

Section

2

Sparta and Athens

Guide to Reading



History Social Science Standards

WH.6.4 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Ancient Greece.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Although Greek city-states developed the idea of citizenship, they had many different types of government. This section describes their different governments and compares the best-known city-states, Athens and Sparta.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- Tyrants were able to seize power from the nobles with the support of Greek farmers, merchants, and artisans. (page 345)
- The Spartans focused on military skills to control the people they conquered. (page 346)
- Unlike Spartans, Athenians were more interested in building a democracy than building a military force. (page 348)

Locating Places

Sparta (SPAHR•tuh)

Athens (A•thuhnz)

Meeting People

Solon (SOH•luhn)

Peisistratus (py•SIHS•truht•uhs)

Cleisthenes (KLYS•thuh•NEEZ)

Content Vocabulary

tyrant (TY•ruhnt)

oligarchy (AH•luh•GAHR•kee)

democracy (dih•MAH•kruh•see)

helot (HEH•luht)

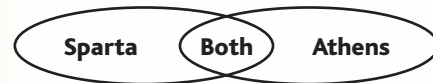
Academic Vocabulary

enforce (ihn•FOHRS)

participate (pah•TIH•suh•PAYT)

Reading Strategy

Compare and Contrast Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast life in Sparta and Athens.



Where & When?



700 B.C.

c. 650 B.C.

Tyrants overthrow nobles in city-states

600 B.C.

594 B.C.

Solon takes power in Athens

500 B.C.

508 B.C.

Cleisthenes reforms Athenian government



WH6.4.2 Trace the transition from tyranny and oligarchy to early democratic forms of government and back to dictatorship in ancient Greece, including the significance of the invention of the idea of citizenship (e.g., from *Pericles' Funeral Oration*).

The Art Archive/E.T. Archive

Tyranny in the City-States

Main Idea Tyrants were able to seize power from the nobles with the support of Greek farmers, merchants, and artisans.

Reading Connection How do you feel when someone makes a decision that affects you without asking for your opinion? Read to find out how ancient Greeks who were shut out of governing made their voices heard.

As you read in the last section, kings ruled the first Greek communities. However, by the end of the Dark Age, the nobles who owned large farms had seized power from the kings.

Rule by the nobles would also be short-lived. The first challenge to their rule came from the owners of small farms. These farmers often needed money to live on until

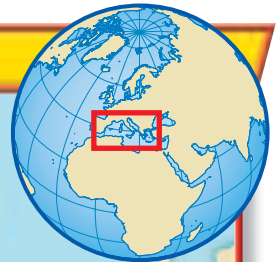
they could harvest and sell their crops. Many borrowed money from the nobles, promising to give up their fields if they could not repay the loans. Time and time again, farmers lost their land. Then they had to work for the nobles or become laborers in the city. In desperate cases, they sold themselves into slavery.

By 650 B.C., owners of small farms began to demand changes in the power structure. Merchants and artisans also wanted to share in governing. Both groups had become very wealthy from the trade between city-states. Because they did not own land, however, they were not citizens and had no say in running the polis.

The growing unhappiness led to the rise of tyrants. A **tyrant** (TY•ruhnt) is someone who takes power by force and rules with

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Sparta and Athens c. 700 B.C.



Using Geography Skills

- Location** How many miles apart were Sparta and Athens?
- Place** Which city-state's geography might make it more open to attack in a military battle? Explain.



total authority. Today the word describes a harsh, oppressive ruler. Most early Greek tyrants, though, acted wisely and fairly.

During the 600s B.C., tyrants managed to overthrow the nobles because they had the backing of the common people. Key support came from the hoplites in the army, many of whom were also farmers.

Tyrants made themselves popular by building new marketplaces, temples, and walls. However, rule by one person was the opposite of what most Greeks wanted. They longed for rule by law with all citizens participating in the government.

By 500 B.C., tyrants had fallen out of favor in Greece. Most city-states became either oligarchies or democracies. In an **oligarchy** (AH•luh•GAHR•kee), a few people hold power. In a **democracy** (dih•MAH•kruh•see), all citizens share in running the government. The oligarchy of **Sparta** (SPAHR•tuh) and the democracy of **Athens** (A•thuhnz) became two of the most powerful governments of early Greece.

Reading Check Evaluate Why were tyrants popular in the city-states?

Spartan Warrior

Spartan boys and men spent many years training for war.

