social structure looked like this.

### Citizens

Citizens were children of parents who were born in Athens. Only male citizens could participate in voting and governing the city. A young man became a citizen after he finished his military service at age 20. Women could not participate in Athenian democracy.



### Metics

Metics were residents of Athens who had been born outside the city-state. They were not allowed to own land and could not become citizens.



### Slaves

Slaves were owned either by private Athenians or by the city-state. Many slaves were people who had been taken prisoner when their city-state was attacked by the Athenians. Slaves could not become citizens.



Did you know that Canadians were once considered British citizens under the law? The *Canadian Citizenship Act*, which came into effect on January 1, 1947, changed all that. Now, people like Izza Ahmed shown here, originally from Pakistan, can become Canadian citizens.

Identity and status were defined by the level of the social structure into which a person was born. As a rule, people were not able to move from one class to another. Only on very rare occasions could a metic or a slave be granted citizenship.

## What Were the Roles of Men and Women?

What would you say if someone asked you to describe the roles of men and women in Canadian society? Men and women had very different roles in ancient Athens and generally lived very separate lives. These differences began from the moment of their birth. When a boy was born, his family attached an olive branch—a sign of victory—to the front door of the house. For a girl, they attached a piece of wool indicating her future as a homemaker. What do you think these symbols suggest about how boys and girls were valued in Greek society?

Both boys and girls spent their early years living in the women's part of the house. There they played with toys such as rattles, tops, dolls, yo-yos, hoops, swings, and knucklebones, which were similar to dice. At about age seven, the boys and girls went their separate ways.

Boys went off to school where they learned reading, writing, and math as well as music and literature. They memorized and discussed poems called **epics**. These poems told stories about great heroes of the past.



Boys of wealthy families were taken to school by their *paidagogus* [pe-tha-go-GOS], or slave tutors, who helped them with their studies. Poor boys usually went to school for only a few years.

### More About...

#### Roles in Society

Poor people in the citizen and metic classes led somewhat different lives. Boys left school at age 13 or 14 and began to work or learn a trade. Girls might work on the family farm or at the market. Female slaves generally worked in households cooking, cleaning, and fetching water. Some male slaves worked for families, while others did heavy labour.

#### words matter!

An **epic** is a long poem that tells a story usually about a legendary hero. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are epic poems believed to be written by the Greek poet Homer. They tell the story of the Trojan War. Why do you think Athenian boys had to study epics?



What skill is this Greek girl learning from her mother?

Men enjoyed entertaining friends in their homes at elaborate parties. They would lounge on couches and be served food and wine by slaves.



### Thinking It Through

1. Compare the rights of men and women in ancient Athens.
2. How did the education of Athenian children prepare them for their adult role in society? In what ways does education prepare children today for their future role in society?

Sports such as running, boxing, wrestling, and javelin and discus throwing were also an important part of boys' education. These skills prepared them for service in the army, which began at age 18. At age 20, they were ready to take their place as adults in Athenian society.

Men spent most of their day outside the home in the company of other men working, shopping at the agora, discussing politics, and voting. Sports were still an important part of their lives.

The lives of girls and women were completely focused on the home. Girls were educated by their mothers. Some of them were taught to read and write, but mostly they learned household skills—spinning, weaving, and child care—that they would need as adults. When a girl turned 15, her father chose a husband for her and she went to live in his house.

While wealthy families had slaves to do the housework, women wove cloth for their family's clothes. Wealthy women rarely went out in public except for family celebrations and certain religious ceremonies.

Women and men had very different rights in Athenian society. Every woman had a male guardian, either her father, brother, or husband, who was in charge of her life. Although she had the "right" to own clothing, jewellery, slaves, and even land, she was not allowed to sell or give away these things. Women did not take part in the Assembly.

# Was Fairness Part of Athenian Democracy?

In earlier chapters, you read that Canadians believe in the fair and equal treatment of all people. Our laws are based on these values. You also read that democracies protect the rights of citizens and that the Charter protects the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

What ideas of fairness, equity, and rights were part of Athenian democracy?

