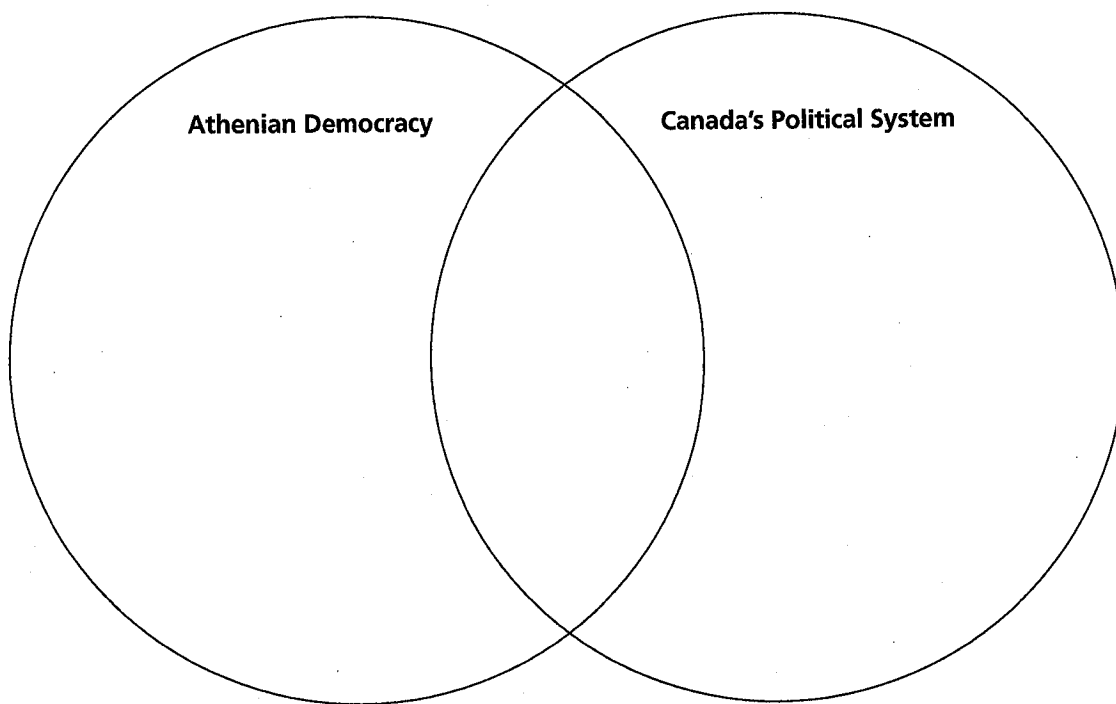


## Venn Diagram: A Comparison of Athenian and Canadian Democracies

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

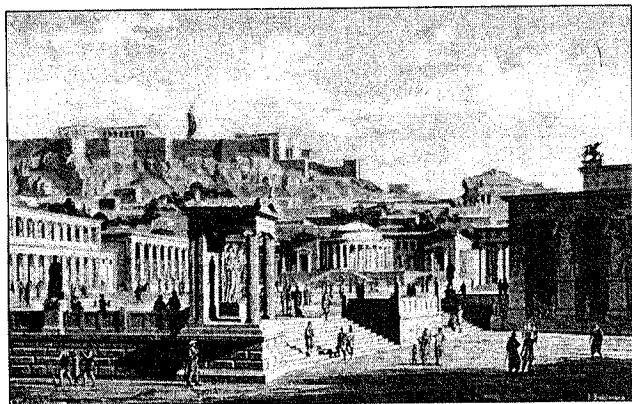
Use a Venn diagram to compare the similarities and differences between Athenian democracy and Canada's current political system. Based on your comparison, consider whether the Athenian system of democracy could work in a country like Canada, or whether it is limited to use in city states.



## Year 3 Human Science

### History – Classical Greece 3 – Athens - a Greek city state

In the Archaic Period, Greece was made up of many small, independent states. Each of these states was called a Polis or city state and it consisted of a city and the countryside which surrounded it. Greece is a generally mountainous country and ancient Greece suffered from



frequent wars. The founders of the city states therefore often chose a hill around which to build their city. A hill could be fortified and defended easily if the city was being attacked. A hill was also a suitable place on which to build temples to the gods, because it reached to the skies where most of the gods were believed to live. The hill around which the city was built was called the Acropolis, which meant "high city".

