

Aristotle

Philosophy



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ARISTOTLE Aristotle was Plato's greatest student. One of his big contributions to philosophy was the theory of the four kinds of causes. Aristotle's ideal state would be ruled by the virtuous citizens. Aristotle thinks that a state is an association for allowing each citizen to live well. What was Aristotle's notion of friendship? It was broader than our modern notion of friendship. It was closer to the idea of people helping each other be virtuous. Aristotle thought the state had a duty to morally improve its citizens. Modern political theorists do not agree. Aristotle didn't think that the state should be barred from religion and censorship. Aristotle's ethical theory was centered on the question of what kind of life to live. It was not concerned with discovering what actions are right. Aristotle (Greek: ἀριστοτέλης, [aristotélɛs], Aristotélēs) (384 BC — 322 BC) [1] was a Greek philosopher and polymath, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. His writings cover many subjects, including physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, linguistics, politics, government, ethics, biology, and zoology. Together with Plato and Socrates (Plato's teacher), Aristotle is one of the most important founding figures in Western philosophy. Aristotle's writings were the first to create a comprehensive system of Western philosophy, encompassing morality, aesthetics, logic, science, politics, and metaphysics. Aristotle's views on the physical sciences profoundly shaped medieval scholarship, and their influence extended well into the Renaissance, although they were ultimately replaced by Newtonian physics. In the zoological sciences, some of his observations were confirmed to be accurate only in the 19th century. His works contain the earliest known formal study of logic, which was incorporated in the late 19th century into

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modern formal logic. In metaphysics, Aristotelianism had a profound influence on philosophical and theological thinking in the Islamic and Jewish traditions in the Middle Ages, and it continues to influence Christian theology, especially the scholastic tradition of the Catholic Church. Aristotle was well known among medieval Muslim intellectuals and revered as *Ø§Ù„ Ù…Ø¹Ù„ Ù… Ø§Ù„ Ø£ÙˆÙ„* - "The First Teacher". His ethics, though always influential, gained renewed interest with the modern advent of virtue ethics. All aspects of Aristotle's philosophy continue to be the object of active academic study today. Though Aristotle wrote many elegant treatises and dialogues (Cicero described his literary style as "a river of gold"),[2] it is thought that the majority of his writings are now lost and only about one-third of the original works have survived.[Logic Aristotle portrayed in the 1493Nuremberg Chronicle as a scholar of the 15th century A. D. Main article: Term logic With the Prior Analytics, Aristotle is credited with the earliest study of formal logic, and his conception of it was the dominant form of Western logic until 19th century advances in mathematical logic. Kant stated in the Critique of Pure Reason that Aristotle's theory of logic completely accounted for the core of deductive inference. History Aristotle " says that 'on the subject of reasoning' he 'had nothing else on an earlier date to speak of'" However, Plato reports that syntax was devised before him, by Prodicus of Ceos, who was concerned by the correct use of words. Logic seems to have emerged from dialectics; the earlier philosophers made frequent use of concepts like *reductio ad absurdum* in their discussions, but never truly understood the logical implications. Even Plato had difficulties with logic; although he had a reasonable conception of a deductive system, he could never actually construct one and relied instead on his dialectic.

Plato believed that deduction would simply follow from premises, hence he focused on maintaining solid premises so that the conclusion would logically follow. Consequently, Plato realized that a method for obtaining conclusions would be most beneficial. He never succeeded in devising such a method, but his best attempt was published in his book *Sophist*, where he introduced his division method. Analytics and the Organon Main article: Organon What we today call Aristotelian logic, Aristotle himself would have labeled "analytics". The term "logic" he reserved to mean dialectics. Most of Aristotle's work is probably not in its original form, since it was most likely edited by students and later lecturers. The logical works of Aristotle were compiled into six books in about the early 1st century AD: Categories On Interpretation Prior Analytics Posterior Analytics Topics On Sophistical Refutations The order of the books (or the teachings from which they are composed) is not certain, but this list was derived from analysis of Aristotle's writings. It goes from the basics, the analysis of simple terms in the Categories, the analysis of propositions and their elementary relations in On Interpretation, to the study of more complex forms, namely, syllogisms (in the Analytics) and dialectics (in the Topics and Sophistical Refutations). The first three treatises form the core of the logical theory *stricto sensu*: the grammar of the language of logic and the correct rules of reasoning. There is one volume of Aristotle's concerning logic not found in the Organon, namely the fourth book of *Metaphysics*.^[17] Aristotle's scientific method Plato (left) and Aristotle (right), a detail of *The School of Athens*, a fresco by Raphael. Aristotle gestures to the earth, representing his belief in knowledge through empirical observation and experience, while holding a copy of his *Nicomachean Ethics* in his hand, whilst Plato gestures to the heavens,