- The most important idea was that it is fair that citizens be allowed to rule themselves. This is the basis of democracy.
- Athenians believed that majority rule was fair. This meant that decisions were made by voting and that a law supported by more than half the voters was passed.
- Athenians believed that people who belonged to the same class in society, should have equal rights. All male citizens had the right to belong to the Assembly and vote. (The only exceptions were people who committed acts that would cause them to lose their citizenship and these were clearly laid out in law.)
- Women, slaves, and metics were denied voting rights.
- Slavery was an accepted part of Athenian society. A person's right to own another person was not questioned even by great Athenian thinkers like Socrates whom you will read about on page 69.
- Individual and minority rights were not part of the thinking of Athenian democracy. The common good was the highest value.

## More About . . .

### Slavery and Democracy

Some people argue that slavery made democracy possible in ancient Athens. There were many slaves to do the work and, as a result, Athenian men had free time to devote to taking part in government. Even poor Athenians owned two or three slaves and the wealthy owned many more.

These slaves are Spartans, captured in war with the Athenians in about 425 BCE. They are bound and chained. Check the location of the city-state of Sparta on the map on page 56.

## Thinking It Through

1. Which of the ancient Athenians' ideas of representation are part of Canadian democracy?
2. To what extent were freedom and equity part of Athenian democracy?





## Using Primary Sources

You have been reading about ancient Athens—how people governed themselves and how they lived. How do we know all this about a society that existed so long ago?

One way to learn about the past is to study what are called **primary sources**. Primary sources are writings and objects that were created by people living at a certain time. They can be

- writings such as books, diaries, letters, and newspapers
- visual items such as paintings, sculptures, and photographs
- objects such as clothing, tools, furniture, cooking implements, and weapons
- structures such as temples, homes, and government buildings.

Primary sources are in their original state; they are not edited or altered in any way. When we use primary sources to learn about the past we ask questions such as:

**What** is it? **Where** did it come from? **Who** made it? **When** was it made? **What** was it used for? **Why** was it made? **What** can I learn from it?

Below is a primary source from ancient Athens. It is a vase decoration of men at the Assembly. It shows us that they voted by dropping objects into a container. We can also see the clothing and hair styles worn by Greek men at that time.

The helmeted man in fancier clothing seems to be an official who is supervising the vote. Why do you think the Athenians would choose this type of image to decorate a vase?



## Practise the Skill

This primary source was discovered at an archaeological site of ancient Athens. The sculpture is titled *Democracy Crowning Demos*.

The woman holding the crown represents democracy. The man represents “demos,” the ancient Greek word for “people.” The **inscription** below is called “The Law Against Tyranny.” Inscriptions are important sources of information because they can last for hundreds, even thousands, of years.

Here is the meaning of part of the inscription:

*...If anyone rise up against (attack) the Demos (people) of Athens or the democracy in Athens, whoever kills him...is blameless...If anyone tries to rule when the democracy in Athens has been overthrown (defeated), both he and his progeny (children) will ...[have their] civil rights and... property [taken away]...*

1. Why do you think this work was created?
2. What does the sculpture tell us about the Athenian attitude toward democracy?
3. What crimes and punishments are described in the inscription?
4. What does the inscription tell us about the beliefs and attitudes of the Athenians?
5. Choose another primary source in this chapter and use the questions on page 62 to discuss it.



*Democracy Crowning Demos* is now in the Museum of the Ancient Agora in Athens.

# How Were Athenian Citizens Involved in Decision Making?

## words matter!

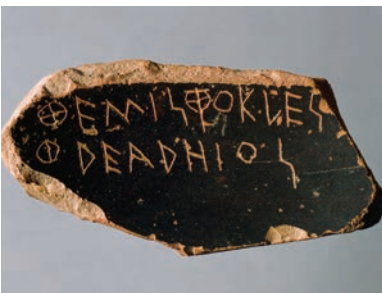
A **pillar** supports or holds up something.

There were many different ways for male Athenian citizens to become involved in running their city-state. It was a responsibility that most of them took very seriously. Any citizen who did not take part in the operation of government was looked down on.



Historians often refer to these three institutions as the “pillars” of Athenian democracy.

## The Assembly



Once a year, members of the Assembly could vote to exile one person, that is, force him to move away forever. This might be someone who was believed to be an enemy of democracy. Members would scratch the name of this person on a broken piece of pottery called an *ostrakon*. This is where the English word “ostracize” comes from.

Assembly meetings took place about 40 times a year, that is, every 8 to 10 days. They could get quite noisy. At times, many thousands of citizens would attend. For example, if there was to be a vote on whether to grant citizenship to a non-Athenian, at least 6000 members of the Assembly needed to be present. Imagine how long it would take to count the votes.

