

Athens and sparta: similar yet different



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Athens vs. Sparta In Greece, Sparta and Athens society was very different in many ways. However, at the same time the two shared a number of character in common. The differences are what set the two apart while the things that they shared in common are what united them as Greek city-states. Sparta and Athens shared similarities and differences in their systems of government, and in education. One of the bigger differences between Sparta and Athens was their systems of government.

There were many statuses to the Spartan government. There were the two kings who ruled the city, but a 28-member council of elders limited their power. The 28-member council of elders were 60 year old men or older elected for life by the citizens. These citizens voted for these men at the assembly. They also voted for five overseers, ephors, annually and ran the day to day operations of Sparta. The assembly was where they voted on and decided political issues. Only men of age 30 or older could attend.

They were able to support or veto the councils recommendations by shouting out their votes. Women did not participate in the political life of Sparta. The differences and similarities coincide with each other in Athens. Athens had an assembly just like Sparta did. The assembly was at the hill of prnx at the foot of the Acropolis. During Pericles age the citizens were paid to go to assemblies so it wouldn't just be the wealthy men. This was called jury service. They were a direct democracy, which meant everyone attended the assembly not just men or politicians (the wealthy).

Athens had a council of elders like the 28 elder, but with a lot more people, 500 more people and citizens elected officials such as 10 generals (strategous), magistrates (archons), and others. Women, as well as in Sparta,

did not participate in the political life, such as voting, of Athens. The government and how it was handled was very good and important, maybe not too fair but important, education is a highly needed subject to have in a Greek city-state. Education has big differences and similarities between the two great city-states. In Athens it was quite unfair for education.

Boys got taught from ages 5-16 but if you came from a wealthier family you could be taught from ages 5-18, some in their twenties. Boys entered military training for two years until age of twenty. Foreign and slaves got taught only basic Greek education and they were not excluded from the public. Girls received very little formal education. They were usually kept at home and had no political powers. The women would learn spinning, weaving, and domestic art. If they were to learn any formal education it would be from their fathers or their brothers teaching them.

There were not all equal differences and similarities between Athens and Sparta for their education. There were more differences than similarities. At age 7 boys were taken and trained in the art of warfare. The boys were given only a cloak and they were underfed. This required them to steal food and clothing. It was for survival. If the boys got caught stealing food they would get in trouble for getting caught not actually stealing the food. At age twenty they went to a higher rank of military. At 30 they could marry and live in the barracks with other soldiers.

Military was all they learned though. They were educated in choral dance, reading, and writing. Military and athletics were favored more in Sparta. So Athens and Sparta's boys education both mainly focused on warfare tactics and raising them to be soldiers. Spartan girls got taught at age 7 in

gymnastics, athletics, and survival skills. They could participate in the sports boys did, but not play with the boys. The girls were more equal to the men in Sparta compared to in Athens. Athens girls had pretty close to no rights.

Education and the system of government in Athens and Sparta were shared in similarities and in differences. Athens and Sparta's government did not let women participate in their political life, but their statuses were quite alike in many stations. Sparta treated their women with more equal right than Athens did. Athens gave girl close to no rights through education. Both city-states were focused of war and teaching young men to fight in battle and survive. Both of these city-states were great, but was Sparta better than Athens, or Athens better than Sparta, or were they both as great as the each other?