

Good essay on life in ancient greece

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The civilization of ancient Greece centered on the Aegean Sea, the region that today includes Greece and the western part of Turkey. Ancient Greece was not a single country ruled by one person. Ancient Greece consists of numerous city-states that share a common language and culture. About 800 B. C. Greeks began to form ' polis' or city-states throughout the country. Each polis has its own government. Some city-states had a few thousand inhabitants, but some city-states such as Athens have a total population of 250, 000. City-states were set up as far from Greece as France and Spain. There were several different forms of government in each city-state. Some were tyrannies ruled by one person who had absolute power. Oligarchy is the type of government ruled by a minor political group of elite people. Democracy is Greece's biggest contribution to the world. Democracy comes from the two Greek words, ' demos' meaning ' people' and ' kratos' which means ' to rule'. Hence, democracy is known as a government ruled by people. However, in the ancient times, supreme democracy is not granted to women and slaves. Women could not take part in political debate nor could the many slaves. From about 500 B. C. the two most important city-states were Athens and Sparta. Athens was the main center for philosophy and literature. The core of public life was the agora, or marketplace, which lay below the Acropolis, the hill where the main temples stood. Most political debate took place at the agora. Men who are not slaves were citizens, and could speak at the Assembly. At this meeting, one can voice out their opinions on various political issues. Each speaker was timed with a water clock, to avoid longer discussions. Athens was an important military power since the ancient times and had an exceptionally strong navy. However, the strongest army in ancient Greece was that of Sparta. Boys entered military

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school at six and forbidden to return to their families until the age of 30. The Spartans became concerned about the power of Athens, and the war broke out between the two states in 431 B. C. The Spartans cut off food supplies to Athens. In 404 B. C. Athens were starved into defeat. Greek thinkers laid the foundations of modern science and philosophy over 2, 000 years ago. One of the most important developments in Greek thought was philosophy.

Philosophy is the study of truth, wisdom and the nature of knowledge; why do we think what we think, and how do we know what we think we know.

Philosophy has both a popular and a technical meaning. In the popular sense, it is any set of beliefs about human being, nature, society and God.

Everyone who has wondered about the meaning of life and found a satisfying answer has a philosophy. In its technical sense, philosophy means a highly disciplined and rational method of criticizing beliefs to make them clearer and more reliable. Great philosophers and teachers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle considered questions about the purpose of life and morality.

Their works still influence modern philosophers today. Greek literature like poetry, plays and history are still studied even in the modern era. The most famous poems are the Illiad and the Odyssey, written by the blind poet

Homer. Aristophanes is known for his literary comedy and sharp humor. His noted works are The Wasp, The Knights and The Clouds. All of his plays

include satirical wit and political sarcasm. Other noted playwrights such as Sophocles and his famous Antigone, a tragic story of a princess torn by her

loyalty to herself and to the people; Euripides also one of the greatest writers of Greek tragedy, his work The Trojan Women written in 415 B. C. deals with

the aftermath of the Trojan War. Greeks also enjoyed singing, dancing and music. Music was played on most social occasions. Poetry was chanted;

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accompanied by music or sung. The main stringed instrument was the lyre, which was sometimes made from a tortoise shell. One thing that united the Greeks was their religious beliefs. They believed in many gods whose personalities were very human. The gods inhabit the Mount Olympus and there were ceremonies and sacrifices done in their honor. The Olympic Games, dedicated to Zeus, the king of the gods were held every four years. Ancient Greek philosophers also made significant contributions in the field of mathematics and science. Aristotle, a noted Greek philosopher was born in northeastern Greece. He wrote more than 400 books on astronomy, biology, physics and poetry as well. Today using modern methods, scientists have confirmed that many of the observations Aristotle made were correct. He taught people the proper reasoning, that every statement should be supported by evidence to prove its legitimacy. Archimedes, another Greek philosopher and scientist created the Law of Buoyancy. Buoyancy is the upward force exerted by water. Indeed, the glory of Greece is still unending because their teachings are still widely used today.

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