

# Athens v. Sparta DBQ

## Directions

The task below is based on documents A through Q. This task is designed to test your ability to work with the information provided by various types of documents. Look at each document and answer the question or questions after each document. Use your answers to the questions to help you write your essay.

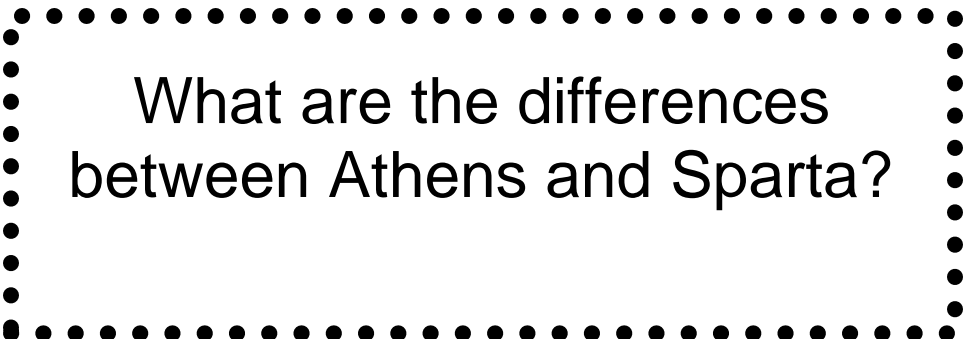
## Background

Ancient Greece was a somewhat isolated set of civilizations. Two city-states that developed were Sparta and Athens. Though the two occasionally worked together, they were completely different from one another.

## Task

For Part A, read each document carefully and answer the question or questions after each document. Then read the directions for Part B and write your essay. You may use the chart at the end of the documents to help you organize your thoughts.

For Part B, use your answers from Part A, information from the documents, and your knowledge of social studies to write a well-organized essay.



What are the differences  
between Athens and Sparta?

## DOCUMENT A

[from Strabo's (A Greek Historian) history, Book VIII.5.4]

...although all the people in the towns around Sparta were technically subjects of the Spartans, they were given the same legal rights as the Spartans at first. Then Agis the son of Eurysthenes took away their equality and had them pay tribute [special taxes] to Sparta. Most submitted – but the Heleians, who occupied Helos and were called “helots,” rose in revolt. A war was fought and the Spartans beat the helots, who were forced from that point on to be slaves to the Spartans with no chance of being set free.

1. What does this document say about how Sparta handled the people they conquered?

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## DOCUMENT B

[from the play *Lysistrata*, by Aristophanes]

Myrrhineé: Are we late, Lysistrata? Tell us, pray; what, not a word...?

Lysistrata: No, let us wait a moment more, till the women of Bœotia arrive and those from the Peloponnese.

Myrrhineé: Yes, that is best...Ah! Here comes Lampito.

Lysistrata: Good day, Lampito, dear friend from Lacedæmon.<sup>1</sup> How well and handsome you look! what a rosy complexion! and how strong you seem; why, you could strangle a bull surely!

Lampito: Indeed, I really think I could. 'Tis because I do gymnastics and practice the kick dance.<sup>2</sup>

1. What does this document tell us about Spartan men?

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<sup>1</sup> “Lacedæmon” is another name for Sparta.

<sup>2</sup> The kick dance was a Spartan exercise in which a person kicks their own posterior with their heels.

**DOCUMENT C**

[from Plutarch’s (Greek Historian) *Lykourgos*, 5:6-8; 26: 1-3]

Among the many innovations made by Lykourgos the first, and the greatest, was his establishment of the *gerousia*; a council of twenty-eight older Spartan men from noble families. These men, according to Plato, when mixed with the “feverish” rule of the two kings, used their ability to vote on matters of great importance to create a government which was both sensible and secure.