Its members would make decisions on many issues, big and small. They would confer on matters of war and peace, treaties with other city-states, religion, taxes, and the proper construction of ships.

Citizens could also bring private concerns to the Assembly. For example, if a person cheated you or harmed you, a complaint could be brought against him at the Assembly.

The Assembly would meet at a large open area at the top of a hill called the *Pnyx* [pu-NINKS]. There the members would make speeches, debate, listen, discuss, and finally vote.



▲ The *Pnyx* as it looks today. A citizen who wanted to address the Assembly would stand on the rock platform on the right so that he could be seen and heard.

Members of the Alberta legislature are elected to represent the interests of citizens. They sit on two sides of the House. What would a photo of direct democracy look like? ▶



### words matter!

In **direct democracy**, people vote directly to make decisions rather than having representatives.

A **decree** is a decision made by people who are in authority.

This kind of democracy is called **direct democracy** because citizens vote directly on government decisions. In Chapter 2, you looked at representative democracy, which we have in Canada today.

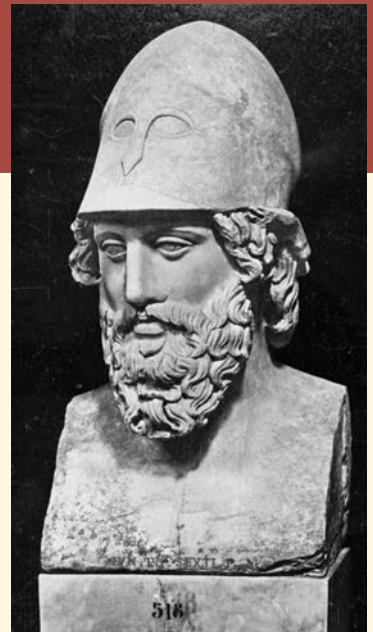
Every member of the Assembly had an equal right to speak. The Greek leader, Aeschines [Es-HIN-ees], wrote that the official in charge of speakers "...does not exclude from the [*Pnyx*] platform the man whose ancestors have not held a general's office, nor even the man who earns his daily bread by working at a trade; nay, these men he most heartily welcomes, and for this reason he repeats again and again the invitation, 'Who wishes to address the Assembly?'"

Voting was most often a show of hands. Every citizen's vote in the Assembly counted equally in decision making. Occasionally Assembly members used stones to represent their decision. A white stone might indicate that a citizen supported a certain decision, while a brown stone indicated the opposite position. As you saw on page 62, citizens voted by dropping their stones into large jugs. The stones were then separated and counted. The **decree** or decision was then announced with the words "It seems best to the Demos..."

### Thinking It Through

In Canada, a person's vote is by secret ballot. What are the advantages of voting in secret?

## Pericles, Athenian Statesman



Pericles was a successful general in the army of Athens as well as an important citizen.

What political leaders are you familiar with? Do you think the ability to speak well in public is essential for a political leader?

All citizens had the right to speak in the Assembly. However, those who were persuasive speakers had more power and influence. Pericles was an influential and prominent **orator**. An ancient Greek historian called him “the first citizen of Athens,” because he dominated Athenian life for over 20 years. This period (450–430 BCE) became known as “The Age of Pericles.”

### words matter!

An **orator** is someone who speaks in public.

### Speaking Out

We do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here [in Athens] at all.

*Pericles*

Pericles often spoke about democracy. In one speech, he said:

*Our form of government is better than all others. Our government does not copy our neighbours' but is an example to them. We are called a democracy because power is in the hands of the many and not of the few. We have equal justice for everyone and all citizens rich or poor can serve in the government. Because they share power, our citizens respect the authorities and the law and therefore live peacefully together and maintain order without force.*

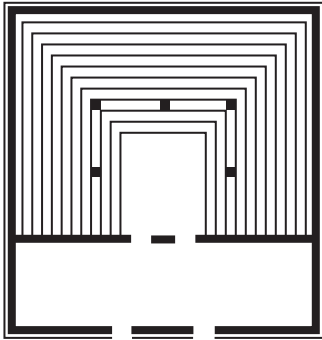
Pericles introduced a law requiring that people be paid for the time they spent in government. That way, poor citizens could participate in public decisions and still have enough money to live on. Pericles was also a great supporter of learning and the arts.

