

Ancient Greece**Lesson 2****MAIN IDEAS**

1. Aristocrats and tyrants ruled early Athens.
2. Athens created the world's first democracy.
3. Ancient democracy was different from modern democracy.

Key Terms and People

democracy type of government in which people rule themselves

aristocrats rich landowners

oligarchy government in which only a few people have power

aristocracy society ruled by rich landowners

citizens people with the right to participate in government

tyrant leader who rules by the use of force

Pericles Athenian leader who ruled at the height of Athenian democracy

Lesson Summary**ARISTOCRATS AND TYRANTS RULE**

The city of Athens in Greece is the birthplace of **democracy**. Democracy is a form of a government in which people rule themselves. Athens was ruled first by kings, and then by an oligarchy of **aristocrats**, or rich landowners. Athenian society was also known as an **aristocracy** because only people in the highest social class had power. In the 600s BC, rebels tried to overthrow the aristocrats and failed. Several rulers followed. First was Draco, who was unpopular due to his overly strict laws. Next was Solon, who ruled that all free men were **citizens** who had a right to participate in government. Then Peisistratus, the first **tyrant**, became a leader of Athens by force. After he died, rebellious aristocrats regained control of the city of Athens.

Circle two ways that Athens was ruled before democracy.

Who was the first tyrant of Athens?

Lesson 2, *continued*

ATHENS CREATES DEMOCRACY

The leader Cleisthenes introduced democracy to Athens in 500 BC when he overthrew the aristocratic leaders by using popular support. Citizens had the right to participate in the assembly that created laws. Assemblies were held outdoors, and anyone could give a speech before voting. Often, either too many or not enough people would come to an assembly, so Athenians selected city officials to vote. Citizens gradually gained more power.

Athenian democracy reached its height with **Pericles**, who led the government from 460 to 429 BC. Democracy all but ended when Athens was conquered by Macedonia in the 330s BC. The Macedonian king wanted to make his own laws.

What do you think is the major disadvantage of allowing every citizen to participate in lawmaking?

ANCIENT DEMOCRACY DIFFERS FROM MODERN DEMOCRACY

Although citizenship was very limited, Athens had a direct democracy, in which every citizen could participate and the majority ruled. The United States operates as a representative government, in which citizens elect people to represent them.

What type of democracy is practiced in the United States today?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Compare Create a chart showing the differences between direct and representative democracy.

Lesson 2, *continued*

DIRECTIONS On the line before each statement, write **T** if the statement is true and **F** if the statement is false. If the statement is false, change the underlined term to make the statement true. Then write the correct term on the line after the statement.

_____ 1. An oligarchy is a government in which only a few people have power.

_____ 2. Greece is considered the birthplace of democracy, which is a type of government in which people rule themselves.

_____ 3. Democracy in Athens reached its height under the rule of a brilliant elected leader named Cleisthenes.

_____ 4. In the 590s BC, a leader named Solon ruled that all free men living in Athens were aristocrats.

_____ 5. The oligarchy in Athens lasted until one noble overthrew the government and ruled it alone as a tyrant.

DIRECTIONS Look at each set of vocabulary terms following each number. On the line provided, write the letter of the term that does not relate to the others.

_____ 6. a. democracy b. oligarchy c. tyranny d. Pericles

_____ 7. a. oligarchy b. aristocrats c. democracy d. aristocracy