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representing his belief in The Forms. " Aristotle" by Francesco Hayez (1791—1882) Like his teacher Plato, Aristotle's philosophy aims at the universal. Aristotle, however, finds the universal in particular things, which he calls the essence of things while Plato finds that the universal exists apart from particular things, and is related to them as their prototype or exemplar. For Aristotle, therefore, philosophic method implies the ascent from the study of particular phenomena to the knowledge of essences, while for Plato philosophic method means the descent from a knowledge of universal Forms (or ideas) to a contemplation of particular imitations of these. For Aristotle, " form" still refers to the unconditional basis of phenomena but is " instantiated" in a particular substance (see Universals and particulars, below). In a certain sense, Aristotle's method is both inductive and deductive, while Plato's is essentially deductive from a priori principles.[19] In Aristotle's terminology, " natural philosophy" is a branch of philosophy examining the phenomena of the natural world, and includes fields that would be regarded today as physics, biology and other natural sciences. In modern times, the scope of philosophy has become limited to more generic or abstract inquiries, such as ethics and metaphysics, in which logic plays a major role. Today's philosophy tends to exclude empirical study of the natural world by means of the scientific method. In contrast, Aristotle's philosophical endeavors encompassed virtually all facets of intellectual inquiry. In the larger sense of the word, Aristotle makes philosophy coextensive with reasoning, which he also would describe as " science". Note, however, that his use of the term science carries a different meaning than that covered by the term " scientific method". For Aristotle, " all science (dianoia) is practical, poetical or

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theoretical" (Metaphysics 1025b25). By practical science, he means ethics and politics; by poetical science, he means the study of poetry and the other fine arts; by theoretical science, he means physics, mathematics and metaphysics. If logic (or "analytics") is regarded as a study preliminary to philosophy, the divisions of Aristotelian philosophy would consist of:

(1) Logic; (2) Theoretical Philosophy, including Metaphysics, Physics and Mathematics; (3) Practical Philosophy and (4) Poetical Philosophy. In the period between his two stays in Athens, between his times at the Academy and the Lyceum, Aristotle conducted most of the scientific thinking and research for which he is renowned today. In fact, most of Aristotle's life was devoted to the study of the objects of natural science. Aristotle's metaphysics contains observations on the nature of numbers but he made no original contributions to mathematics. He did, however, perform original research in the natural sciences, e. g., botany, zoology, physics, astronomy, chemistry, meteorology, and several other sciences. Aristotle's writings on science are largely qualitative, as opposed to quantitative. Beginning in the 16th century, scientists began applying mathematics to the physical sciences, and Aristotle's work in this area was deemed hopelessly inadequate. His failings were largely due to the absence of concepts like mass, velocity, force and temperature. He had a conception of speed and temperature, but no quantitative understanding of them, which was partly due to the absence of basic experimental devices, like clocks and thermometers. His writings provide an account of many scientific observations, a mixture of precocious accuracy and curious errors. For example, in his History of Animals he claimed that human males have more teeth than females.[20] In a similar vein, John Philoponus, and later Galileo,