1. What does this document tell us about the governing body of Sparta?

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**DOCUMENT D**

[from Plutarch’s *Lykourgos*, 8-9]

[Lykourgos] persuaded all the people of Sparta to pool all of their lands together and divide it out anew: they were to live with each other, one and all, as equals, with plots of the same size ensuring that they could get the things they needed to have to survive, with their wish to be better than all of their neighbors expressing itself in the pursuit of excellence – the idea being that between one man and another there is no difference or inequality other than they way in which they are treated depending on whether or not they choose to do good things or bad things.

1. What does this document tell us about life in Sparta?

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**DOCUMENT E**

[from Plutarch's *Lykourgos*, 28]

The practice of the *krypteia* at Sparta [worked as follows]:

The magistrates from time to time sent out into the countryside at large the most discreet of the young men, equipped only with daggers and necessary supplies. During the day they scattered into obscure and out of the way places, where they hid themselves and lay quiet. But in the night, they came down to the roads and killed every Helot whom they caught. Often, too, they actually made their way across fields where the Helots were working and killed the sturdiest and best of them...it was not considered in any way impious or evil to do this.

1. What does this document tell us about the skill of Spartan men?

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2. What does this document tell us about Sparta's opinion of the Helots?

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**DOCUMENT F**

[from Xenophon's (Greek Historian and soldier) *Lakedaimonian Politeia*, v.2-6]

Lykourgos realized that having everyone lounging about at home was a perfect way to make people lazy and gluttonous; so he brought the messes out into the open...and he made a rule about how much everyone should get to eat so that it was enough, but not too much. [He] intermixed the age groups so that the younger men might learn from the experience of the older men [by eating with them], and he made it the custom to make the topic of conversation at meals the great deeds of the city, so that there is now no evil in the city, no gluttony or drunkenness, and no inappropriate behavior or talking.

1. What does this document tell us about life in Athens?

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## DOCUMENT G

[from Xenophon's *Lakedaimonian Politeia*]

Lycurgus thought that female slaves were competent to furnish clothes; and, considering that the production of children was the most important thing women could do, he enacted...that the female should practice bodily exercise no less than the male sex.

He ordained that a man should think it shame to be seen going in to his wife, or coming out from her. When married people meet in this way, they must feel stronger desire for the company of one another and produce more robust offspring....

He took from the men the liberty of marrying when each of them pleased, and appointed that they should contract marriages only when they were in full bodily vigor, deeming this injunction also conducive to producing excellent offspring...and said that an old man should introduce to his wife whatever man in the prime of life he admired for his bodily and mental qualities, so that she might have children by him.

1. What do we know from this document about marriage and children in Sparta?

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## DOCUMENT H

[Excerpt from "The Lycurgan Reforms" by Plutarch.]

...but as soon as they were seven years old they were to be enrolled in certain companies and classes; where they all lived under the same order and discipline, doing their exercises and taking their play together. Of these, he who showed the most conduct and courage was made captain; they had their eyes always upon him, obeyed his orders, and underwent patiently whatsoever punishment he inflicted; so that the whole course of their education was one of continued exercise of a ready and perfect obedience...Reading and writing they gave them just enough to serve their turn; their chief care was to make them good subjects, and reach them to endure pain and conquer in battle.

1. What does this document tell us about the training of children in Sparta?

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**DOCUMENT I**

[from Plutarch's *Lykourgos*, 27.3-4]

...Lykourgos did not grant them freedom to leave home, if they wanted to, or to wander around picking up foreign habits and imitating the lives of uneducated people who lived under different political systems. He actually drove foreigners who came to Sparta for no reason away from the city...not because he did not want them to learn something about the city, but in order to prevent them from teaching the Spartans anything evil.

1. What does this document tell us about life in Sparta?

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**DOCUMENT J**

[from Plutarch's *Lykourgos*]

Nor was it in the power of the father to dispose of the child as he thought fit; he was obliged to carry it before certain triers at a place called Lesche; these were some of the elders of the tribe to which the child belonged; their business it was carefully to view the infant, and, if they found it stout and well made, they gave order for its rearing, and allotted to it one of the nine thousand shares of land above mentioned for its maintenance, but, if they found it puny and ill-shaped, ordered it to be taken to what was called the Apothetae, a sort of chasm under Taygetus; as thinking it neither for the good of the child itself, nor for the public interest, that it should be brought up, if it did not, from the very outset, appear made to be healthy and vigorous.