### Over to You

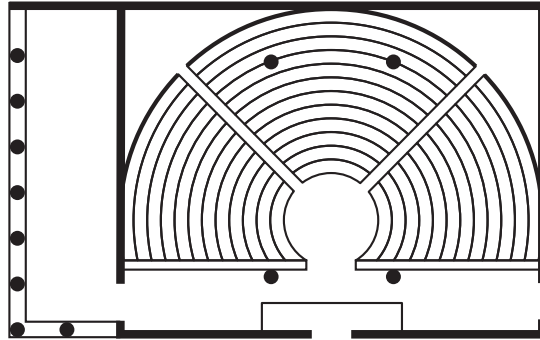
1. How did Pericles think democracy benefited people in a community?
2. Why do you think democracy is an attractive form of government today?

# How Was the Council of 500 Democratic?

The Council of 500 was the full-time government of Athens. It was known as the *boule* and met in the *Bouleuterion* [voo-loo-TE-ree-on] at the *agora*. The term for the Council was one year. Then a new Council was selected.



6<sup>th</sup> century BCE



5<sup>th</sup> century BCE

The citizens of Athens were officially divided into 10 **tribes** and 50 members from each tribe over the age of 30 served on the Council. The group of 50 Councillors from each tribe was in charge of the Council for one-tenth of the year.

Membership in the Council of 500 was made democratic in the following ways:

- Council positions were chosen through a **lottery** to give everyone in the tribe an equal chance of being picked.
- A citizen could serve on the Council only twice. This gave more citizens a chance to be Council members.
- The chairman or leader of the Council had his position for only 24 hours, a day and a night. This gave more than half the Council members a chance to be leader during the year of their service. The chairman was chosen by lottery.

The Council planned the **agenda** for Assembly meetings and supervised the running of the government. They would also discuss and vote on decrees that they would then present for approval to the Assembly. No laws or decrees could be made without the approval of the majority of the Assembly. There were always 50 members of the Council on duty at all times to help the chairman deal with emergencies that might come up. They lived in the *Tholos* near the *agora*.

## words matter!

In Athenian society, a **tribe** was a political group.

In a **lottery**, names are drawn by chance from a large number of choices.

An **agenda** is the list of topics that will be discussed at a meeting.

These are the floor plans for old and new Athenian Bouleuterion. Do you think one design is better than the other for practising democracy? Explain.

### Thinking It Through

1. Why do you think membership in the Council was limited to citizens over 30 years old?
2. How would limiting the amount of time a citizen could serve on Council or as chairman help safeguard democracy? What problems might it create?

# How Were Athenian Courts Run?

## words matter!

A **magistrate** is a government official who works for the court.

The **defendant** is the person who is accused of a crime in a court case.

The **plaintiff** is the person who brings a complaint about another person to court.

If Athenians felt that they had been wronged by someone, or if they thought that someone was not acting in the best interest of society, they would bring their complaint to a **magistrate**. Magistrates were citizens and officers of the court, who were chosen by lottery for a one-year term. Sometimes magistrates would set a fine as punishment. Other times, they would send the case to trial.

Any male citizen over the age of 30 could be chosen to be on a jury for a trial. Depending on how important the case was, a jury usually had between 501 and 1500 people. Jurors were chosen by lottery on the day of the trial. Today, in Canada, people are chosen for jury duty the same way. From this pool only 12 jurors are chosen for a criminal trial.

Women could take part in cases before a magistrate, but a woman who was a **defendant** in a jury trial needed to have a male citizen speak for her. Metics could be involved in legal cases, but they could not serve on juries.

Today people have professional lawyers speak for them in court, but in Athenian courts, people argued their own cases. The **plaintiff** and the defendant had to be able to speak well to convince the jury of their position. Wealthy Athenians sometimes hired professional speech writers to help them make more effective arguments.

When both sides had been heard, the jury would vote on whether the defendant was innocent or guilty. If the defendant was found guilty, the jury would vote on the punishment.

