

# [Aristotle’s life and achievements essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/aristotles-life-and-achievements-essay-sample/)

Aristotle was a famous Greek philosopher and scientist that lived from 384 to 322 BC. He is ranked with Socrates and Plato to be one of the most famous philosophers.

Aristotle was born at Stagira, in Macedonia, as the son of a physician to the royal court. At the age of 17, he went to Athens to study at Plato’s Academy. He remained there for about 20 years, as a student and then as a teacher.

When Plato dies in 347 BC, Aristotle moved to Assos, where a friend of his, Hermais was ruler. There he counseled Hermais and married his niece, Pythias. After Hermais was captured and executed by the Persians in 345 BC, Aristotle went to Pella, the capital of Macedonia, and became the tutor of the king’s young son Alexander, later known as Alexander the Great. In 335, when Alexander became king, Aristotle returned to Athens and established his own school, the Lyceum. Because much of the teaching and discussions took place while teachers and students were walking the Lyceum grounds, Aristotle’s school became known as the Peripatetic (“ walking” or “ strolling”) school. Upon the death of Alexander in 323 BC, strong feelings against the Macedonians began to arise in Athens, so Aristotle moved to a family estate in Euboea, where he died there the following year.

Apart from a few fragments in the work of later writer’s, Aristotle’s works have been lost. Aristotle also wrote some short technical notes, such as a dictionary of philosophic terms and a summary of doctrines of Pythagoras. Of these, only a few excerpts have been recovered. Still existent are Aristotle’s lecture notes for carefully outlines courses dealing with almost every branch of knowledge and art. These are what Aristotle’s reputation as the great philosopher is largely rested upon.

Among the notes that Aristotle wrote are treatises on logic, called Organon (instrument), because they provide the ways that positive knowledge is to be attained. His works on natural science include Physics, which gives tons of information on astronomy, meteorology, plants, and animals. His writings on nature, scope, and properties of being, which Aristotle called First Philosophy, were given the title Metaphysics, was the first published edition of his works that came out around 60 BC. To his son Nicomachus he dedicated his work on ethics, called the Nicomachean Ethics. Other essential works of Aristotle are his Rhetoric, his Poetics and his Politics.

Because of the influence of his father’s medical profession, Aristotle’s philosophy was mainly centered on biology. Aristotle regarded the world as “ made up of individuals occurring in fixed natural kinds. Each individual has its built-in specific pattern of development and grows toward proper self-realization as a specimen of its type. Growth, purpose, and direction are thus built into nature.”

One of the most distinctive of Aristotle’s philosophic contributions was a “ notion of casualty.” Each thing or event, he thought, has more than one “ reason” to explain what, why, and where it is. Earlier Greek thinkers assumed that only one sort of cause could be explanatory, while Aristotle proposed four.

The four causes are: the material cause, the matter of which a thing is made. The efficient cause, the source of motion, generation, or change. The formal cause, which is the species, kind, or type. And, the final cause, the intended function of a construction or invention. So Aristotle thought that the material cause of a statue is the marble from which it was carved. The efficient cause is the sculptor. The formal cause is the shape the sculptor realized . And, the final cause is its function, which is to be a fine work of art. In each context of his thinking, Aristotle thought that things could be stated in specific terms rather than on general terms. So, it is more informative to know that a sculptor made the statue rather than an artist made it. And, even more informative to know that a certain person sculpted it rather than a sculptor did so.

Aristotle’s works were lost in the West after the decline of Rome. During the 9th century AD, Arab scholars introduced Aristotle, in Arabic translation, to the Islamic world. The 12th century Spanish-Arab philosopher, Averroes, is the best known of the Arab scholars that studied and commented on Aristotle and his works. In the 13th century, the Latin West renewed its interest in Aristotle’s work, and Saint Thomas Aquinas found in it a philosophical foundation for Christian thought. Church officials at first questioned Aquinas’ use of Aristotle; because, in the early stages of its rediscovery, Aristotle’s works followed a lot of suspicion, mainly because his teachings were thought to lead to a materialistic view of the world. Nevertheless, Aquinas’ work was accepted, and the later philosophy of scholasticism continued the philosophical tradition based on Aquinas’s adaptation of Aristotelian thought.

The influence of Aristotle’s philosophy has been persuasive. It has been thought to have help shape the modern language and common sense. His doctrine of the Prime Mover as a final cause played an important role in theology. Until the 20th century, logic meant Aristotle’s logic. Until the Renaissance, and even later, astronomers and poets alike admired his concept of the universe. Zoology rested on Aristotle’s work until British scientist Charles Darwin modified the doctrine of Aristotle’s species theory in the 19th century. In the 20th century, a new appreciation has developed of Aristotle’s method and it’s relevance to education, literary criticism, the analysis of human action, and political analysis.

Not only the discipline of zoology, but also the world of learning as a whole, seem to amply justify Darwin’s remark that the intellectual heroes of his own time “ were mere schoolboys compared to old Aristotle.”