

3

What was democracy in ancient Athens?

Chapter Focus Questions

- What was the social structure of ancient Athens?
- What opportunities did ancient Athenians have to participate in decision making?
- What were the ideas behind democracy in ancient Athens?

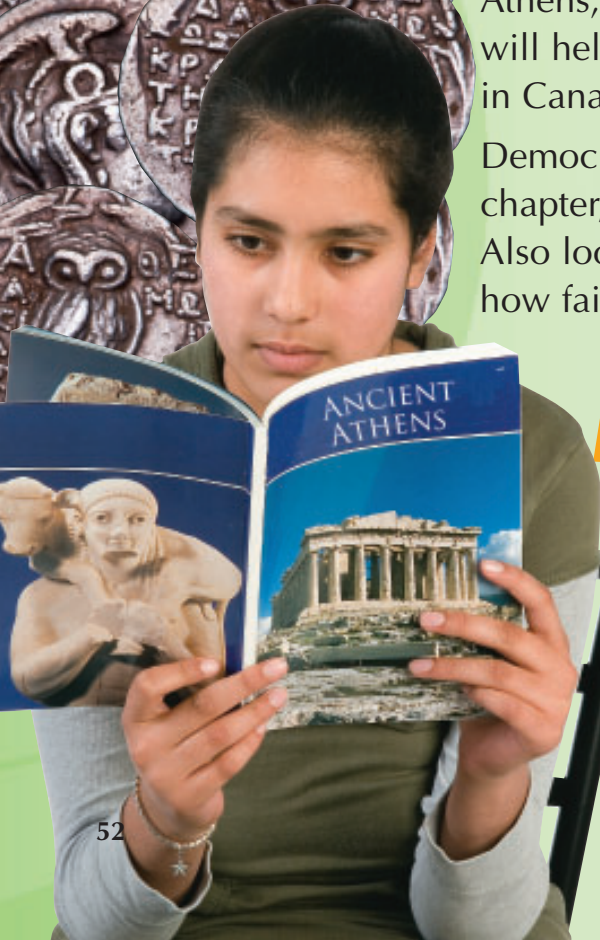
In the last chapter, you began to learn about government, and the many decisions it makes and services it provides. This chapter explores an example of government from the past: the government of ancient Athens.

The government of ancient Athens was a type of **democracy**. So is our government in Canada today. By exploring ancient Athens, you will begin to explore ideas of democracy. This will help you when you start investigating how to participate in Canada's democracy, starting in Chapter 5.

Democracy means "people power." As you work through this chapter, look for ways people in ancient Athens had **power**. Also look for ways people did not have power. Ask yourself: how fair and equitable was democracy in ancient Athens?

Pause

The coins on this page come from ancient Athens. On one side, they show Athena, the ancient Greek's goddess of wisdom. On the other side, they show her symbol, the owl. With coins like this, people bought and sold many things in ancient Athens, including slaves. What would it have been like to be a slave?



What are we learning in this chapter?

In this chapter, we will investigate the **social structure** of ancient Athens. Each person in ancient Athens came from a **class**, or layer of society. We will explore the roles and responsibilities people had in government, based on their class.

We will also investigate how government made decisions in ancient Athens. Think back to what you learned about different ways for groups to make decisions in Chapter 1. What way did ancient Athens put into practice?

Why are we learning this?

Canadian society has some of the same beliefs and values that the ancient Athenians held. Long ago, the Athenians developed a form of government that helped their society function efficiently. Their government was based on principles and beliefs that have influenced our systems of democratic government today.

This is the Temple of Hephaestus, as it looks in Athens today. In ancient Athens, this temple overlooked the Agora or market. Very little of the market remains today, but it played an important role in the democracy of ancient Athens. People met there to buy and sell goods, and to talk over events that affected the city.



Chapter 3 Inquiry Task

Constructing an historical map of ancient Athens

Introduction

Today, guidebooks provide walking tours of historic sites in cities such as Athens. They lead visitors from one site to another, give directions and distances, and relate information about the past. You have been hired to create a walking-tour map of Athens for the guidebook *Experiencing Greece on Foot*. The theme of this walking tour is ancient Athenian democracy.

The task

You need to complete these steps:

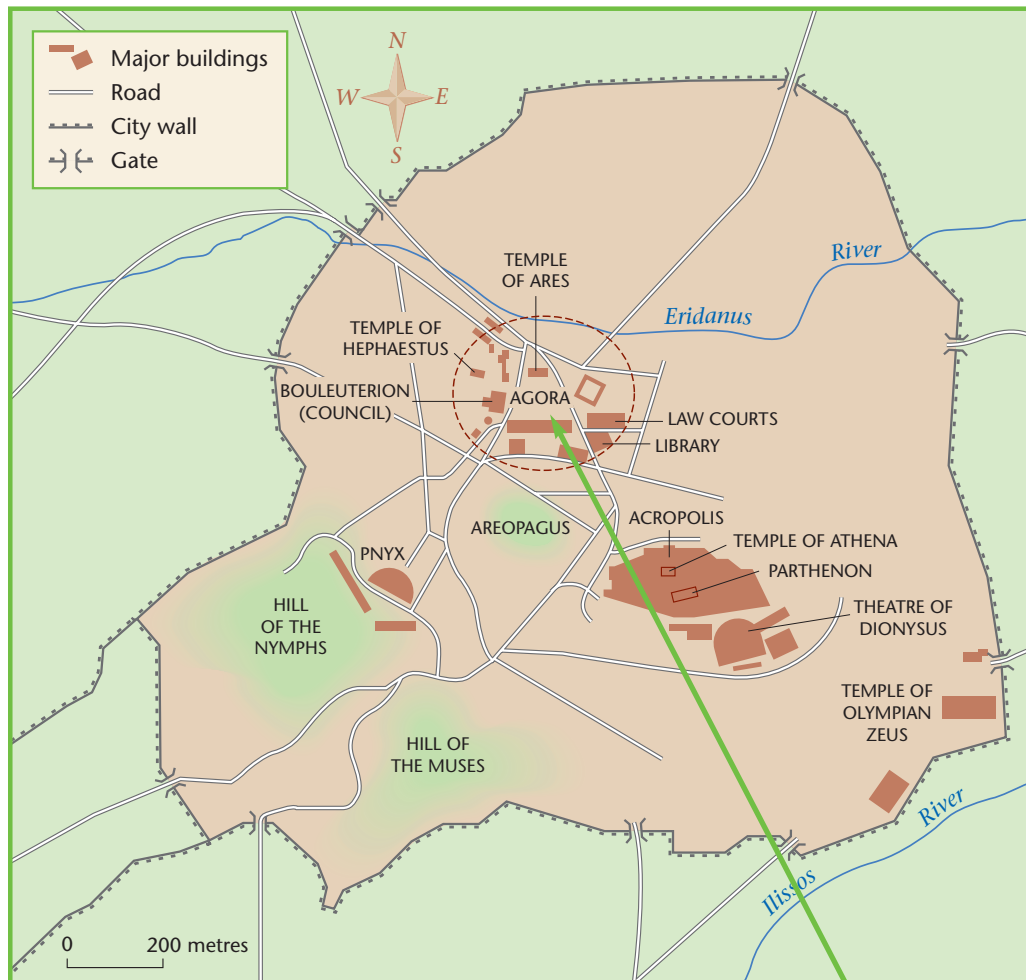
- Determine why the following sites were important to ancient Athenian democracy: Pnyx Hill, the Agora and the Bouleterion.
- Create a walking-tour map of ancient Athens that shows these sites.
- Write a caption for each site that explains why it was significant to ancient Athenian democracy. In your caption, include information that helps visitors understand that people's experiences with democracy were different according to their social class.
- Answer the following question, so that the visitors to Greece understand why taking this walking tour is important: If the selected sites were many kilometres apart, or if some were outside the city walls, would democracy in Athens have been different?

Your map will be professionally published, so you need to ensure that you create a product that is accurate, clearly labelled, easy to read and informative.

Things to think about before starting the task

This is a task you will complete at the end of the chapter, but don't wait until the end of the chapter to gather information. Gather information as you read. Then, add it to your map. Check out the example on the next page.

Ancient Athens



SKILLS at Work

In this task, you will need to use mapping skills. Check out the Skills Centre for tips on how to

- construct maps
- use cardinal directions to locate places on maps and globes
- use scale to determine the distance between places



Slaves who could be trusted with money could be sent to the Agora to help buy or sell goods. They could listen to citizens talking politics. Slaves couldn't vote. All they could do was - just listen.

This is part of what Samantha wrote for her walking-tour map.

Getting Started

Where was ancient Athens?

Using a globe, finding directions

Examine a globe. A globe gives physical information by showing natural features such as oceans and seas. Find the **Mediterranean Sea** which is connected to the **Atlantic Ocean**. Most globes are also political. That means they show countries. Locate **Greece**, a country that borders on the Mediterranean Sea, and find **Athens**.

SKILLS at Work

Look at the map on the next page. Use the lines of **latitude** and **longitude** to locate Athens on a globe. Approximate the latitude and longitude of your own location. Describe the direction you would fly when going from your location to Athens.

- use **cardinal directions** to locate places on maps and globes



How do maps and globes help you understand history?



Using a modern political map

Political maps show a selected area of a globe. Maps are flat, convenient and can show much more detail than is possible on a globe. Political maps show names and boundaries of countries and need to be updated when changes occur. What countries are neighbours to Greece today?

Greece Today



Using scale

A page this size could be used for a map that shows a city, or a country, or a continent. Depending on what a map depicts, a centimetre on a map could represent kilometres or possibly hundreds of kilometres in distance. This is called scale. Checking scale is important for determining real distances between places.

Think About the Task

The scale on a map can determine whether a person could walk, drive or fly between locations. Why will scale be important information to include in your walking-tour map of Athens?