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showed by simple experiments that Aristotle's theory that a heavier object falls faster than a lighter object is incorrect.[21] On the other hand, Aristotle refuted Democritus's claim that the Milky Way was made up of "those stars which are shaded by the earth from the sun's rays," pointing out (correctly, even if such reasoning was bound to be dismissed for a long time) that, given "current astronomical demonstrations" that "the size of the sun is greater than that of the earth and the distance of the stars from the earth many times greater than that of the sun, then ... the sun shines on all the stars and the earth screens none of them." [22] In places, Aristotle goes too far in deriving 'laws of the universe' from simple observation and over-stretched reason. Today's scientific method assumes that such thinking without sufficient facts is ineffective, and that discerning the validity of one's hypothesis requires far more rigorous experimentation than that which Aristotle used to support his laws. Aristotle also had some scientific blind spots. He posited a geocentric cosmology that we may discern in selections of the *Metaphysics*, which was widely accepted up until the 16th century. From the 3rd century to the 16th century, the dominant view held that the Earth was the rotational center of the universe. Since he was perhaps the philosopher most respected by European thinkers during and after the Renaissance, these thinkers often took Aristotle's erroneous positions as given, which held back science in this epoch.[23] However, Aristotle's scientific shortcomings should not mislead one into forgetting his great advances in the many scientific fields. For instance, he founded logic as a formal science and created foundations to biology that were not superseded for two millennia. Moreover, he introduced the fundamental notion that nature is composed of things that change and that studying such changes

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can provide useful knowledge of underlying constants. Geology As quoted from Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology: He [Aristotle] refers to many examples of changes now constantly going on, and insists emphatically on the great results which they must produce in the lapse of ages. He instances particular cases of lakes that had dried up, and deserts that had at length become watered by rivers and fertilized. He points to the growth of the Nilotic delta since the time of Homer, to the hallowing of the Palus Maeotis within sixty years from his own time ... He alludes ... to the upheaving of one of the Eolian islands, previous to a volcanic eruption. The changes of the earth, he says, are so slow in comparison to the duration of our lives, that they are overlooked; and the migrations of people after great catastrophes, and their removal to other regions, cause the event to be forgotten. He says [12th chapter of his Meteorics] 'the distribution of land and sea in particular regions does not endure throughout all time, but it becomes sea in those parts where it was land, and again it becomes land where it was sea, and there is reason for thinking that these changes take place according to a certain system, and within a certain period.' The concluding observation is as follows: 'As time never fails, and the universe is eternal, neither the Tanais, nor the Nile, can have flowed forever. The places where they rise were once dry, and there is a limit to their operations, but there is none to time. So also of all other rivers; they spring up and they perish; and the sea also continually deserts some lands and invades others. The same tracts, therefore, of the earth are not some always sea, and others always continents, but everything changes in the course of time. Physics Aristotle proposed a fifth element, aether, in addition to the four proposed earlier by Empedocles. Earth, which is cold and dry; this corresponds to the <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-2/>

modern idea of a solid. Water, which is cold and wet; this corresponds to the modern idea of a liquid. Air, which is hot and wet; this corresponds to the modern idea of a gas. Fire, which is hot and dry; this corresponds to the modern ideas of plasma and heat. Aether which is the divine substance that makes up the heavenly spheres and heavenly bodies (stars and planets). Each of the four earthly elements has its natural place. All that is earthly tends toward the center of the universe, i. e., the center of the Earth. Water tends toward a sphere surrounding the center. Air tends toward a sphere surrounding the water sphere. Fire tends toward the lunar sphere (in which the Moon orbits). When elements are moved out of their natural place, they naturally move back towards it. This is "natural motion"-motion requiring no extrinsic cause. So, for example, in water, earthy bodies sink while air bubbles rise up; in air, rain falls and flame rises. Outside all the other spheres, the heaven, fifth element, manifested in the stars and planets move in the perfection of circles. Motion Aristotle defined motion as the actuality of a potentiality as such Aquinas suggested that the passage be understood literally; that motion can indeed be understood as the active fulfillment of a potential, as a transition toward a potentially possible state. Because actuality and potentiality are normally opposites in Aristotle, other commentators either suggest that the wording which has come down to us is erroneous, or that the addition of the "as such" to the definition is critical to understanding it. Causality, The Four Causes Four causes Aristotle suggested that the reason for anything coming about can be attributed to four different types of simultaneously active causal factors: Material cause describes the material out of which something is composed. Thus the material cause of a table is wood, and the material cause of a car is rubber and steel. It is not