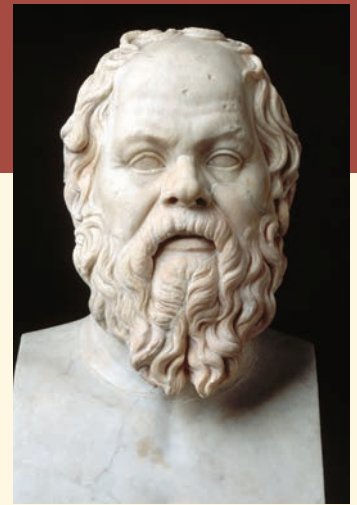


A *klepsydra* [KLEP-suh-druh] or water-clock was used to time the speeches of the plaintiff and defendant. Each got the same amount of water in the jar. When the water ran out, his time for speaking was over. How might this system have come about?

## Thinking It Through

1. Why do you think Athenian jurors were chosen on the day of the trial?
2. Do you think it would be better to go to trial in ancient Athens or in Canada today? Explain your thinking.

## The Trial of Socrates



Socrates' ideas are still studied by people today.

Socrates was one of the great thinkers in ancient Athens. He spent his days challenging young people to question their ideas. He criticized democracy because he thought that the lottery system did not allow the best people to govern. His ideas about religion were also different from those of most Athenians. Many citizens thought he was a dangerous influence on young people and disrespectful of the gods. Finally, the poet Meletus brought Socrates before the court.

Meletus and Socrates presented their arguments before a jury. The majority voted against Socrates. When Meletus asked that Socrates be given the death penalty, the jury agreed.

People in Athens who were given a death sentence commonly saved themselves by escaping from the city. But when Socrates' friends told him to leave the city, he refused. He said:

*Do you think that a state can exist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law are of no force (have no power), and are disregarded and set at nought (ignored) by private individuals?... [a good citizen] must do whatever your city and your country bid (tell) you to do, or you must convince them that their commands are unjust.*



This painting done in 1787 by Jacques-Louis David shows Socrates about to drink a cup of poison to end his life. How does the artist show Socrates' attitude toward his death?

### Over to You

1. What do you think about Socrates' criticism of the Athenian system of democracy?
2. What ideas about the responsibilities of citizens did Socrates express when his friends urged him to escape his punishment?
3. What similarities do you see between Socrates' speech and Pericles' speech on page 66? Use computer technology to organize your ideas.



## Is Ancient Athens a Good Example of Democracy?

Ancient Athens was the first democracy. The role of citizens in ancient Athens has served as a model of democracy for over 2500 years. However, as you read on page 58, the definition of a citizen was very limited. The majority of the population could not vote, be a member of the Assembly or Council of 500, or serve on a jury. So, is Athens a good example of democracy?



I don't understand why ancient Athens is called a democracy when only certain men could be citizens. If I lived back then, none of the women in my family would have been allowed to vote.

Viewpoint 1

Every adult citizen of Canada has the right to vote and to run for office in federal and provincial elections.





Democracy in ancient Athens was different from what we have in Canada today. We include many more people in our definition of a citizen. Still, Athenian citizens had many rights for that time in history. They voted directly on laws and every citizen had an opportunity to be on a jury or in the Assembly. They were also free to give their opinion on issues. In many other countries people were punished for speaking out.

Viewpoint 2



In some ways, the system in Athens was more democratic than it is in Canada today. Almost once a week they gathered to vote on laws. Sometimes there were thousands of people voting on a single issue. Many citizens in Canada don't even bother to vote in elections. It's their civic responsibility. I don't get it!

Viewpoint 3



Canada is a democracy. However, for many years only men who owned property were allowed to vote. Women, First Nations people, and many immigrants could not vote. Laws on voting changed because our attitudes changed. This shows that democracy can change over time. I think ancient Athens gave us a good start for democracy.

Viewpoint 4

### Over to You

1. Which of the statements is closest to your own thinking about democracy in ancient Athens?
2. If you could change one thing about Athenian democracy, what would it be? Explain your thinking.
3. In some places, people are fined if they don't vote. Do you think that this is a good idea? Explain.

# Contributing to Community



How can you make sure that everyone at a meeting gets a chance to speak?

All the Grade 6 classes in the school have been asked to choose two students to be their representatives on a Grade 6 student council. These representatives will attend student council meetings and help make decisions about Grade 6 events, such as a charitable fundraising project and the graduation event. A group of students in Mr. Kahn's class were talking about the council.

