

# [The history of pericles history essay](https://assignbuster.com/the-history-of-pericles-history-essay/)

After winning Persian War of the Greece city-states, Athens became the leader of Greece because of its critical role in the war and its outstanding navy. In 477 B. C., the Greece city-states created the alliance which was called the Delian League. Athens controlled the alliance from the start; it, therefore, collected the tribute, commanded the leagues fleets and dictated policy. From Delos to the Acropolis in Athens, in 454 B. C., Athens moved the league treasury.

Athens established an empire through the benefit from controlling the Delian. Athenians enjoyed the great political freedom ever, and Greek culture bloomed. The Athenians leader also undertook the beautify-Athens program because Athens was destroyed by Persians in 480 B. C. Athenians strengthened the defensive walls that connected Athens to the busy port of Piraeus. The building program employed thousands of workers. Athens became the center of Greek culture when many talent artists, philosophers, and poets converged on there. The period following the Persians war has been known as the “ Golden Age of Athens”.

Who was the leader of Athens during the “ Golden Age of Athens”? He was the great leader who we have known as Pericles. He ruled Athens from 461 B. C. to 429 B. C. In this paper, we will outline you clearly about Pericles’ family background, military career, foreign policy and his ideas on democracy.

Family background and early life

Pericles, the son of Xanthippus and Agariste, was born in Athens in the state of Attica in 494 B. C. into a very distinguished Athenian family. His father, Xanthippus–a military leader in the Persian Wars in 479 B. C.–attaining hero status as a result, victorious at the battle at Mycale, was the son of one Ariphron and the father of another. Ariphron II was a candidate for ostracism. Xanthippus himself was ostracized in spring 484. Pericles’ mother, Agariste, was a member of the Alcmaeonid family, famous for its long involvement in Athens’ political history, which was accused of treachery at the Battle of Marathon.

The Pericles family is an old lineage that has migrated all across the world over time, and as the name Pericles has migrated, it has changed making its history a challenge to piece together. This Pericles history and genealogy page contains the accumulated history of the Pericles family name made up of user-contributed content from users like you. Pericles family history has a complex evolution of which Pericles family members have accumulated the particulars over the years.

During his middle life, many Sophist philosophers came into Athens, and he seemed to have gained full benefit of the society of Zeno and mainly Anaxagoras, from whom he was said to have learned impassivity in the face of trouble and insult and incredulity about unproven godly phenomena. In 472 B. C. Pericles studied music under Damon and mathematics under Zeno of Elea, which was the best education available.

Military career

Pericles was a general of Athens during the city’s Golden Age known specifically as the time between the Persain and Peloponnesian war. Pericles achieved his military career in many wars, such as battle in Sicyon and Acarnania (454 BC), Second Sacred War (448 BC), expulsion of barbarians from Gallipoli (447 BC), Samain War (440 BC), siege of Byzantium (438 BC), and Peloponnesian War (431-429 BC).

Meanwhile, many ancient historians had blamed on Pericles and allies were the causes of Peloponnesian war. Peloponnesian war was a war between Athens and Sparta, the leading city-states of ancient Greece, along with their allies, which included nearly every other Greek city-state. Its principal cause was a fear of Athenian imperialism. The Athenian alliance reliance relied on its strong navy, the Spartan alliance on its strong army. The war fell into two periods, which were separated by a six-year truce. In the meantime, Pericles was a commander of Athenians to fight the war breaking out in 431. In the first 10 years, Archidamus led the Spartans to defeat. Plagur strike Athens in 429 and killed Pericles and much of the army.

Pericles technically centered his military policy on Themistocles’s principle that the majority of Athenians depended on its superior naval power and supposed that the Peloponnesians were near invincible on land. He also began a self-protective, the so-called “ grand strategy” whose goal was the collapse of the enemy and the preservation of the status quo. The two basic principles of the “ Periclean Grand Strategy” were the rejection of appeasement (in agreement with which he advised the Athernians not to withdraw the Megarian Decree) and the prevention of overextension.

