

# Principle ideas and methods of socrates essay sample



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## Introduction

Socrates was a Greek philosopher who lived in the period between 469 BC-399 BC (Apology, 27). He was charged in the year 399BC, for convincing youths not to believe in the God of Athens (Brun, 1978). The allegations were forwarded by Mellitus who was also from the same city. Socrates commanded a large youth following. They liked him because he did not ask them to pay for the services he offered. His beliefs were seen as going against the common sense in the Athenian context and this made most parents to be weary of their children's association with him.

He believed that his work as a philosopher was to make other people understand that they knew less than they thought they knew. He did this by ironic questioning, which was later referred to as " Socratic irony" by Plato. It's his questioning of those in authority, strict commitment to truth and his belief in eternal soul that didn't die that made him to clash with the society and especially the political class.

## Socrates Methods and ideas and why he was tried

Socrates believed in the existence of an eternal soul which he argued was the main thing that human beings needed to be concerned most about its state rather than increasing their wealth (Brun, 1978). This was the greatest among other reasons that contributed to his trial. This is why he was charged for convincing youths not to believe in the Gods of their fathers. He tried to convince fellow Athenians not to concentrate on pursuing material wealth and instead be concerned with the state of their souls. He told the Athenians that they should not fear death if they had been doing right since at the time

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of death, it's only the body which dies but not the soul. The urge for material mightiness to him was the greatest enemy to the attainment of the ideal life of self development. To him, self development involved the quest for integrity, justice, goodness and virtue. He believed in eternality of the soul and therefore urged fellow citizens to put more emphasis on it. This made people in the city to change their character which went against the Athenian norms.

He strictly subscribed to the principle of upholding the truth and only the truth despite any temptation to do otherwise. According to Socrates, there was an inner voice that everyone had and listening to it will always help you not to do something wrong (Brun, 1978). He knew that to pursue the truth, one will have content with great opposition. He therefore, as an example to his students, decided to criticize the social and the moral standards of the city dwellers. It's through his hard line stance on what's true that put him on the enemy side of the Athenian politicians and the society in general (Koffman, 1998). And, for the sake of his doctrine and the students, Socrates maintains his stance on adherence to the truth by not asking for forgiveness but went ahead to accept the jury's verdict. During his trial he argued that what spoilt his reputation was not that he was an atheist but the kind of wisdom he possessed (Apology, 24).

The belief that people knew less than they thought they knew and that most didn't understand what the truth comprises, made him an enemy to most politicians who wanted people to believe in whatever they perceived to be true. He argued that the main reason as to why he refused to be a politician is that one cannot be a politician if he's not morally compromised (Brun, <https://assignbuster.com/principle-ideas-and-methods-of-socrates-essay-sample/>

1978). This started raising a lot of doubts among citizens on the Athenian democracy.

To prove his arguments about who is wiser, he chose to scrutinize the level of ignorance in those who claimed to be wiser. His sample of investigation included the theologians, politicians and poets (Apology, 26). The scrutiny made people very uneasy as many didn't want others to know they were not as wise as they really claimed to be. For instance, during his judgment he tells the jury how little they knew. Many in authority thought by killing Socrates, they would not be required to explain whatever they did to anybody. His questioning exposed the ignorance in the leadership of the Athenian politics which was dangerous as many citizens could have ended up losing confidence in the system.

He lived at a time when the Athenian hegemony was on its decline after it was defeated by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. The defeat raised a lot of doubts on the democratic system of governance. Most Athenians started questioning its credibility as far as efficiency is concerned. Socrates was on the fore front of criticizing democratic system since those who led did not admit their ignorance and accept that they knew less. He made a lot of arguments about many things that occurred in the society and this made him a foe to many in the political class.

## Conclusion

Socrates had some relationships with earlier Athenian regimes. He also believed in the existence of eternal soul which cannot die even if the body dies. This made him to be accused of corrupting the minds of the youths who  
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believed in his teachings. His way of scrutinizing the leaders who claimed to be wiser made them to go after him in the belief that they will be free from accounting for whatever they did after he is dead. He expected leaders to give reasons for whatever they did. It's important to note that even today, political leaders will always hate those who can come up with a way of making them account for anything they were involved in. Socrates believed for instance that there's no politician who's not morally compromised. Socrates philosophies will always be a threat to those who are not committed to doing what is true.

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