



Comparing Sparta and Athens

The following charts are helpful in comparing the two city-states Athens and Sparta. The first provides a general comparison; the second compares the government of totalitarian Sparta with that of its democratic rival, Athens.

SOCIETY

Sparta	Athens
Upper classes had all power and privilege. Helots (slaves) did all nonmilitary work.	All citizens were equal. Women and slaves were excluded from becoming citizens.
All education focused on military strategies and war.	Education focused on physical and mental skills.

GOVERNMENT

Branch of Government	Sparta	Athens
Executive	Five ephors, or magistrates, with unlimited power. Two kings elected by the Assembly.	Nine archons, or rulers, with power limited by the Assembly.
Legislature	Council of Elders made up of 28 members over age 60. Laws proposed to the Assembly. Assembly made up of all citizens over age 20. They voted on major policies.	Council of 500 made up of citizens over the age of 30, chosen by lot. Laws proposed to the Assembly. Assembly made up of all male citizens aged 20. They had full and final power.
Judicial	Kings acted as judges.	Court chosen by lot. Juries were very large, used secret ballots to reach a verdict.

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