The Acropolis of Athens is high enough to give a fine view as far as the nearby Aegean Sea. If raiders were landing for an attack on the city, the Athenians could have plenty warning of their coming. The most important temple on the Acropolis was the Parthenon (Below); this



was seventy metres long and built of marble. The Parthenon was dedicated to the Goddess Athena, who was the patron Goddess of Athens (and after whom the city is named). The Acropolis contained several temples other than the Parthenon. It also contained a huge open-air statue of Athena. This statue was said to be 16 metres tall and could be seen glistening in the sunlight for a great distance out to sea.

**Social divisions in Athens** - In all Greek states people were divided into different classes. This division was strict and it was virtually impossible for a person to change from one class to another.

Citizens were free adult men who were born of Athenian parents. They were the most privileged and powerful group in Athens, as they were the only people who could take part in

Metics were free men who had been born outside Athens or to parents who were not native Athenians. Most metics were traders or craftsmen and some of them were very rich. Like citizens, they were expected to pay taxes and to serve in the army if needed. But, unlike citizens, they could take no part in the running of the state. Nor could they ever become citizens.

Slaves were considered to be the personal property of free people. Some slaves had been captured in war. Most were born into slavery; being themselves the children of slaves. Slaves did all sorts of work for their masters. Some performed back-breaking labour in mines and quarries. Others worked on the land or in the homes of their owners. Some were even skilled doctors or teachers. A few were paid for their work, but all slaves had one thing in common: they had no legal rights at all and could be bought and sold like animals. It happened sometimes (though not often) that a slave owner would grant freedom to his slave. This made the slave a free person, though he or she could never become a citizen or a metic.

The social divisions here applied to men only. A woman had to take the social status of her husband or father and no woman was ever allowed to take part in government or other public life.

### **How was Athens ruled?**

The Monarchy (up to c. 800BC) - In its earliest times, Athens was ruled by kings who lived in the easily defended Acropolis. One famous Athenian king was called Theseus. Many legends were told about Theseus.

The Aristocracy (c. 800-600BC) - After Theseus the power of the monarchy declined and Athens fell under the control of an oligarchy, which means rule by a small group of people. This small group consisted of the richest landowners, whose wealth gave them great power and influence. These powerful people were sometimes called aristocrats, which comes from the Greek word *aristoi*, meaning "the best people".

The Tyranny (c. 600-500BC) - As time went on, many other Athenians such as traders, and craftsmen and farmers demanded that they, too, should have a say in the running of the Polis. The aristocrats, however, wanted to keep all political power for themselves. Rioting and trouble broke out. To re-establish peace, the people sometimes allowed one powerful man to seize all power for himself. A leader who seized complete power by force was called a tyrant. Some tyrants were cruel and unpopular and were soon driven out. But others helped the poor, were popular and reigned

Democracy (from c.500BC) - In 508BC, an Athenian leader called Cleisthenes introduced a new system of Government to Athens. This government was called democracy, which meant "rule by the people". Today, democracy means a system of government in which every adult has a vote, this was not the case in ancient Greece.

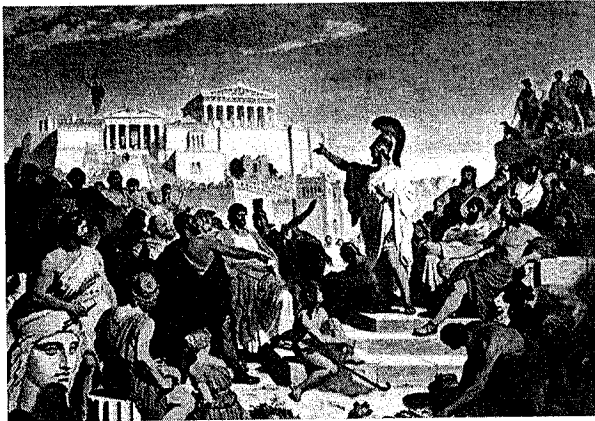
### **Activity**

Write the questions and answers for a 'Fling the Teacher' quiz entitled 'The Society and Government of Ancient Athens'. The correct answers are: Acropolis, Polis, Parthenon, Citizens, Metics, Slaves, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Tyranny and Democracy. Remember for each correct answer you must include 3 feasible ~~incorrect~~ answers. .

## Year 3 Human Science

### History – Classical Greece 4 – Athenian Democracy

The word "democracy" combines the elements demos (which means "people") and kratos (which means "force" or "power"). How many people made up the demos of Athens is hard to say. During the 4th century BC, there may well have been some 250,000–300,000 people in Attica. Citizen families may have amounted to 100,000 people and out of these some 30,000 will have been the adult male citizens entitled to vote in the assembly.