1. What does this document tell us about what the Spartans did to newborn infants?

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**DOCUMENT K**

[Excerpt from “*The Old Oligarch on the Athenian constitution*” by unknown author]

Again, some people are surprised at the fact that in all fields they give more power to the masses, the poor and the common people than they do the respectable elements of society, but it will become clear that they preserve the democracy by doing precisely this. When the poor, the ordinary people and the lower classes flourish and increase in numbers, then the power of the democracy will be increased.

1. What does this document say about Athenian Social Classes?

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**DOCUMENT L**

[from Aristotle, the *Athenian Constitution*]

Not only was the constitution at this time oligarchical in every respect, but the poorer classes---men, women, and children---were in absolute slavery to the rich. They were known as pelatai and also as hectemori, because they cultivated the lands of the rich for a sixth part of the produce. The whole country was in the hands of a few persons, and if the tenants failed to pay their rent, they were liable to be haled into debt-slavery and their children with them. Their persons were mortgaged to their creditors, a custom which prevailed until the time of Solon, who was the first to appear as a leader of the people. But the hardest and bitterest part of the condition of the masses was the fact that they had no share in the offices then existing under the constitution. At the same time they were discontented with every other feature of their lot; for, to speak generally, they had no part nor share in anything.

1. What does this document tell us about living in Athens at the time?

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**DOCUMENT M**

[from Solon Athenian Poet]

Out of the clouds comes the mighty force of snow and hail,  
and thunder arises from the brilliant lightning.  
But it is from men of great power that a city perishes, and the *demos*,  
in its mindlessness, falls into slavery beneath a monarch.  
It is no easy thing, afterwards, to restrain a man once you have exalted him  
too high — rather, take all these thoughts to heart now.

- 1. What does this document say about government in Athens?

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**DOCUMENT N**

[from Pausanias, Description of Greece, 1.1.2-3]

The Peiraeus was a parish from early times, though it was not a port before Themistocles became an archon of the Athenians.<sup>1</sup> Their port was Phalerum, for at this place the sea comes nearest to Athens, and from here men say that Menestheus set sail with his fleet for Troy, and before him Theseus, when he went to give satisfaction to Minos for the death of Androgeos. But when Themistocles became archon, since he thought that the Peiraeus was more conveniently situated for mariners, and had three harbors as against one at Phalerum, he made it the Athenian port. Even up to my time there were docks there, and near the largest harbor is the grave of Themistocles.

The most noteworthy sight in the Peiraeus is a precinct of Athena and Zeus. Both their images are of bronze; Zeus holds a staff and a Victory, Athena a spear. Here is a portrait of Leosthenes and of his sons, painted by Arcesilaus. This Leosthenes at the head of the Athenians and the united Greeks defeated the Macedonians in Boeotia and again outside Thermopylae forced them into Lamia over against Oeta, and shut them up there.<sup>1</sup> The portrait is in the long portico, where stands a market-place for those living near the sea--those farther away from the harbor have another--but behind the portico near the sea stand a Zeus and a Demos, the work of Leochares. And by the sea Conon<sup>2</sup> built a sanctuary of Aphrodite, after he had crushed the Lacedaemonian warships off Cnidus in the Carian peninsula.<sup>3</sup> For the Cnidians hold Aphrodite in very great honor, and they have sanctuaries of the goddess.

- 1. What does this document tell us about the city of Athens? What is it near? What types of structures does it have in it?

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## DOCUMENT O

[from Philochorus, *Atthis*, Book III]

Ostracism is as follows: The Demos takes a vote before the 8th Prytany, as to whether it seemed best to hold an ostracism. When the response is positive, the Agora is fenced off with barricades; ten entrances were left open, through which they entered according to Phyle and deposited their potsherds, keeping face-down what they had written. The Nine Archons and the Boule presided. After they added up the results, whoever received the largest number, and it had to be not less than 6,000, was required to pay the penalty: he had to settle his private affairs within ten days and to depart from the City for ten years (though it later was made five years); he still received the income from his property, but he could not come nearer than Geraistos, the promontory of Euboea. Hyperbolus was the sole undistinguished person to suffer ostracism, on account of the degeneracy of his habits, not because he was suspected of aiming at tyranny. After him the practice was abandoned, which had begun when Kleisthenes was legislating, when he expelled the tyrants, so that he might toss out their friends as well.

