

II. ATHENS and SPARTA

LIFE IN ATHENS

Athens was one of the most important Greek city-states. It developed a democratic society and became the cultural leader of Greece.

The kind of democracy practiced in Athens was a pure, or direct, democracy. This meant that all citizens assembled and made the laws themselves. However, Athens was not a complete democracy. Citizenship was limited to males who owned land. This excluded those men who were not landowners, as well as women, slaves, and outsiders. In spite of the shortcomings of Athenian democracy, many of our modern democratic ideas originated there.

Women in Athens were treated well but had few rights. They were expected to stay home and concern themselves with domestic chores and raising children. Even the task of going to the market was reserved for the husband of the family. When the man of the house entertained male friends at home, his wife stayed out of sight.

Only boys in Athens received an education. Girls stayed home and were taught household duties and domestic skills by their mothers. Boys were trained to become good citizens, and their schooling stressed development of both the mind and the body. When boys turned eighteen, they were required to participate in two years of military training. Emphasis on education and good citizenship helped make Athens a leader among the Greek city-states for many years.

LIFE IN SPARTA

While Athens and other Greek city-states made great strides in such areas as art, literature, and philosophy, Sparta, another Greek city-state, developed into a military camp. Because of their emphasis on the military and their rejection of luxuries, the Spartans made no major cultural contributions.

The Spartans ruled over a huge slave population known as helots. Partly because there were twenty times as many helots as citizens, the Spartans maintained a powerful army to reduce any chance of rebellion. In time, their army became the most powerful one in Greece.

All aspects of Spartan life centered around physical conditioning. Weak or deformed babies were taken from their parents and left on a mountainside to die of exposure. Boys were removed from the home at age 7 and underwent "basic training" in the army until they were 20. From age 20 – 60, men were on active duty in the military. They were allowed to marry when they were 30, but they were required to spend the better part of their time in army barracks.

Girls likewise received vigorous physical training. They did not serve in the military, but Spartan authorities believed that rigorous exercise aided girls in producing healthy children for the state.

2 kings and 5 elders with total power controlled Spartan government. A government such as this one, whose leaders are all-powerful and are backed by the military, is described as **totalitarian**.

Athens and Sparta represent the best examples of city-states in Ancient Greece. As the chart is filled in, compare the similarities and differences among them. Each was extremely unique, while still believing they were all members of Greece.

	Athens	Sparta
Geography		
Government		
Education		
Role of Men		
Role of Women		
Contributions		