At what age did Spartan boys leave their families for the military?



Sparta

Main Idea The Spartans focused on military skills to control the people they conquered.

Reading Connection What would it be like to leave home when you were only seven? Read to learn how Spartan boys faced this challenge.

As you read in the last section, Sparta was founded by the Dorians—Greeks who invaded the Peloponnesus in the Dark Age. Like other city-states, Sparta needed more land as it grew, but its people did not set up colonies. Instead, they conquered and enslaved their neighbors. The Spartans called their captive workers **helots** (HEH•luhts). This name comes from the Greek word for “capture.”

Why Was the Military So Important?

Spartans feared that the helots might someday rebel. As a result, the government firmly controlled the people of Sparta and trained the boys and men for war.

At age seven, boys left their family to live in barracks. They were harshly treated to make them tough. The Greek historian Plutarch describes life for Spartan boys:

“After they were twelve years old, they were no longer allowed to wear any undergarment; they had one coat to serve them a year; . . . They lodged together in little bands upon beds made of the reeds [grasses] . . . which they were to break off with their hands without a knife.”

—Plutarch, “Spartan Discipline”

At age 20, Spartan men entered the regular army. The men remained in military barracks for 10 more years. They ate all their meals in dining halls with other soldiers.



Spartan girls were trained in sports. ▼



▲ Spartan boys began training for the military at age 7. **Why did the Spartan government want its young people to be physically fit?**

A typical meal was a vile-tasting dish called black broth—pork boiled in animal blood, salt, and vinegar.

Spartans returned home at age 30 but stayed in the army until age 60. They continued to train for combat. They expected to either win on the battlefield or die, but never to surrender. One Spartan mother ordered her son to “Come home carrying your shield or being carried on it.”

Girls in Sparta were trained in sports—running, wrestling, and throwing the javelin. They kept fit to become healthy mothers. Wives lived at home while their husbands lived in the barracks. As a result, Spartan women were freer than other Greek women. They could own property and go where they wanted.

What Was Sparta's Government Like?

The Spartan government was an oligarchy. Two kings headed a council of elders. The council, which included 28 citizens over age 60, presented laws to an assembly.

All Spartan men over age 30 belonged to the assembly. They voted on the council's laws and chose five people to be ephors (EH•fuhrs) each year. The ephors **enforced** the laws and managed tax collection.

To keep anyone from questioning the Spartan system, the government discouraged foreign visitors. It also banned travel abroad for any reason but military ones. It even frowned upon citizens who studied literature or the arts.

The Spartans succeeded in keeping control over the helots for nearly 250 years. However, by focusing on military training, the Spartans fell behind other Greeks in trade. They also knew less about science and other subjects. However, their soldiers were especially strong and swift. The Spartans would play a key role in defending Greece.

Reading Check Cause and Effect Why did the Spartans focus on military training?





WH6.4.2 Trace the transition from tyranny and oligarchy to early democratic forms of government and back to dictatorship in ancient Greece, including the significance of the invention of the idea of citizenship (e.g., from *Pericles' Funeral Oration*).

WH6.4.6 Compare and contrast life in Athens and Sparta, with emphasis on their roles in the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars.

Athens

Main Idea Unlike Spartans, Athenians were more interested in building a democracy than building a military force.

Reading Connection When visiting a new city, does everything feel strange to you? Spartans who visited Athens probably felt the same way. Read to find out why.

Athens lay northeast of Sparta, at least a two-day trip away. The two city-states were also miles apart in their values and systems of government.

What Was Life in Athens Like? Athenian citizens raised their children very differently from Spartans. In Athenian schools, one teacher taught boys to read, write, and do arithmetic. Another teacher taught them sports. A third teacher taught them to sing and to play a stringed instrument called the lyre. This kind of instruction created well-rounded Athenians with good minds and bodies. At age 18, boys finished school and became citizens.

Athenian girls stayed at home. Their mothers taught them spinning, weaving,

Linking Past & Present

The Olympics

PAST In ancient Greece, only men could participate in and view the Olympic games. Athletes competed by themselves, not as part of a team. Contests included running, jumping, wrestling, and boxing. Each winning athlete won a crown of olive leaves and brought glory to his city.



