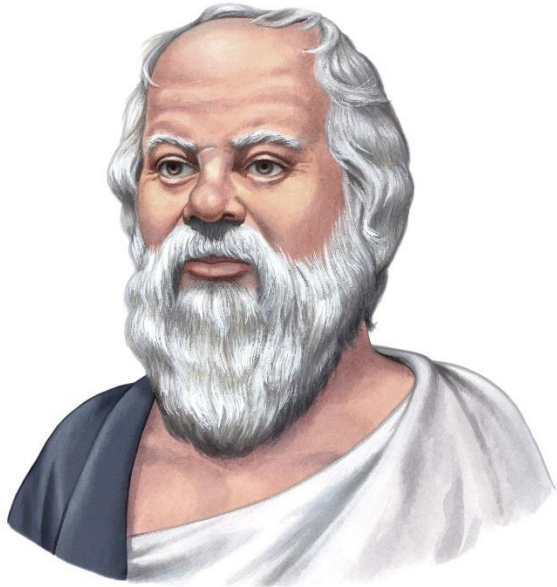


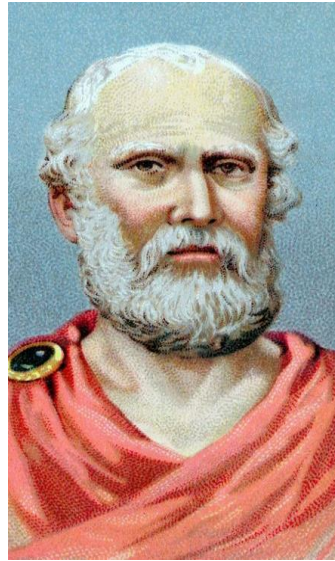
Three Great Greek Philosophers



Socrates – was a philosopher who taught by asking questions. When teachers ask questions that encourage students to draw conclusions, they are using the ‘Socratic Method’ of teaching. Socrates asked many questions, but gave few answers. Socrates was a well-known teacher in Athens. He drifted around the city with his students, engaging many people in arguments. What

we know about Socrates comes from what others wrote about him. Socrates did not write any books since he believed it was better to debate than write. Socrates regarded the tales of the gods as just make-believe. This upset the leaders of Athens and they threatened to bring him to trial for neglecting the gods and corrupting the children of Athens by encouraging them to consider new ideas. The leaders expected the seventy year old Socrates to leave Athens before his arrest, but he remained in Athens, stood trial, and was found guilty. A friend tried to plan an escape from prison, but Socrates refused to participate. He believed that he must obey the law, even if he disagreed with it. His last day was spent with friends. At the end of the day, Socrates calmly drank from a cup of poison hemlock, the customary practice of execution at that time.

Plato – Most of what we know about Socrates comes from Plato, his most famous student. When his teacher was executed, Plato left Greece for more than a decade. He returned to start the Academy, a school that would operate for more than 900 years! Plato described his idea of the best society in his most famous book, *the Republic*. Plato did not believe in democracy. He argued in favor of an ‘aristocracy of merit’, where there would be rule by the best and the wisest people. Plato believed a small group of people, intelligent and educated men and women should govern everyone.



Aristotle – was the greatest scientist of the ancient world. Aristotle believed in using science and reason, rather than the anger or pleasure of gods,

to explain natural events. Aristotle moved to Athens and studied at Plato’s Academy. He remained at the school for more than twenty years until shortly after Plato died. Aristotle then returned to his home in Macedonia, where King Philip hired him to prepare his thirteen-year-old son, Alexander, for his future role as a military leader. His student would one day be known as Alexander the Great, one of the greatest military conquerors of all time. Once Alexander became King of Macedonia, Aristotle returned to Athens and opened a school he called ‘Lyceum’. For the next twelve years, Aristotle organized his school as a center of research on astronomy, zoology, geography, geology, physics, anatomy, and many other fields. Aristotle wrote 170 books, 47 of which still exist more than two thousand years later. His ideas formed the basis of modern science.

Questions:

1. Who were the three great philosophers in ancient Greece?
2. What is the method of teaching Socrates used called?
3. Why was Socrates sentenced to death?
4. Explain what you think about this reason and his sentence. Was it fair? Was it justified? Even if you disagree, explain why some people might think that this type of penalty is necessary.
5. What was Plato's school called?
6. What is Plato's most famous book called?
7. Aristotle helped teach which famous military leader?
8. Explain why two of these philosophers started schools of learning.