1. What does this document say about people who went against the Athenian Government?

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## DOCUMENT P

[from Herondas, *The Third Mime*]

Metrotimé. Flog him Lampriscos, across the shoulders, till his wicked soul is all but out of him. He's spent my all in playing odd and even; knuckle bones are nothing to him. Why, he hardly knows the door of the Letter School. And yet the thirtieth comes round and I must pay---tears no excuse.

His writing tablet which I take the trouble to wax anew each month, lies unregarded in the corner. If by chance he deigns to touch it he scowls like Hades, then puts nothing right but smears it out and out. He doesn't know a letter, till you scream it twenty times. The other day his father made him spell "Maron"; the rascal made it "Simon": dolt I thought myself to send him to a school! ---Another time we set him to recite some childish piece; he sifts it out like water through a crack, "Apollo" --- pause,---then "hunter!"

1. What does this document say about schooling in Athens?

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## DOCUMENT Q

[from Aristotle, *Oikonomikos*]

A good wife should be the mistress of her home, having under her care all that is within it, according to the rules we have laid down. She should allow none to enter without her husband's knowledge, dreading above all things the gossip of gadding women, which tends to poison the soul. She alone should have knowledge of what happens within. She must exercise control of the money spent on such festivities as her husband has approved--keeping, moreover, within the limit set by law upon expenditure, dress, and ornament---and remembering that beauty depends not on costliness of raiment. Nor does abundance of gold so conduce to the praise of a woman as self-control in all that she does. This, then, is the province over which a woman should be minded to bear an orderly rule; for it seems not fitting that a man should know *all* that passes within the house. But in all other matters, let it be her aim to obey her husband; giving no heed to public affairs, nor having any part in arranging the marriages of her children. Rather, when the time shall come to give or receive in marriage sons or daughters, let her then hearken to her husband in all respects, and agreeing with him obey his wishes. It is fitting that a woman of a well-ordered life should consider that her husband's wishes are as laws appointed for her by divine will, along with the marriage state and the fortune she shares. If she endures them with patience and gentleness, she will rule her home with ease; otherwise, not so easily. Therefore not only when her husband is in prosperity and good report must she be in agreement with him, and to render him the service he wills, but also in times of adversity. If, through sickness or fault of judgment, his good fortune fails, then must she show her quality, encouraging him ever with words of cheer and yielding him obedience in all fitting ways---only let her do nothing base or unworthy. Let her refrain from all complaint, nor charge him with the wrong, but rather attribute everything of this kind to sickness or ignorance or accidental errors. Therefore, she will serve him more assiduously than if she had been a slave bought and taken home. For he has indeed bought her with a great price--with partnership in his life and in the procreation of children...

1. What does this document say about Athenian women?

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### ATHENS V. SPARTA

ATHENS	CATEGORY	SPARTA
	<b>Government</b>	
	<b>Education</b>	
	<b>Military Involvement</b>	
	<b>Girls/Women</b>	
	<b>Who Votes in Government</b>	
	<b>Slaves</b>	

## Directions

Using the documents, your answers from Part A, and your knowledge of social studies, write a well-organized essay about the following:

What were the differences between Athens and Sparta?

In your essay remember to:

√Include information about government, social classes, education, women.

√Include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

√Include details, examples, or reasons to develop your ideas.

√Use information from **12 documents** in your answer.

Helpful Hints

√Edit your work

√Use the documents to feed the essay;  
however do not forget outside information!!

√Group your documents into categories of similar information, do NOT make a paragraph about each document

√ Explain why what the document says is important  
Don't just restate the information in the document.