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about action. It does not mean one domino knocks over another domino. The formal cause is its form, i. e., the arrangement of that matter. It tells us what a thing is, that anything is determined by the definition, form, pattern, essence, whole, synthesis or archetype. It embraces the account of causes in terms of fundamental principles or general laws, as the whole (i. e., macrostructure) is the cause of its parts, a relationship known as the whole-part causation. Plainly put the formal cause is the idea existing in the first place as exemplar in the mind of the sculptor, and in the second place as intrinsic, determining cause, embodied in the matter. Formal cause could only refer to the essential quality of causation. A simpler example of the formal cause is the blueprint or plan that one has before making or causing a human made object to exist. The efficient cause is " the primary source", or that from which the change or the ending of the change first starts. It identifies 'what makes of what is made and what causes change of what is changed' and so suggests all sorts of agents, nonliving or living, acting as the sources of change or movement or rest. Representing the current understanding of causality as the relation of cause and effect, this covers the modern definitions of " cause" as either the agent or agency or particular events or states of affairs, simpler again that which immediately sets the thing in motion. So take the two dominos this time of equal weighting, the first is knocked over causing the second also to fall over. This is effectively efficient cause. The final cause is its purpose, or that for the sake of which a thing exists or is done, including both purposeful and instrumental actions and activities. The final cause or telos is the purpose or end that something is supposed to serve, or it is that from which and that to which the change is. This also covers modern ideas of mental causation involving such

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psychological causes as volition, need, motivation or motives, rational, irrational, ethical, and all that gives purpose to behavior. Additionally, things can be causes of one another, causing each other reciprocally, as hard work causes fitness and vice versa, although not in the same way or function, the one is as the beginning of change, the other as the goal. (Thus Aristotle first suggested a reciprocal or circular causality as a relation of mutual dependence or influence of cause upon effect). Moreover, Aristotle indicated that the same thing can be the cause of contrary effects; its presence and absence may result in different outcomes. Simply it is the goal or purpose that brings about an event (not necessarily a mental goal). Taking our two dominos, it requires someone to intentionally knock the dominos over as they cannot fall themselves. Aristotle marked two modes of causation: proper (prior) causation and accidental (chance) causation. All causes, proper and incidental, can be spoken as potential or as actual, particular or generic. The same language refers to the effects of causes, so that generic effects assigned to generic causes, particular effects to particular causes, operating causes to actual effects. Essentially, causality does not suggest a temporal relation between the cause and the effect. Optics Aristotle held more accurate theories on some optical concepts than other philosophers of his day. The earliest known written evidence of a camera obscura can be found in Aristotle's documentation of such a device in 350 BC in *Problemata*. Aristotle's apparatus contained a dark chamber that had a single small hole, or aperture, to allow for sunlight to enter. Aristotle used the device to make observations of the sun and noted that no matter what shape the hole was, the sun would still be correctly displayed as a round object. In modern cameras, this is analogous to the diaphragm. Aristotle also made the

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observation that when the distance between the aperture and the surface with the image increased, the image was magnified. Chance and spontaneity

According to Aristotle, spontaneity and chance are causes of some things, distinguishable from other types of cause. Chance as an incidental cause lies in the realm of accidental things. It is "from what is spontaneous" (but we can note that what is spontaneous does not come from chance). For a better understanding of Aristotle's conception of "chance" it might be better to think of "coincidence": Something takes place by chance if a person sets out with the intent of having one thing take place, but with the result of another thing (not intended) taking place. For example: A person seeks donations. That person may find another person willing to donate a substantial sum. However, if the person seeking the donations met the person donating, not for the purpose of collecting donations, but for some other purpose, Aristotle would call the collecting of the donation by that particular donor a result of chance. It must be unusual that something happens by chance. In other words, if something happens all or most of the time, we cannot say that it is by chance. There is also more specific kind of chance, which Aristotle names "luck" that can only apply to human beings, since it is in the sphere of moral actions. According to Aristotle, luck must involve choice (and thus deliberation), and only humans are capable of deliberation and choice. "What is not capable of action cannot do anything by chance".