19th century painting of Pericles addressing the Athenian Assembly

**The Assembly:** Greek democracy created at Athens was a direct, not a representative democracy: any adult male citizen of age could take part, and it was a duty to do so. Every citizen had the right to attend and speak at the Ekklesia or Assembly, which met about every ten days on a hill called the Pnyx. The assembly had to debate any proposals by the Council and then pass or change or reject these proposals by a show of hands. At least 6,000 had to attend a meeting of the assembly to create a quorum where laws could be passed. If not enough citizens turned up, special police were sent out to round up more citizens and make them attend. The police normally rounded up such citizens using ropes which had been dipped in fresh red paint. Citizens had to pay a

fine if they were found to have red paint on their cloaks. The standard format was that of speakers making speeches for and against a position (see image of Pericles) followed by a general vote (usually by show of hands) of yes or no. There were no political parties and likewise no government or opposition. In effect, the government was whatever speaker(s) the assembly agreed with on a particular day. Voting was by simple majority. One unusual power given to the Assembly was the power of ostracism. This was a way of getting rid of unpopular or corrupt politicians. On one day in the year, a vote of ostracism could be held in the Assembly. Each citizen was given a fragment of pottery called an ostrakon. On this he could write the name of any politician he wished to see punished. If a politician's name appeared on more than 6000 pottery pieces, that politician was ostracised. He had to leave Athens for a period of ten years.

**The Council (boule):** Every year, 500 citizens were chosen by lot to become Councillors. Allotment was random and shared the work of government throughout the whole citizen body, engaging them in the crucial democratic experience of, to use Aristotle's words, "ruling and being ruled in turn". The allotment of an individual was based on citizenship rather than merit or any form of personal popularity which could be bought. Allotment therefore was seen as a means to prevent the corrupt purchase of votes and it gave citizens a unique form of political equality as all had an equal chance of obtaining government office. They had responsibility for the day-to-day running of the state. They also drew up proposals for new laws; though these proposals had to be passed by the Assembly before they could become law.

In conclusion, to be an Athenian citizen meant to participate in the day to day running of the state. Those not interested in participating in politics were considered to be idiots. The modern word 'idiot', comes from the ancient Greek word ἰδιώτης (idiōtēs), meaning a private person, a person who is not actively interested in politics.

#### Activities

1. What percentage of the population of Athens was actually entitled to vote?
2. Explain the meaning of the following in the context of classical Athens: democracy, assembly, quorum, ostracise, council, lot.
- ~~3. Fill in a table of similarities and differences between ancient Greek and modern democracy.~~

## Year 3 Human Science

### History – Classical Greece 5 – Sparta

In the last lesson you learned about Athens, which was a very famous city state of Ancient Greece. Another famous city state was Sparta, which was situated at the very south of the mainland of modern Greece (see map below).



While Athens was known for its poets and learned people and fine buildings, Sparta was famous for something else. It was a land of warriors. Everything in Sparta was geared to producing a huge army of tough, disciplined soldiers. The Spartans were so tough that they did not even bother to build a wall around their city. Their soldiers were fierce enough to frighten away almost any enemy. The Spartans succeeded in building the best army in ancient Greece. They also won most of the prizes at the Olympic Games, but they did not create much art or literature or many fine buildings.

### Life in Sparta

There was very little luxury in ancient Sparta. The people lived in hard, uncomfortable conditions because they believed that this would help to keep them strong and able to defend themselves from possible attack. Every Spartan man had to be a soldier. Even kings were not allowed to possess wealth or luxuries; as such things might make them weak or selfish. Children (even when they obeyed orders) were left hungry and flogged. This was to toughen them up into hard, fearful warriors. Babies belonged not so much to their parents as to the State. When a child was born, state officers would come to examine it. If the child was healthy and perfectly formed it "passed" the examination and was allowed to live. If not, the baby would be taken outside and left to die.

### School and Army

Young children were treated very harshly. They were not allowed to cry or to be afraid of the dark or to become "soft" in any way. They were often beaten in order to make them "disciplined". At the age of seven, boys were taken from their homes and sent to a kind-of state boarding-school. There they would spend thirteen years learning to be strong and totally disciplined warriors of Sparta. Conditions in such schools were terrible. When a young man reached twenty years, his harsh schooling finally came to an end. But now he had to join the army and go to live in an army barracks, where conditions were almost as hard as they had been at school.

