



History for Kids: A History of Ancient Athens and Sparta for Children

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures.

*Profiles famous Athenians and Spartans like Plato and Leonidas.

*Explains how Sparta and Athens built their legendary armies and navies.

“We are children of the Greeks.” – Alexander the Great

For 2500 years, the Ancient Greeks have fascinated the West, who look to Greece as the creators of Western culture. Indeed, the Greeks revolutionized warfare, art, architecture, government, philosophy, and more. Of all the Greeks' accomplishments, many can be credited to the two most famous city-states of all: Athens and Sparta.

The most unique city-state in Ancient Greece was Sparta, which continues to fascinate contemporaneous society. It is not entirely clear why Sparta placed such a great emphasis on having a militaristic society, but the result was that military fitness was a preoccupation from birth. If a Spartan baby did not appear physically fit at birth, it was left to die. Spartan children underwent military training around the age of 7 years old, and every male had to join the army around the age of 18.

The Spartans, whose carefully constructed approach to warfare and – there is no other word for it – Spartan way of life, earned the grudging admiration of all of Greece and succeeded in establishing themselves in the years following the reforms of the semi-legendary ruler Lycurgus as the greatest military force in all of Hellas. Athens might have the mightiest fleet and the greatest cadre of philosophers and dramatists, Thessaly might have had the most vaunted cavalry, and the great city-states of Argos, Thebes and Corinth all had their own claims to fame, but on the battlefield the Spartan phalanx stood without peer.

Athens was a military force in its own right, but it's chiefly remembered for its political system, which would in time form the nucleus of all Western democratic systems of government, and the remarkable number of outstanding individuals who lived and flourished in the enlightened city-state. The Ancient Athenians formed the backbone of the West's entire culture, from the arts to philosophy and everything inbetween. In the field of medicine, the great physician Hippocrates not only advanced the practical knowledge of human anatomy and care-giving but changed the entire face of the medical profession. The great philosophers of Athens revolutionized the way men thought about reason, logic, rhetoric, politics, and good and evil. Great architects and sculptors such as Phidias produced works of art of such breathtaking realism and startling dynamism that they later formed the driving force behind the resurgence of sculpture during the Renaissance. And this does not take into account the host of equally brilliant mathematicians, natural philosophers, historians, astronomers and politicians that the city's great schools nurtured and produced. A History of Athens and Sparta for Children comprehensively covers the history and culture of the famous Greek city-states, looking at their cultural, political, and military past, and examining all their accomplishments. Your kids will learn about Athens and Sparta like never before.

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