Using an historical map

Historical maps show boundaries and names of places as they were at a particular time. The water bodies, hills and mountains in Greece are very similar now to what they were 2500 years ago. However, boundaries and cities have changed greatly. Athens is much bigger than it once was and Sparta is no longer a city. To understand history, it is really important to use either ancient maps of the period, or maps that reconstruct the way things once were.

Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece was divided into small areas centred on cities and their surrounding farms and countryside. These were known as city states. Athens and Sparta, two famous city states, were often at war with each other.

SKILLS at Work

Compare the map on this page with the map on page 57. Identify two ways that Greece today is different from ancient Greece. Why is it important to keep in mind that places today are different than in history?

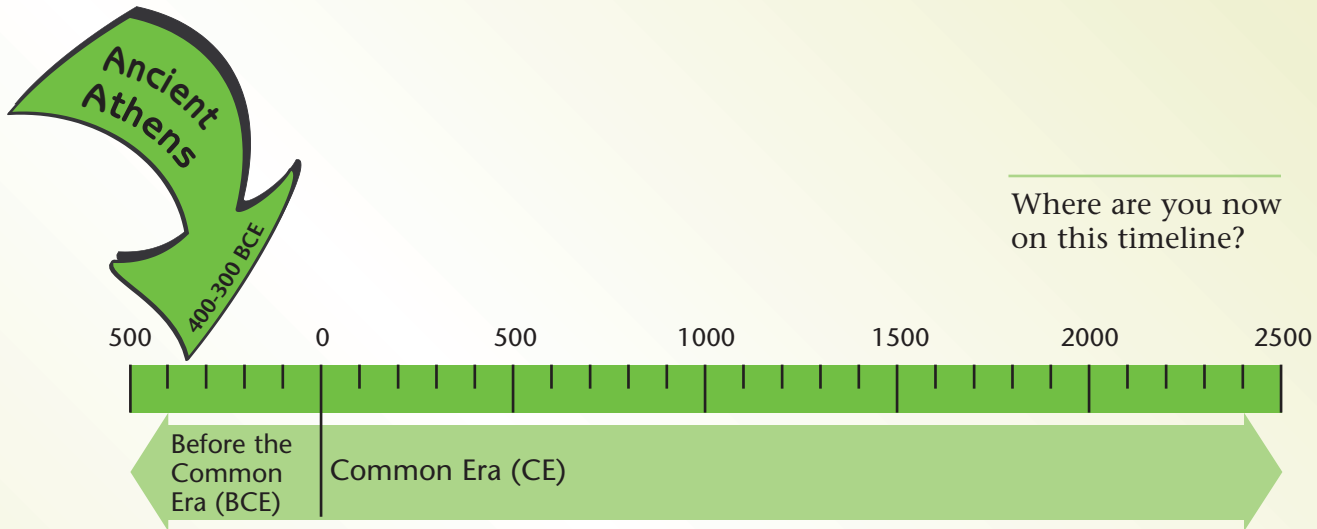
Look at the scale on the map above. Figure out a way to measure a north-south distance and an east-west distance.

- use historical and political maps to broaden understanding of topics
- use cardinal directions to locate places on maps
- use scale to determine the distance between places



When was ancient Athens?

We will be studying Athens during its height as an ancient democracy. That was about 400 to 300 BCE. How does the timeline below help you understand what BCE means?

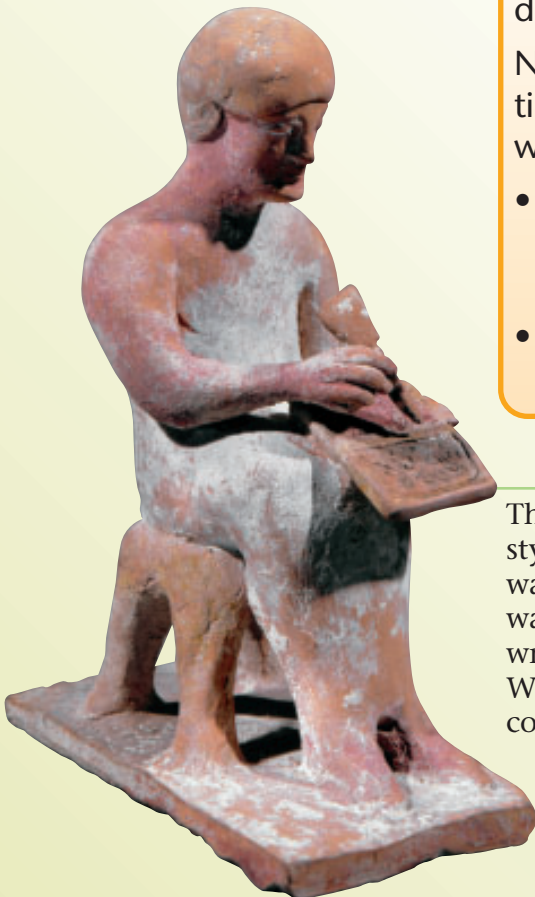


SKILLS at Work

Think about dates you know from history. Point to their approximate location on this timeline. For example, when did European explorers begin to arrive in North America?