Foreign policy

Notably, after he gained political salience in the 450 B. C. at Athens, Pericles had the idea of expanding and strengthening his empire with not only the neighboring but also the other city-states, which were far from Athens. He, therefore, devoted his attention on the foreign policy as his vital political mechanism, which allowed him to partner with many states even his enemy. At the level of a single city-state, his foreign policy consisted of two main goals. They are, first, continuing military action against the Persian presence in Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean, and second, greater attention to Athenian relations and disputes with other Greek states. To put the matter in another fashion, this foreign policy brought good and bad effect; as a result, the second de facto policy reflected the growing hostility between Athens and Sparta. Throughout the foreign policy, Athens also made the alliances with the Argos and Thessayly, which were Sparta’s enemies. He also, finally, reached the truce with the Sparta after battling with either side won the war. Thus, Pericles’ foreign policy did help to unite not even other states but even the enemy to be friend.

Democracy

The Persians of Aeschylus was introduced by Pericles at the greater Dionysia as hierurgy, showing that he was rich in Athens in 472 B. C. Pericles’ choice of the play, which demonstrated a nostalgic picture of Themistocles’ well-known victory at Salamis, had been argued by Cimon Hornblower. Pericles supported Themistocles to fight against his adversary, Cimon. Plutarch said, democratically, almost forty years, Pericles was the first notable leader among the people in Athens. It meant Pericles had taken a position of leadership by the early 460s B. C. During the years, Pericles tried to conserve his private life and to show himself as a model for his people. For instance, he would often stop holding or joining party and tried to be thrifty. At Areopagus, it consisted of the Athenian aristocracy, which had once had the most powerful leader in the state; the leadership of the Democratic Party decided it was time to take goal in around 462- 461B. C. Ephiales–who was the chief of the party and mentor of Pericles–suggested the reduction of the Areopagus’ power. As a result, the Athenian Assembly, Ecclesia, adopted Ephialtes’ suggestion with no strong opposition. Without further delay, a new era of “ radical democracy” was started immediately by this reform. In order to coax the public, Pericles seemed to follow a populist policy and the Democratic Party steadily became dominant in Athenian Politics.

Apparently, Pericles accomplished the political removal of troublesome adversary by the reason that Cimon crossed up his city by being friendly with Sparta. Pericles kept advocating and promoting a populist social policy after Cimon’s collapse. With the state covering the cost of their entrance fees, he firstly suggested a law that allowed the indigence to enjoy theatrical plays without paying. With other laws, he decreased the property needs for people in high position in 458- 457 B. C and gave liberal wages on all citizens who served as jurymen in the Heliaia, the supreme court of Athens, just after 454 B. C. But, a law of 451 B. C limited Athenian citizenship to those of Athenian ancestry on both sides was his most disputed action. Such actions made Pericles’ critics regarded him to be responsible for the progressive deterioration of the Athenian democracy. Some historians have argued that Pericles looked for the enlargement and stabilization of all democratic institutions. Hence, he legislated law granting the indigence to access to the political system and the public offices from which they had formally been barred because of limited means or low-born. On the other hand, Cimon was sure that democracy had reached its peak, and stalemate of populism had been led by Pericles’ reforms, so he surly believed that no further free space for democratic evolution existed. Like Cimon, the other historical experts believed that because of Pericles’ reform, Athens sank into the abyss of political turmoil and demagogy after his dead.

Pericles is called a populist, a demagogue and a hawk by some contemporary scholars, while others adore his charming leadership. Plutarch said that Pericles was not a man whom he knew before; he was biddable to the people and ready to give in to the desires of the multitude as a steersman to the breezes. It is told that when Sparta’s king, Archidamus, asked his political adversary Thucydides, who was the better fighter between two of them, Thucydides answered without any dither that Pericles was better because even when he was beaten, he tried to persuade the spectators that he had won.

Thucydides, an admirer of Pericles, said that Athens was nominal democracy but, in fact, governed by its first citizen. The historians have explained what he perceived as Pericles’ charisma to lead, convince and, sometimes, to manipulate through this comment. Even though, Thucydides pointed out the fining of Pericles, he did not refer to the condemnation against Pericles but focused on Pericles’ honesty. In one of his dialogues, on the other hand, Plato denied the praise of Pericles and said that Pericles made the Athenians lazy, talkative and greedy, by beginning the system of public fees. Plutarch pointed out other criticisms of Pericles’ leadership that many others say that he first led on the peoples into allotments of public lands, festival-grants, and distributions of fees for public services; due to these reasons, they fell into bad habits and became sumptuous under the effect of his public action instead of thrifty and self-contained.

