

Education in ancient athens

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



No civilization can exist without education. All that didn't perished quickly without a significant mark. Ancient Athens had an excellent system of education and therefore was able to prevail and live for a long time. Education was offered to boys in Athens and schooling started at the age of seven. All Athenians valued education. Even though schools have tuition fees, many poor people paid the money (McAllister). Students from ages seven to fourteen learned three main subjects. They learned grammar, which consisted of reading, writing and math.

Music was an important subject to the Athenians and so was gymnastics (Dunkle). Reading and writing that was taught was useful for trade and business (Dunkle). Athenians learned gymnastics to promote health and strength (Dunkle). Music built up characteristics, and entertained friends, and was used to purify their souls (McAllister). The sensible education system of Athens was beneficial to their civilization. Too all students in Greece, the basic reading, writing and math were taught. Being taught reading and writing was helpful in trade.

Traders all over the world commonly spoke Greek. It second language for educated people outside of Greece (Mazour). Learning Greek, would help communicate with traders in the world that don't have Greek as their first language. After elementary school, sophists usually taught the students (Mazour). From them they learned about poetry, the government, ethics, astronomy and rhetoric (Mazour). Rhetoric was the study was public speaking and debating. Rhetoric was helpful to the democratic system that was Athens' government.

This was beneficial to the government because people could speak well in front of people and creating good arguments. Reading and writing isn't all they valued. They also thought that music was important. The ancient philosopher, Aristotle said that music served as education, but also as a pastime and amusement (Dunkle). In music class, they learned to sing, and play an instrument. By doing so, they were able to entertain guests at a party (Mazour). Music wasn't always for these shows, but they supported a calm mind in a healthy body (Mazour). The type of music that a person listened to also built the characteristics of that person, or so Plato says, "Teach them the poems of other morally good poets, setting them to the music of the kithara and compel rhythms and harmonies to dwell in the souls of the boys to make them more civilized, more orderly and more harmonious so that they will be good in speech and action" (Dunkle). Plato's student, Aristotle also agreed to this, "Therefore it is evident that music is able to produce a certain effect on the character of the soul, and if it is able to do this, it is plain that the young must be introduced to and educated in [music]" (Dunkle).

Aristotle stressed that the students must love music, and "mere appreciation would not be sufficient" (Dunkle). Training in singing and the playing of an instrument was important. Students that learned went on competitions called Mouseia (Dunkle). This built their confidence and their morale. The Athenians had a special curriculum of gymnastics. In our time, it would be called physical education. Students had athletic training because it promoted good health, strength, courage, and it prepared them for warfare (Dunkle).

Unlike Sparta that trained their children to death (Crystal), Athens were not concerned with specialization for a specific job, but to have a wide range of education (McAllister). Good health would lead to longer lifetimes and so Athen's would be healthier overall. Strength and courage would be useful in battle or in public speeches. This means that Athenians wouldn't be nervous and would look intimidating because of their good physique. Many kids studied from an early age. There were intelligent students that benefited Athens. The system of education the Athenians had been well made and because of that Athens was able to thrive.

It is similar to how our system works today, with College and able to be taught/ or tutored by teachers who are hired. How we have music classes like orchestra and choir. Also like how we have dance classes and physical education classes at school. It is a good system that our education system is based off of. Reading and writing taught the students to communicate and so they could communicate with traders. Music brought peace to the soul, but also served as entertainment. Physical education brought good health and children were able to prepare for warfare. These features of Athenian education made the Athenians stronger and more powerful.