At the age of thirty, a Spartan soldier might marry. But this did not mean he could live with his wife. He still had to live in barracks and had to be content with brief visits (many of them secret and at night) to visit his wife and children. Soldiers were given land, which they used to support their families. They did not farm the land themselves. Such work was considered



slaves. Only when a man reached the age of sixty could he finally return to live permanently with his family. But few Spartan soldiers reached such an age of "retirement". Most died before then of hardship or of battle wounds. (Image left shows a 5<sup>th</sup> century BC marble statue of Spartan soldier or Hoplite)

Girls were at least educated in Sparta (not every Greek city-state educated its females). Their schools, though not quite as harsh as those of boys, were strict and hard. The most important activity in school was physical education, which included running competitions and other athletic activities. Girls were trained to become physically fit, so that they would eventually become the strong mothers of Spartan warriors. Spartan girls knew little of the art of fashion or physical beauty. They were expected, for example,

to strip almost naked when they took part in religious dances or processions. This was to ensure that they would not develop the habit of showing off fine clothes. Spartan women were in some ways freer than their husbands. At least they could live at home, rather than in an army barracks. They were also freer than some other Greek women in that they could own property. But, like the men they were expected to be tough and completely loyal to the State. A Spartan mother could kill a son who was considered to be a coward. A mother would tell her son, before he went to battle: "Return with your shield or upon it".

#### **The Boy and the Fox (based on an ancient Spartan story)**

The Spartan boy had been seeking some excitement when, near the house of local helot, he saw a beautiful young fox - no doubt the pet of some helot child. Remembering how in school he was encouraged to steal from helots, he thought only for a moment before scrambling over the fence. Creeping stealthily upon the animal, he pounced, grabbed the fox and was gone before anyone noticed. The fox's little heart beat with fear. But the boy's heart beat with delight. He could not wait to show his fox cub to his friends and to tell them of his successful adventure.

It was only when he neared his barracks that he heard some guards approach. Knowing that (while successful theft was praised) he must not be actually caught stealing, the boy stuffed the fox inside his tunic. The guards, seeing that the boy seemed to be acting suspiciously, began to question him. The boy lied coolly about his activities and (since boys had to be polite to older Spartan citizens) even held polite conversation with the guards long after they had stopped questioning him.

When, at last, the guards bade him good evening; the boy made his way to his barracks, staggered through the door and fell dead on the floor. His friends gathered around and soon discovered the cause of his death. While the boy was being questioned by the guards, the terrified fox had eaten right into his stomach and intestines. The boy, though in agony, had never cried out.

The leaders in the barracks agreed that the boy had been an ideal young Spartan.

#### **Activities**

1. Why was there very little luxury in Sparta?
2. What did the Spartan mother mean when she said 'return with your shield or upon it'?
3. Read the story of the Boy and the Fox; why, in your opinion, did the leaders of the barracks consider the boy to be a good Spartan?
4. Was there anything in Spartan culture and society that we still value today?

## Year 3 Human Science

### History – Classical Greece 6 – Sparta society and politics



#### Social classes

There were three separate social classes in Sparta: Only Spartan men were allowed to be citizens of Sparta and only they could take part in the Government of the state. All citizens had to serve in the Spartan army.

The second class were the free men. They often came from outside Sparta and so were called perioikoi "neighbours". They were mainly craftsmen, farmers or traders. They were allowed to serve in the army. But they could take no part in the running of Sparta.

The helots were descended from the people who had originally lived in Sparta, but who had been conquered by the Spartans. They were treated as slaves. They farmed the land for the Spartan masters, who usually treated them cruelly. Most people living in Sparta were helots.

#### How Sparta was ruled

There were two kings who ruled together. These kings were members of special royal families. Their main task was to lead the army in war. The day-to-day running of the State was carried out by five officials called ephors. Each year, the ephors were elected by the Assembly.

The laws of Sparta were proposed by the Council. The council consisted of the two kings and twenty eight councillors. These councillors had to be at least sixty years old and were elected for life by the Assembly. The Assembly consisted of all citizens over the age of thirty. All laws proposed by the Council had to be passed by the Assembly. The Assembly members had an interesting way of voting. They simply screamed out "yes" or "no" to the proposed law. The loudest group won the vote.

#### The end of Spartan power

The state of Sparta lasted for nearly four hundred years and was, for a time, the most powerful and feared state in ancient Greece. But Sparta had many enemies and, like all powerful states in history, finally met defeat. It was the state of Thebes which finally defeated Sparta in 362 BC

Edited extract from Hayes et al *The Cradle of Europe*.

#### Activity

~~Refer back to your work on Athens and draw up a table to show the similarities and differences between social and political life in Athens and Sparta.~~