Thucydides argued that the people did not carry away Pericles, but he guided the people. His decision has been questioned; some 20th-century critics, such as Malcolm F. McGregor proposed that he might have been a charming public face acting to be supported on the suggestions of advisors, or the people themselves. According to the King, by increasing the power of the people, the Athenians left themselves with no authoritative leader. During the Peloponnesian War, Pericles depended on his popular to govern was obvious.

In the literary works of his Golden Age, we can find Pericles’ most visible legacy, most of which survive to this day. First, The Acropolis, though it is in ruins, still stands and is a symbol of modem Athens. In politics, Athenian imperialism is the remarkable legacy of Pericles. It denies the true democracy and freedom to the people at all but the ruling state. Finally, the freedom of expression is regarded as the lasting legacy deriving from this period.

Conclusion

Pericles, the greatest statesman of ancient Greece, was born 494 B. C in the wealthy family. His father was that Xanthippus who won the victory over the Persians at Mycale, 479 B. C.; and his mother, Agariste, the niece of the great Athenian reformer, Cleisthenes. He received an extravagant education; his teacher whom he most reverenced was the quiet and gentle philosopher, Anaxagoras. Pericles was noticeable all through his career for the singular dignity of his manners, the Olympian grandeur of his articulacy, his “ majestic intelligence” in Plato’s phrase, his wisdom, integrity, and deep Athenian patriotism. The abilities of Pericles were supreme that he quickly rose to the highest power in the state as the leader of the dominant democracy.

His successful expeditions to the Thracian Chersonese, and to Sinope on the Black Sea, together with his colonies planted at Naxos, Andros, Oreus in Euboea, Brea in Macedonia, and AEgina, as well as Thurii in Italy, and Amphipolis on the Strymon, did much to spread and confirm the naval power of Athens, and afford a means of subsistence for his poorer citizens. But his greatest project was to create, in concert with the other Hellenic states, a grand Hellenic confederation in order to put an end to the mutually destructive wars of kindred peoples, and to make Greece one enormous nation, fit to front the outlying world.

After Cimon was dead and Thucydides was disliked, and came into the end of his life, Pericles reigned the undisputed master of the public policy of Athens. During the rest of his career “ there was,” says the historian Thucydides, “ in name a democracy, but in reality a government in the hands of the first man.”

Soon after the Samian war broke out, in which Pericles gained high renown as a naval commander. The Samians, after a stubborn struggle, were beaten, and a peace was established. Since the time of the Persian invasion, he had been the leader of the confederacy formed to fight the attacks of the powerful enemy, and the guardian of the confederate treasury kept in the isle of Delos. Pericles caused the treasury to be removed to Athens, and commuting the commissions of the allies for money, enormously increased the contributions to the patriotic fund, Athens herself undertaking to protect the confederacy. He decorated and enriched Athens with the spoils of the allied states.

Pericles did many things to make his native city the most magnificent in the ancient world. Under his patronage, Greek architecture and sculpture reached perfection. He remained Athens the Parthenon, the Erechtheum, left unfinished at his death, the Propylaea, the Odeum, and numerous other public and holy edifices; he also liberally stimulated music and the drama; and during his life, industry and commerce was in so well-off a condition that prosperity was universal in Attica.

In 431, the long foreseen and inevitable Peloponnesian war broke out between Athens and Sparta. The plague damaged the city in 430, and in the autumn of the following year, Pericles died after a prolonged fever.

As a greatest statesman, Pericles was a lofty-minded statesman, motivated by noble objectives, and his heart was full of a honorable love for the city and his citizens. When he lay dying and speciously insensible, his friends around his bed were passing in review the great accomplishments of his life, and the nine cups which he had founded at different times for so many triumphs. The dying patriot silently interrupted with the typical sentence: “ What you praise in my life belongs partly to good fortune, and is, at best, common to me with many generals. But that of which I am proudest, you have left unnoticed–no Athenian has ever put on mourning through any act of mine.”