Now consider the position of ancient Athens on the timeline. How different do you think life in ancient Athens was from today? Why?

- use historical and community resources to understand and organize the sequence of historical events
- explain the historical contexts of key events of a given time period



This clay figure from ancient Greece shows a man writing with a stylus on a wax tablet. The stylus was a pointed stick and the tablet was a piece of wood coated with wax. You could smooth over the wax and use the tablet again. Why don't we use this method of writing today? Why do you think the ancient Athenians used it? What else do you think might be different about ancient Athens compared to today?

What was the social structure of ancient Athens?

What's important?

In this section you will be reading a story that takes place over two days. As you read about the first day, think about how Athenian society was structured. People in ancient Athens *belonged* to different classes. A person's class determined their *rights* and *responsibilities*. Who had rights, who didn't? How do you think the structure of society in Athens might affect their government?

Two Days to Decide Up an Olive Tree

It was his first waking thought, even before the first rooster crowed. Would there be a war vote? Jason bolted upright in the dark.

"Menander! Where are you?" he called impatiently, trying to free his feet from the tangle of his blanket. It was one of Menander's jobs, as Jason's slave, to help Jason with pinning his linen tunic and tying his leather sandals.

Who's Who in Athens: Slaves

Slaves were a class of people in ancient Athens. They were men, women and children owned by others, and could be bought and sold. They were often people captured in wars. Their jobs and value depended on their education, skills, age and strength. Slaves could not vote, own land, or make decisions about their owners, their work or location.

Why might an educated slave be worth more than a manual worker?

Shadows flitted around the room as Menander entered, carrying a little olive-oil lamp. "You're late!" said Jason. "We need to hurry to meet Perseus at the Agora near the sandal-makers' stalls."

Menander nodded, silent. He was supposed to take Jason to school this morning, as usual. But he didn't want to anger his young master. Menander knew he could be sold or, even worse, sent to labour in the deep deadly holes of the silver mines. Jason never hesitated to remind him of this possibility.

Menander shouldered the bag of provisions he had prepared: a heavy jug of water, some feta cheese, bread and apples. He padded after Jason, down the stairs and through the courtyard. The two slipped out through the gate the yardkeeper had opened for them, just as the sun's first colour seeped into the eastern sky.

Who's Who in Athens: Children

People in ancient Athens believed boys and girls, and men and women, had different responsibilities based on their gender and class. They trained children to prepare them for these responsibilities. For example, boys who were not slaves could go to school and were expected to have military training. Girls were expected to stay home and learn household skills.

School cost money, so boys from less wealthy families often didn't attend. Instead, they helped in family businesses such as farming or sandal-making.



This clay figure from ancient Greece shows a warrior with a lance riding a horse. What people in ancient Athens had to take military training?

Perseus and Jason had become friends when they started school at age seven, four years ago. The endless teasing they suffered at school had sealed their alliance. The two bore taunts of “second-class citizen” and “outsider” from the other pupils, because neither would ever become an Athenian citizen. Both had been born in Athens, but a citizen needed parents who had both been born in Athens, too.

Perseus’s father was Athenian — a general and one of the city’s leading citizens. His mother, however, was from the city of Corinth. Jason’s father and mother were from Crete. His father was a timber merchant, and he had come to Athens to supply timber to the city’s famous navy. Athens had been good to Jason’s father. He had become wealthy enough to send Jason to school.

Who’s Who in Athens: Men

Men who were not slaves belonged to one of two classes in ancient Athens: **citizens** or **metics**.

Citizens

Citizens were free men who were born in Athens and had an Athenian-born mother and an Athenian-born father. Only men could be citizens. Citizens were expected to serve in government positions, to vote and to perform military service. Citizens could send their sons to school and own property.

Metics

Metics were foreigners living in Athens. They were expected to perform military service, and they could send their sons to school. But they could not own property without permission, and they could not vote or hold government positions. They needed a citizen to sponsor them or else they could become enslaved. Although metics could not participate in government, they could try to influence what citizens thought and did.