Metaphysics Statue of Aristotle (1915) by Cipri Adolf Bermann at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau Main article: Metaphysics (Aristotle) Aristotle defines metaphysics as "the knowledge of immaterial being," or of "being in the highest degree of abstraction." He refers to metaphysics as "first philosophy", as well as "the theologic science." Substance, potentiality and

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actuality See also: Potentiality and actuality (Aristotle) Aristotle examines the concepts of substance and essence (ousia) in his *Metaphysics* (Book VII), and he concludes that a particular substance is a combination of both matter and form. In book VIII, he distinguishes the matter of the substance as the substratum, or the stuff of which it is composed. For example, the matter of a house is the bricks, stones, timbers etc., or whatever constitutes the potential house, while the form of the substance is the actual house, namely 'covering for bodies and chattels' or any other differentia (see also predicables) that let us define something as a house. The formula that gives the components is the account of the matter, and the formula that gives the differentia is the account of the form.[29] With regard to the change (kinesis) and its causes now, as he defines in his *Physics* and *On Generation and Corruption* 319b-320a, he distinguishes the coming to be from: growth and diminution, which is change in quantity; locomotion, which is change in space; and alteration, which is change in quality. The coming to be is a change where nothing persists of which the resultant is a property. In that particular change he introduces the concept of potentiality (dynamis) and actuality (entelecheia) in association with the matter and the form. Referring to potentiality, this is what a thing is capable of doing or being acted upon, if the conditions are right and it is not prevented by something else. For example, the seed of a plant in the soil is potentially (dynamis) plant, and if is not prevented by something, it will become a plant. Potentially beings can either 'act' (poiein) or 'be acted upon' (paschein), which can be either innate or learned. For example, the eyes possess the potentiality of sight (innate — being acted upon), while the capability of playing the flute can be possessed by learning (exercise — acting). Actuality

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is the fulfillment of the end of the potentiality. Because the end (telos) is the principle of every change, and for the sake of the end exists potentiality, therefore actuality is the end. Referring then to our previous example, we could say that an actuality is when a plant does one of the activities that plants do. " For that for the sake of which a thing is, is its principle, and the becoming is for the sake of the end; and the actuality is the end, and it is for the sake of this that the potentiality is acquired. For animals do not see in order that they may have sight, but they have sight that they may see." In summary, the matter used to make a house has potentiality to be a house and both the activity of building and the form of the final house are actualities, which is also a final cause or end. Then Aristotle proceeds and concludes that the actuality is prior to potentiality in formula, in time and in substantiality. With this definition of the particular substance (i. e., matter and form), Aristotle tries to solve the problem of the unity of the beings, for example, " what is it that makes a man one"? Since, according to Plato there are two Ideas: animal and biped, how then is man a unity? However, according to Aristotle, the potential being (matter) and the actual one (form) are one and the same thing.[31] Universals and particulars Aristotle's predecessor, Plato, argued that all things have a universal form, which could be either a property, or a relation to other things. When we look at an apple, for example, we see an apple, and we can also analyze a form of an apple. In this distinction, there is a particular apple and a universal form of an apple. Moreover, we can place an apple next to a book, so that we can speak of both the book and apple as being next to each other. Plato argued that there are some universal forms that are not a part of particular things. For example, it is possible that there is no particular good in existence, but "

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good" is still a proper universal form. Bertrand Russell is a contemporary philosopher who agreed with Plato on the existence of "uninstantiated universals". Aristotle disagreed with Plato on this point, arguing that all universals are instantiated. Aristotle argued that there are no universals that are unattached to existing things. According to Aristotle, if a universal exists, either as a particular or a relation, then there must have been, must be currently, or must be in the future, something on which the universal can be predicated. Consequently, according to Aristotle, if it is not the case that some universal can be predicated to an object that exists at some period of time, then it does not exist. In addition, Aristotle disagreed with Plato about the location of universals. As Plato spoke of the world of the forms, a location where all universal forms subsist, Aristotle maintained that universals exist within each thing on which each universal is predicated. So, according to Aristotle, the form of apple exists within each apple, rather than in the world of the forms.