**MARIE:** *How will we choose our representatives? I'd like to nominate somebody. Is that how it works?*

**KENDRA:** *"Nominate" means suggest, right? But people might only suggest their friends. The most popular people will probably win. They aren't necessarily the ones who will do the best job.*

**IAN:** *And what if the people you nominate don't want to do it? I think the students who represent us should be excited about the job. I think all the students who want to do it should put their names on the board, and then we will decide by lottery, like the ancient Athenians. That's the fairest way.*

**MARIE:** *I don't like that idea. What if we are represented by someone who won't listen to the girls? A lottery might be the fairest way, but it might not be the best way.*

**IAN:** *But how do we know who will do the best job? We all have different ideas about what is important in a class representative. You want someone who listens to girls. I might want something else from the representative. Maybe we shouldn't even have a Grade 6 council. Maybe all the Grade 6 students should vote on every issue, like in a direct democracy. Let's go talk to Mr. Kahn.*

Mr. Kahn suggested that the students take their ideas to the librarian, Mrs. Savitska, who helps run the council.



**KENDRA:** Mrs. Savitska, we were thinking that the best way to make decisions is to use direct democracy instead of a council. That way everyone has a say.

**MRS. SAVITSKA:** That is a fair idea, Kendra, but do you think it's really possible? It would take a long time to explain each problem to all the students, listen to all the arguments for each side, vote, and then count all the votes. Having a council means only a few people make decisions, so it's more efficient. But your representatives should listen to what members of your class think and bring these ideas to the council. Then members of the council will make the best choices they can, based on the information they have.

**MARIE:** How do we know what our representatives think and how they might vote?

**MRS. SAVITSKA:** You're learning about ancient Athens in class, aren't you? Well, Athenians were known for choosing by lottery, but they were also known for their speeches.

**KENDRA:** That's right! We'll have a better idea of who might be the best people for the job if we hear what is important to them. Also then we'll know that they will be good speakers and will represent our ideas at council meetings.

Marie, Kendra, and Ian told the rest of their class what Mrs. Savitska had said. The students who wanted to be class representative put their names on the board and the class heard their speeches the next day. Then the class voted to choose two representatives.



If your class had to choose a representative for student council, what ideas would you like to hear the candidates express?

### Over to You

1. How were the students of Mr. Kahn's class practising democracy?
2. How else might the class have selected representatives?

# Explore More!

## ? Inquiring Minds

1. a. People in ancient Athenian society had different roles. With these roles, came both rights and responsibilities. In your notebook, make a chart like the one below and fill it in.

Group of people	Rights	Responsibilities
male citizens		
boys who were sons of citizens		
women and girls		
metics		
slaves		

- b. What beliefs and values of Athenian society do you think are reflected in your chart?

2. Just as in ancient Athens, many modern court cases are decided by juries. Prepare a pamphlet using primary sources to explain how juries work in Canada today. Include information such as who is eligible to serve on juries; how members are selected; how many jurors are required for each trial; and how juries make their decisions.
  - a. Modern primary sources that you might consult for gathering information include a person who has served as a juror, a lawyer, or a judge. You could also visit a courtroom and watch a trial in progress.
  - b. You might consider using computer technology to create your pamphlet.
  - c. Reflect on your methods of gathering information and your completed booklet. What might you do differently the next time you do a project like this one?
3. Make a list of ways that ancient Athenian democracy influenced Canadian democracy today. Organize your list from the most important to the least important. Share and discuss your list in a group.

# Your Turn

Another great ancient Greek thinker, Plato, did not believe that democracy was the best kind of government. He proposed that a small group of wise men should run the government. He thought that they could make better decisions than the average Athenian citizen. Have a horseshoe class debate on the question: Is Plato's idea a good criticism of democracy? At the beginning of the debate, you will choose a spot on the horseshoe indicating whether you agree, disagree, or are undecided about the question. Your position in the horseshoe may change in the course of the debate.

- a. Before the debate, make notes to support your position on the question.
- b. After the debate, consider how your classmates' opinions affected your thinking about the question. Explain.



## Democracy in Action Journal

In ancient Athens, women and metics could not act as citizens. In Canada today, our idea of citizenship is far more inclusive. However, is this reflected in our representatives in government? Here are some facts: In 2006, 16 of the 83 seats in the Alberta legislature were held by women. Although women represent half the Canadian population, they occupy only 20 percent of the seats in the Canadian Parliament. Aboriginal peoples, who make up 3.5 percent of the total population, are similarly underrepresented. Is it a problem that these groups aren't better represented in government? How might this situation be changed in the future? Record your thoughts about this issue in your journal.