Men in the Government of Ancient Athens

Citizens

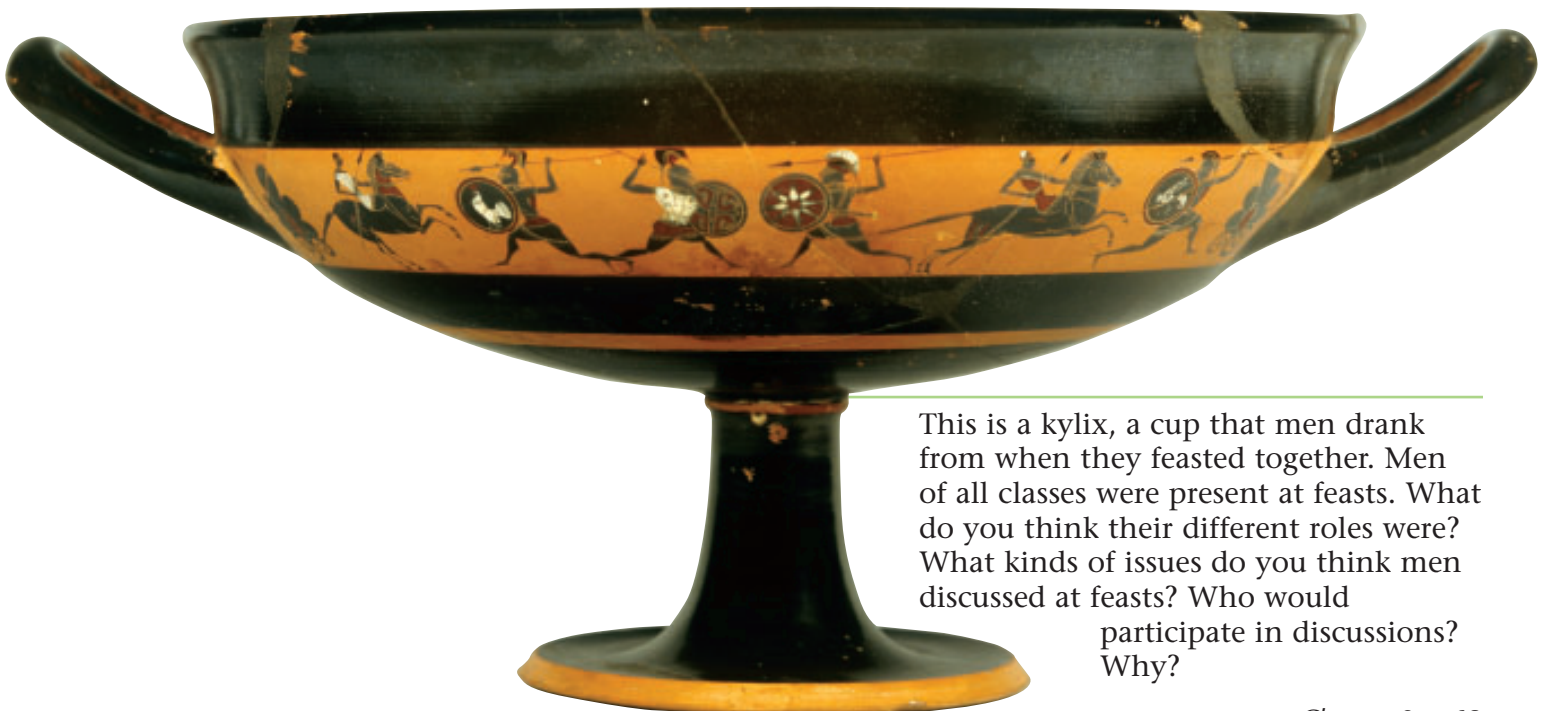
- could participate in government
- could vote

Metics

- couldn't participate in government
- couldn't vote
- could influence citizens

Slaves

- couldn't participate in decision making
- couldn't vote
- had no influence



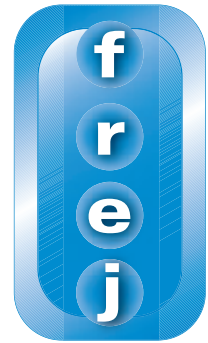
This is a kylix, a cup that men drank from when they feasted together. Men of all classes were present at feasts. What do you think their different roles were? What kinds of issues do you think men discussed at feasts? Who would participate in discussions? Why?

Who's Who in Athens: Women

Women who were not slaves belonged to two classes: Athenian-born women and metics. The difference between these classes was that Athenian-born women could own property, but not metics. Otherwise, the roles and responsibilities of women were similar.

Women in ancient Athens had respect as caregivers and home managers, but they had little independence. Men accompanied them outside the house and approved most purchases. Most of a woman's time was spent at home — cooking, cleaning, spinning, weaving and caring for children, or organizing slaves to do these jobs.

Women could not hold government positions or vote. They could, however, influence the men in their families. They got news of the city through male relatives, servants, and visits to the Agora.



Women in the Government of Ancient Athens

- ### Athenian Women
- couldn't participate in government
 - couldn't vote
 - could influence citizens

- ### Metics
- couldn't participate in government
 - couldn't vote
 - could influence citizens

- ### Slaves
- couldn't participate in government
 - couldn't vote
 - had no influence



How have the rights, roles and status of women changed?

This ancient image shows a Greek woman working at home. What do you think she is doing?



Today, the boys were only too happy to skip school — and their daily dose of teasing. There were matters of life and death at stake!

For days, the city had buzzed with tension and excitement! Talk and gossip amounted to a way of life in Athens, but something else was in the air. In the Agora, knots of men discussed the future, some angry and loud, others quiet and grim. What would happen? The boys had heard the rumours and wanted desperately to see first-hand what was going on.

This morning, so early, the Agora was already alive. Shops had begun to open for business. Jason ignored his rumbling stomach as he passed a stall selling fresh, fragrant bread and another where the sharp scent of cheese bit the air. He had caught sight of Perseus and his slave, waiting outside the sandal-makers' stalls.