Biology and medicine In Aristotelian science, most especially in biology, things he saw himself have stood the test of time better than his retelling of the reports of others, which contain error and superstition. He dissected animals but not humans; his ideas on how the human body works have been almost entirely superseded. Empirical research program

Leopard shark Aristotle is the earliest natural historian whose work has survived in some detail. Aristotle certainly did research on the natural history of Lesbos, and the surrounding seas and neighbouring areas. The works that reflect this research, such as History of Animals, Generation of Animals, and Parts of Animals, contain some observations and interpretations, along with sundry myths and mistakes. The most striking passages are about the sea-life visible from observation on Lesbos and available from the catches of

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fishermen. His observations on catfish, electric fish (Torpedo) and anglerfish are detailed, as is his writing on cephalopods, namely, Octopus, Sepia (cuttlefish) and the paper nautilus (Argonauta argo). His description of the hectocotyl arm was about two thousand years ahead of its time, and widely disbelieved until its rediscovery in the 19th century. He separated the aquatic mammals from fish, and knew that sharks and rays were part of the group he called Selachia (selachians).[32] Another good example of his methods comes from the Generation of Animals in which Aristotle describes breaking open fertilized chicken eggs at intervals to observe when visible organs were generated. He gave accurate descriptions of ruminants' four-chambered fore-stomachs, and of the ovoviviparous embryological development of the hound shark Mustelus mustelus.[33] Classification of living things Aristotle's classification of living things contains some elements which still existed in the 19th century. What the modern zoologist would call vertebrates and invertebrates, Aristotle called 'animals with blood' and 'animals without blood' (he was not to know that complex invertebrates do make use of hemoglobin, but of a different kind from vertebrates). Animals with blood were divided into live-bearing (humans and mammals), and egg-bearing (birds and fish). Invertebrates ('animals without blood') are insects, crustacea (divided into non-shelled — cephalopods — and shelled) and testacea (molluscs). In some respects, this incomplete classification is better than that of Linnaeus, who crowded the invertebrata together into two groups, Insecta and Vermes (worms). For Charles Singer, " Nothing is more remarkable than [Aristotle's] efforts to [exhibit] the relationships of living things as a scala naturae"[32] Aristotle's History of Animals classified organisms in relation to a hierarchical " Ladder of Life" (scala naturae), <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-2/>

placing them according to complexity of structure and function so that higher organisms showed greater vitality and ability to move.[34] Aristotle believed that intellectual purposes, i. e., final causes, guided all natural processes. Such a teleological view gave Aristotle cause to justify his observed data as an expression of formal design. Noting that "no animal has, at the same time, both tusks and horns," and "a single-hooved animal with two horns I have never seen," Aristotle suggested that Nature, giving no animal both horns and tusks, was staving off vanity, and giving creatures faculties only to such a degree as they are necessary. Noting that ruminants had multiple stomachs and weak teeth, he supposed the first was to compensate for the latter, with Nature trying to preserve a type of balance. [35] In a similar fashion, Aristotle believed that creatures were arranged in a graded scale of perfection rising from plants on up to man, the *scala naturae* or Great Chain of Being.[36] His system had eleven grades, arranged according "to the degree to which they are infected with potentiality", expressed in their form at birth. The highest animals laid warm and wet creatures alive, the lowest bore theirs cold, dry, and in thick eggs. Aristotle also held that the level of a creature's perfection was reflected in its form, but not preordained by that form. Ideas like this, and his ideas about souls, are not regarded as science at all in modern times. He placed emphasis on the type(s) of soul an organism possessed, asserting that plants possess a vegetative soul, responsible for reproduction and growth, animals a vegetative and a sensitive soul, responsible for mobility and sensation, and humans a vegetative, a sensitive, and a rational soul, capable of thought and reflection. Aristotle, in contrast to earlier philosophers, but in accordance with the Egyptians, placed the rational soul in the heart, rather than the