▲ A warrior's race in the ancient Olympics

▼ Modern Olympic athletes



PRESENT In today's Olympic games, both men and women compete. These athletes come from all over the world. They may compete in either individual or team sporting events. Olympic athletes strive to win gold, silver, or bronze medals. **What did ancient Greek Olympic winners receive? What do present-day Olympic winners receive?**



History Online

Web Activity Visit ca.hss.glencoe.com and click on *Chapter 7—Student Web Activity* to learn more about ancient Greece.

and other household duties. Only in some wealthy families did girls learn to read, write, and play the lyre. When they married, women stayed home to keep house and to teach their own daughters.

A Budding Democracy Early Athens, like other city-states, was ruled by landowning nobles during the 600s B.C. An assembly of all citizens existed, but it had few powers. Actually, the government was an oligarchy, as in Sparta.

Around 600 B.C., the Athenians began to rebel against the nobles. Most farmers owed the nobles money, and many sold themselves into slavery to pay their debts. Over and over, farmers demanded an end to all debts, along with land for the poor.

In 594 B.C. the nobles turned to the one man both sides trusted: a noble named **Solon** (SOH•luhn). Solon canceled all the farmers' debts and freed those who had become slaves. He also allowed all male citizens to **participate** in the assembly and law courts. A council of 400 wealthy citizens wrote the laws, but the assembly had to pass them.

Solon's reforms were popular among the common people. However, the farmers



◀ The city of Athens was named for the goddess Athena. **What group ruled Athens during the 600s B.C.?**

continued to press Solon to give away the wealthy nobles' land. This he refused to do.

After Solon, there were 30 years of turmoil. Finally, a tyrant named **Peisistratus** (py•SIHS•truh•uhs) seized power in 560 B.C. He won the support of the poor by dividing large estates among landless farmers. He also loaned money to poor people and gave them jobs building temples and other public works.



▲ Token used to select jurors for Athenian courts



The most important leader after Peisistratus died was **Cleisthenes** (KLYS•thuh•NEEZ). When he came to power in 508 B.C., he reorganized the assembly to play the central role in governing. As before, all male citizens could belong to the assembly and vote on laws. However, members had new powers. They could debate matters openly, hear court cases, and appoint army generals.

Most importantly, Cleisthenes created a new council of 500 citizens to help the assembly carry out daily business. The council proposed laws, dealt with foreign countries, and oversaw the treasury.

Athenians chose the members of the council each year in a lottery. They believed this system was fairer than an election, which might favor the rich.

Cleisthenes' reforms did not bring all Athenians into the political process.



◀ This stone carving shows Democracy crowning a figure that symbolizes Athens. **What leader is credited with making Athens a democracy?**

Noncitizens, which included all women, foreign-born men, and slaves, were still excluded. Nonetheless, Cleisthenes is credited with making the government of Athens a democracy.

Reading Check Explain How did Cleisthenes build a democracy in Athens?

History online
Study Central Need help comparing Athens and Sparta? Visit ca.hss.glencoe.com and click on Study Central.

Section 2 Review

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

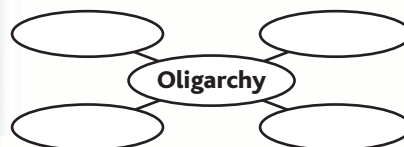
- The support of wealthy merchants and artisans helped tyrants seize power from nobles in the city-states.
- Sparta was a powerful city-state. It created a military state to control the people it conquered and to prevent uprisings.
- Athens was a powerful democratic city-state. Athenians were more involved in government, education, and the arts than the Spartans.

What Did You Learn?

1. Who were the helots?
2. Why did tyrants fall out of favor with the Greeks?

Critical Thinking

3. **Persuasive Writing** Athenians chose officials by lottery. Write an essay arguing for or against this idea. **CA 6WA2.5**
4. **Classifying Information** Draw a diagram like the one below. In each oval write a fact about the Spartan oligarchy. **CA 6RC2.4**



5. **Explain** How did Greek nobles gain power? **CA 6RC2.0**
6. **Analyze** Why was Solon popular among some Athenian farmers and unpopular among others? **CA HR5.**
7. **The Big Ideas** To ensure stability, the Athenians set up their government to keep one person from gaining too much power. How did they do this? **CA 6RC2.4**
8. **Expository Writing** Imagine that you are a 28-year-old man living in Sparta in 700 B.C. Write a letter to your 6-year-old nephew telling him what to expect when he leaves home on his next birthday. **CA 6WS1.1**