The Agora or Market

The heart of ancient Athens was the **Agora**, or market, where citizens, metics and trusted slaves set up stalls to sell goods. Often the women and children of merchants were involved in the market.

People of all types and classes shopped and bargained, and exchanged news and opinions. The Agora was very near to government buildings, and many citizens met in the Agora to discuss Athenian politics.

Think About the Task

What opportunities might the Agora have offered people who didn't have a direct role in government, such as metics and women? Why was the Agora important to the democracy of ancient Athens?



People bought and sold goods, such as fruit, bread, tools and clothing at the Agora.



Pause

The members of the Boule were chosen in a draw. It worked like this: the names of citizens were written on lead discs and then discs were drawn — or selected — at random. Anyone whose name was drawn became a member of the Boule for one year. In what way did this process reflect fairness and equity?

The Bouleterion

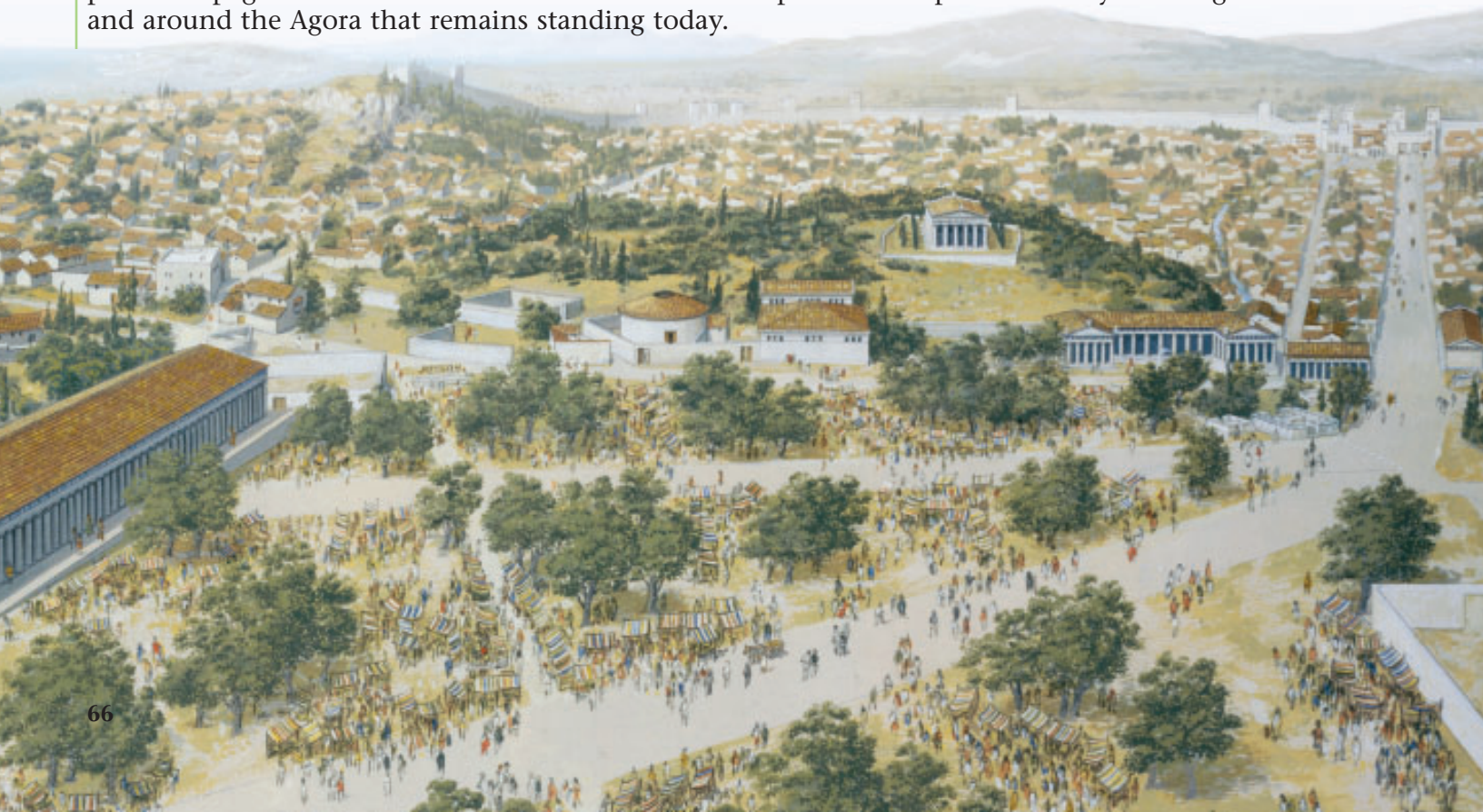
The council of ancient Athens, or **Boule** (boo-lee), met at the **Bouleterion** (boo-li-teer-ee-on).

The Boule had 500 members, chosen each year in a draw from the citizens of Athens.

The Boule made decisions about Athens' day-to-day affairs, such as collecting taxes. It also decided what questions required a vote of all Athenian citizens.