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brain. Notable is Aristotle's division of sensation and thought, which generally went against previous philosophers, with the exception of Alcmaeon. Psychology Aristotle's psychology, given in his treatise *On the Soul* (*peri psyche*, often known by its Latin title *De Anima*), posits three kinds of soul ("psyches"): the vegetative soul, the sensitive soul, and the rational soul. Humans have a rational soul. This kind of soul is capable of the same powers as the other kinds: Like the vegetative soul it can grow and nourish itself; like the sensitive soul it can experience sensations and move locally. The unique part of the human, rational soul is its ability to receive forms of other things and compare them. For Aristotle, the soul (*psyche*) was a simpler concept than it is for us today. By soul he simply meant the form of a living being. Since all beings are composites of form and matter, the form of living beings is that which endows them with what is specific to living beings, e. g. the ability to initiate movement (or in the case of plants, growth and chemical transformations, which Aristotle considers types of movement).

Practical philosophy Ethics Aristotle considered ethics to be a practical rather than theoretical study, i. e., one aimed at becoming good and doing good rather than knowing for its own sake. He wrote several treatises on ethics, including most notably, the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle taught that virtue has to do with the proper function (*ergon*) of a thing. An eye is only a good eye in so much as it can see, because the proper function of an eye is sight. Aristotle reasoned that humans must have a function specific to humans, and that this function must be an activity of the *psuchē* (normally translated as soul) in accordance with reason (*logos*). Aristotle identified such an optimum activity of the soul as the aim of all human deliberate action, *eudaimonia*, generally translated as "happiness" or sometimes "

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well being". To have the potential of ever being happy in this way necessarily requires a good character (ἡθικὴ ἀρετή), often translated as moral (or ethical) virtue (or excellence).[46] Aristotle taught that to achieve a virtuous and potentially happy character requires a first stage of having the fortune to be habituated not deliberately, but by teachers, and experience, leading to a later stage in which one consciously chooses to do the best things. When the best people come to live life this way their practical wisdom (phronesis) and their intellect (nous) can develop with each other towards the highest possible human virtue, the wisdom of an accomplished theoretical or speculative thinker, or in other words, a philosopher.[47] Politics Like Aristotle, conservatives generally accept the world as it is; they distrust the politics of abstract reason — that is, reason divorced from experience. Benjamin Wiker In addition to his works on ethics, which address the individual, Aristotle addressed the city in his work titled Politics. Aristotle considered the city to be a natural community. Moreover, he considered the city to be prior in importance to the family which in turn is prior to the individual, "for the whole must of necessity be prior to the part". He also famously stated that "man is by nature a political animal." Aristotle conceived of politics as being like an organism rather than like a machine, and as a collection of parts none of which can exist without the others. Aristotle's conception of the city is organic, and he is considered one of the first to conceive of the city in this manner. The common modern understanding of a political community as a modern state is quite different to Aristotle's understanding. Although he was aware of the existence and potential of larger empires, the natural community according to Aristotle was the city (polis) which functions as a

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political "community" or "partnership" (koinônia). The aim of the city is not just to avoid injustice or for economic stability, but rather to allow at least some citizens the possibility to live a good life, and to perform beautiful acts: "The political partnership must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together." This is distinguished from modern approaches, beginning with social contract theory, according to which individuals leave the state of nature because of "fear of violent death" or its "inconveniences." | | PLATO (c. 428 - 348 B. C.) was a hugely important Greek philosopher and mathematician from the Socratic (or Classical) period. He is perhaps the best known, most widely studied and most influential philosopher of all time. Together with his mentor, Socrates, and his student, Aristotle, he provided the main opposition to the Materialist view of the world represented by Democritus and Epicurus, and he helped to lay the foundations of the whole of Western Philosophy. In his works, especially his many dialogues, he blended Ethics, Political Philosophy, Epistemology, Metaphysics and moral psychology into an interconnected and systematic philosophy. In addition to the ideas they contained (such as his doctrine of Platonic, Essentialism, Idealism, his famous theory of Forms and the ideal of "Platonic love. The philosophical school which he developed at the Academy was known as Platonism (and its later off-shoot, Neo-Platonism). Life | | Plato was born in Athens (or possibly in Aegina, according to some sources) some time between 429 and 423 B. C. (most modern scholars use estimate of 428 or 427 B. C.) He was possibly originally named Aristocles after his grandfather, and only later dubbed "Plato" or "Platon" (meaning "broad") on account of the breadth of his eloquence, or of his wide forehead, or

