

GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

How did the world begin? What is the right way for people to live?

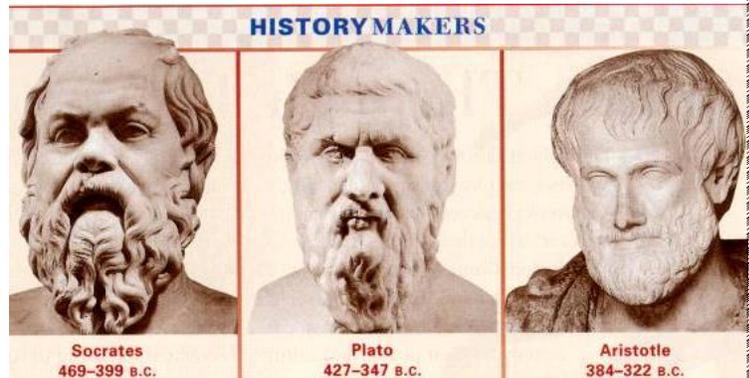
Most ancient people thought that only the gods could answer such questions. But many Greeks thought differently. They believed people themselves could answer such questions through reason. They believed people could use their minds to answer questions about the world and human beings. The Greeks called people who searched for such answers **philosophers**, or "lovers of knowledge." Greek philosophers made important contributions to the growth of modern science and philosophy. Their method of finding answers through careful **observation** (study) was used by later scientists and philosophers.

Socrates

Some philosophers were interested in **ethics**, or ideas about the right way to live. One of those philosophers was Socrates. Socrates was a teacher who lived in Athens. He taught that people must learn to think for themselves. Only through clear thinking could people discover the right way to live.

Socrates taught his students to think clearly by asking them questions. When Socrates was not satisfied with an answer, he asked more questions. That method of teaching by asking questions became known as the Socratic Method.

Socrates urged his students to question all their old beliefs. Some Athenians thought such teaching was dangerous. They accused Socrates of turning his students away from the gods. Socrates was put on trial. A jury found Socrates guilty. His penalty was death. In 399 B.C., Socrates drank a cup of poison and died.



Plato

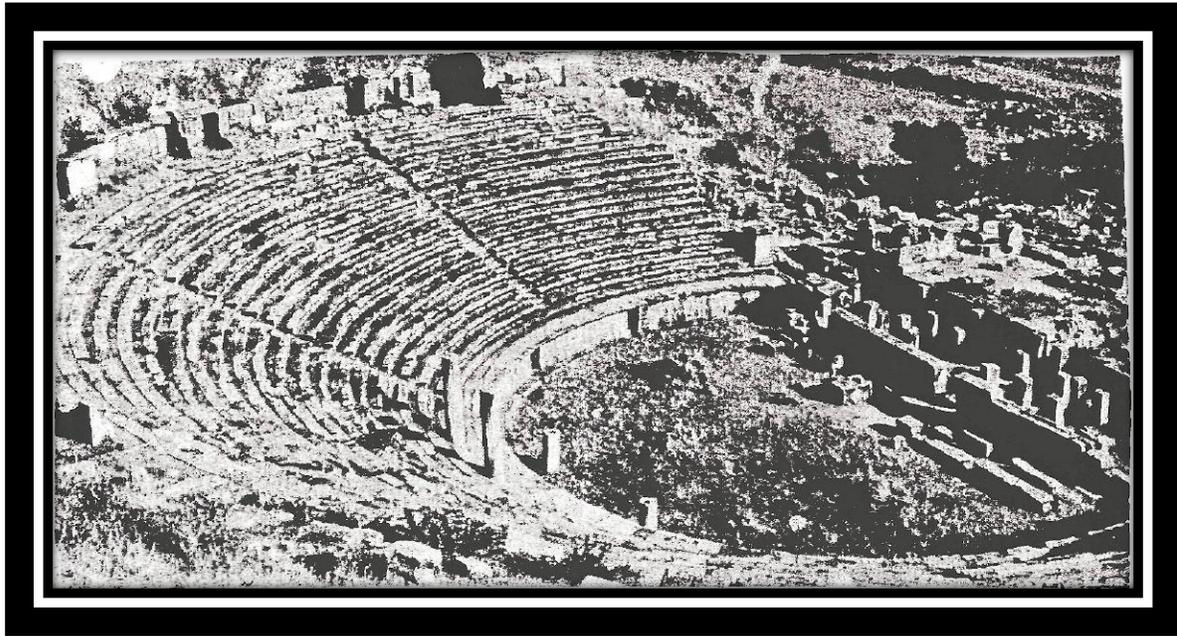
After Socrates died, his student Plato carried on his work. Plato was a great writer. His most famous book is *The Republic*. It is still read today. In *The Republic*, Plato wrote down his ideas about government. Plato did not believe that democracy was the best kind of government. He did not believe that most people could make good decisions about government. Instead, Plato believed that a small group of wise men should run the government.

Aristotle

The last great philosopher of Athens was Aristotle. He was a student of Plato. Aristotle was a brilliant man who explored all areas of learning. He wrote hundreds of books on science, government, philosophy, and other subjects. His books had a great **influence**, or effect, on later scientists.

Looking Back

1. How did the Greeks believe they could find answers to questions about the world?
2. What is the Socratic method?
3. What did Plato write about government in *The Republic*?
4. Use context clues to define:
Philosophers-
Observation –
Ethics –
Influence –



GREEK DRAMA

During the Golden Age of Athens, the Greeks invented a new form of art. It was called drama. In this new art form, people acted out stories. Drama grew out of the Athenian festival for Dionysus, the god of wine.

During the festival, a **chorus**, or group of singers, sang and **chanted** (spoke together) stories about Dionysus.

About 500 B.C., an important change took place at the festival. One member of the chorus was chosen to act out part of the story. Later, other actors were added. The stories became what we call plays.

Greek Theaters

Greek dramas were performed outdoors. Theaters were built on hillsides to give everyone a good view. Some theaters held 10,000 people. Often, several plays were performed one after another. People brought food and wine to theaters and stayed all day. Three actors performed all the parts in a Greek drama.

The actors wore masks that looked like the character they were playing. The masks were large so that they could be seen by everyone in the huge theaters. The chorus played an important role in the drama. It sang or chanted some of the story.

Tragedy and Comedy

At first, Greek plays were tragedies. A **tragedy** is a story of great suffering. The ending is always sad. The greatest Greek tragedies were written by three Athenians: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Later, the Greeks created another kind of play. It was called a **comedy**. Comedies were filled with jokes about daily life. They had happy endings. The best comedies were written by an Athenian named Aristophanes.

Looking Back

1. How did Greek drama develop?
2. How were plays performed?
3. How were tragedies and comedies different?
4. Use context clues to define:
 - Chorus -
 - Chanted –
 - Tragedy –
 - Comedy -