Members of the Boule were paid, so that citizens without wealth could afford to devote their time to government. To what extent did this reflect fairness and equity?

This illustration shows the Agora of ancient Athens, as an artist has imagined it. Can you find the building with the round roof? That was part of the Bouleterion, along with the buildings next to it. Above the Bouleterion and to the right, you can see the Temple of Hephaestus. The photo on page 80 of this textbook shows the same temple. The temple is the only building in and around the Agora that remains standing today.



Crowds had begun to assemble at the Bouleuterion (boo-li-teer-ee-on) by the time the boys arrived. The walls surrounding this building were high and solid, but the boys already knew what they would do. Leaving their slaves protesting below, they scrambled up an old, squat olive tree. If they climbed as high as they dared, they could just peer over the wall.

The Bouleuterion was named after the Boule (boo-lee), the group of 500 citizens chosen to run the day-to-day affairs of Athens. The Boule also set the agenda for votes of the Assembly. The Assembly included all the 11 000 citizens of Athens. Today, the Boule would decide whether the Assembly, which would meet tomorrow, would vote on going to war.

Jason and Perseus spent the next few hours anxiously perched in the scratchy branches, listening to bits of conversation that drifted up from the council. Most of the talk was about how a war would affect the city. The last war had destroyed many of the temples and shrines. Jason's father had donated a lot of timber used to rebuild these monuments. How would another war affect Athens?

In the cloudless sky, the sun passed from one side of the olive tree to the other.

Finally, Jason and Perseus heard the rustle of tunics and the scrape of sandals. The councilmen filed out of the Bouleuterion. Their solemn faces told the story.

"Jason," whispered Perseus, "tomorrow the Assembly will be voting on whether to go to war."



This lotting machine helped the citizens of ancient Athens draw the names of people at random for the Boule. Lead discs inscribed with names were put in the slots.

What's important?

Athenian citizens had rights and privileges. They also had responsibilities to their city. What were these rights and responsibilities, and how did they support a well-functioning society?

Athenian Rights and Responsibilities

- It is a right and privilege to hold Athenian citizenship. To be a citizen a man must be free-born and have an Athenian father and mother. Citizenship is not dependent on wealth, influence or occupation.
- All Athenian citizens can debate and have the freedom to vote in the Assembly, own land that family members will inherit, and own slaves.
- All Athenian citizens are expected to be educated, have military training, serve Athens in times of war, and pay taxes.
- All citizens are responsible for governing. Any citizen over the age of 30 whose name is drawn for the Boule must comply.
- Voting is a privilege and a citizen's responsibility. At least six thousand Athenians must vote when important decisions are to be made.



This is a replica of a trireme, one of the swift ships of the ancient Athenian navy. Athenian men — both citizens and metics — had to pay for and serve on ships. But only citizens could vote about using the navy in wars. To what extent does this reflect fairness and equity?



Pause

Find clues on this page about what services the government of ancient Athens provided citizens. How did it pay for services?

What opportunities did ancient Athenians have to participate in decision making?

What's important?

Day one of Jason's story introduced the structure of society in Athens. When you read through day two, consider how Athenian government was structured. How did democracy affect every person living in Athens? Also search for clues about how non-citizens could try to influence decisions even though they were not allowed to vote.