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possibly on account of his generally robust figure. His father was Ariston (who may have traced his descent from Codrus, the last of the legendary kings of Athens); his mother was Perictione (who was descended from the famous Athenian lawmaker and poet Solon, and whose family also boasted prominent figures of the oligarchic regime of Athens known as the Thirty Tyrants). He had two brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon, and a sister, Potone. Plato later introduced several of his distinguished relatives into his dialogues, indicating considerable family pride. When Ariston died early in Plato's childhood, his mother married her own uncle, Pyrilampes, who was also a friend of Pericles (the leader of the democratic faction in Athens), and who had served many times as an ambassador to the Persian court. Together, they had another son, Antiphon, who was therefore Plato's half-brother. Coming as he did from one of the wealthiest and most politically active families in Athens, Plato must have been instructed in grammar, music and gymnastics by the most distinguished teachers of his time, and certainly his quickness of mind and modesty were widely praised. He had also attended courses of philosophy and was acquainted with Cratylus, a disciple of Heraclitus, before meeting Socrates. This life-changing event occurred when Plato was about twenty years old, and the intercourse between master and pupil probably lasted eight or ten years. As a youth he had loved to write poetry and tragedies, but burnt them all after he became a student of Socrates and turned to philosophy in earnest. It is plain that no influence on Plato was greater than that of Socrates. During his time in Italy, he also studied with students of Pythagoras and came to appreciate the value of mathematics. When he returned to Athens in about 385 or 387 B. C., Plato founded the Academy (or Akademia), one of

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the earliest and most famous organized schools in western civilization and the prototype for later universities, on a plot of land containing a sacred grove just outside the city walls of ancient Athens, which had once belonged to the Athenian hero Akademos. Plato had been bitterly disappointed with the standards displayed by those in public office, and his intention was to train young men in philosophy and the sciences in order to create better statesmen, as well as to continue the work of his former teacher, Socrates. Among Plato's more noteworthy students at the Academy were Aristotle, Xenocrates (396 - 314 B. C.), Speusippus (407 - 339 B. C.) and Theophrastus (c. 371 - 287 B. C.). Except for two more rather ill-advised and ill-fated trips to Syracuse in Sicily in 367 B. C. and 361 B. C. to tutor the young ruler Dionysius II, Plato presided over his Academy from 387 B. C. until his death in 347 B. C., aged about 80. He was supposedly buried in the school grounds, although his grave has never been discovered. On Plato's death, his nephew Speusippus succeeded him as head of the school (perhaps because his star pupil Aristotle's ideas had by that time diverged too far from Plato's). The school continued to operate for almost 900 years, until A. D. 529, when it was closed by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, who saw it as a threat to the propagation of Christianity.

Work | | Plato is perhaps the first philosopher whose complete works are still available to us. He wrote no systematic treatises giving his views, but rather he wrote a number (about 35, although the authenticity of at least some of these remains in doubt) of superb dialogues, written in the form of conversations, a form which permitted him to develop the Socratic method of question and answer. In his dialogues, Plato discussed every kind of philosophical idea, including Ethics (with discussion of the nature of

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virtue), Metaphysics (where topics include immortality, man, mind, and Realism), Political Philosophy (where topics such as censorship and the ideal state are discussed), Philosophy of Religion (considering topics such as Atheism, Dualism and Pantheism), Epistemology (where he looked at ideas such as a priori knowledge and Rationalism), the Philosophy of Mathematics and the theory of art (especially dance, music, poetry, architecture and drama). We have no material evidence about exactly when Plato wrote each of his dialogues, nor the extent to which some might have been later revised or rewritten, nor even whether all or part of them were ever "published" or made widely available. In addition to the ideas they contained, though, his writings are also considered superb pieces of literature in their own right, in terms of the mastery of language, the power of indicating character, the sense of situation, and the keen eye for both tragic and comic aspects. None of the dialogues contain Plato himself as a character, and so he does not actually declare that anything asserted in them are specifically his own views. The characters in the dialogues are generally historical, with Socrates usually