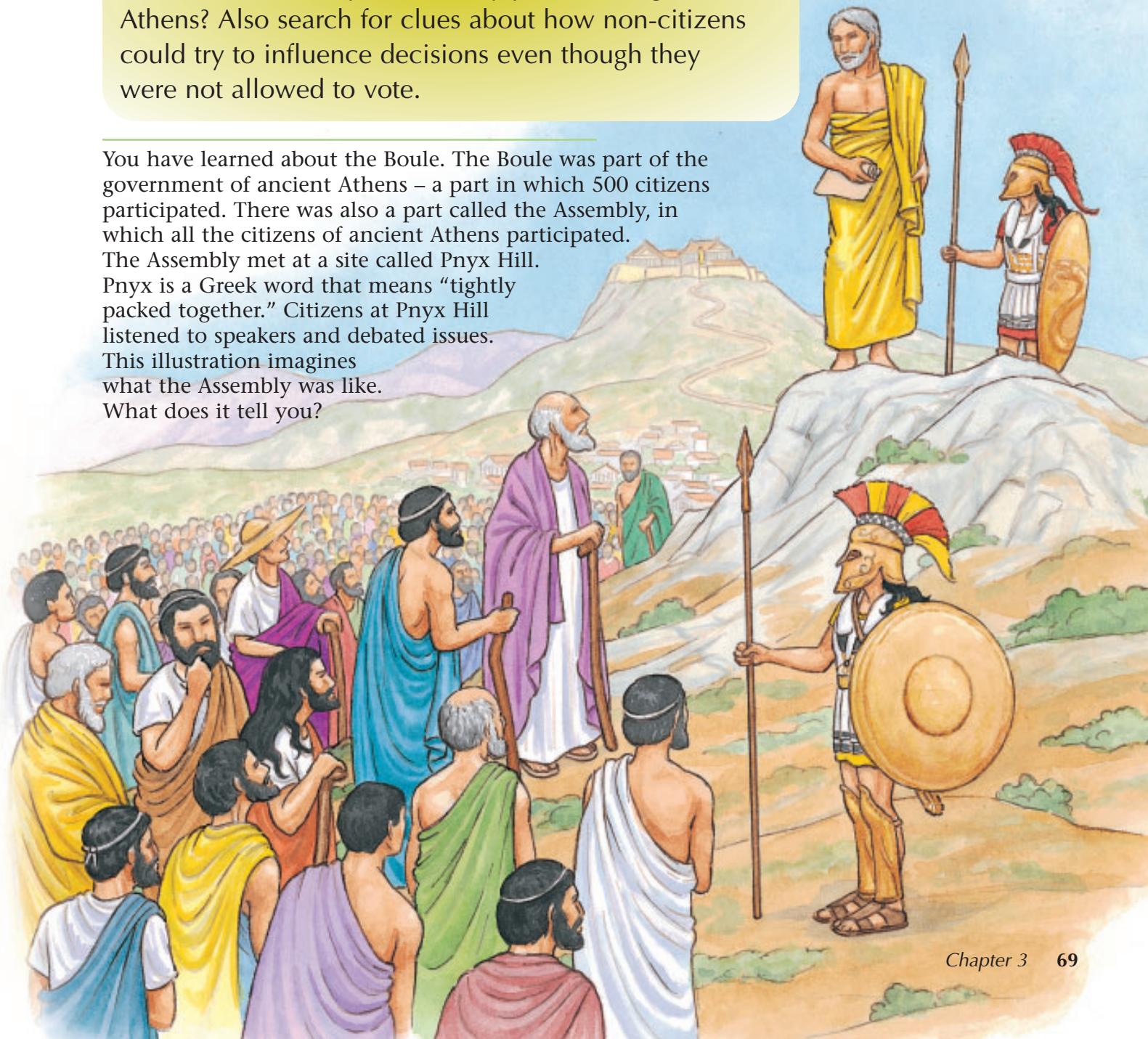
You have learned about the Boule. The Boule was part of the government of ancient Athens – a part in which 500 citizens participated. There was also a part called the Assembly, in which all the citizens of ancient Athens participated.

The Assembly met at a site called Pnyx Hill.

Pnyx is a Greek word that means “tightly packed together.” Citizens at Pnyx Hill listened to speakers and debated issues.

This illustration imagines what the Assembly was like.

What does it tell you?



SKILLS at Work

Primary sources are pieces of information about the past that come directly from the past. Primary sources include objects and writings. What other examples of primary sources can you think of? Describe something you can learn about women in ancient Athens from the primary sources on this page.

- use primary sources to interpret historical events and issues



Girls were each given a **dowry** by their families for their marriages. This included household goods and personal items such as the expensive perfume jar and earrings shown here. How important was wealth or gender in deciding the status of a person in ancient Athens?

To the hill and back

Jason dreamed that the olive tree was poking him again. He moved to grab the twig — and woke with a start, his hand clasped around someone's finger. A face loomed over him.

"Why didn't you take me with you?" hissed the face.

Jason's heart continued racing even after he had identified the finger, the face and the voice: his sister.

He was never sure how his sister always knew what was going on. Jason could leave the house and hang around the Agora whenever he wanted, picking up news from overheard conversations. But Lydia could only leave the house if one of her male relatives came with her, such as her father or an uncle — or soon her husband. Lydia would turn thirteen next month. She sometimes seemed overwhelmed, sometimes excited, by the preparations for her marriage to Philip. She was so proud of the fact that he was not a metic, but a citizen.

"Lydia," Jason said, "You know you can't go with me. It would disgrace our family! I swear I'll let you know what happens as soon as I get home."

"Hurry up! Father has already gone. Mother suggested that he speak to the citizens who work for him and encourage them to vote for war — especially since he can't vote." Lydia continued.



“War? Why does he want war?” said Jason, wide-eyed.

“Because he wants to stop the threat of Sparta and protect Athens,” she replied. Lydia pushed three figs into his hands. “These are for you and Menander,” she whispered. “Now get up! I heard that the general — Perseus’s father — will be speaking.”

Like the previous day, Jason had arranged to meet Perseus at the Agora at dawn. The market seemed busier than usual. No one stood around and talked. Instead, a steady stream moved through the Agora on its way to Pnyx Hill.

Word about the Boule’s decision had spread. Today, the Assembly would meet at Pnyx Hill and decide whether to go to war. A decision as important as this required six thousand Athenian citizens to vote. The hill would be full, packed shoulder to shoulder, with men.

Pnyx Hill

Pnyx Hill was an important place in the democracy of ancient Athens because the Assembly met there. The Assembly included all citizens of Athens who had paid their taxes. The Boule chose the issues the Assembly voted on.

The Assembly met nearly every week. Any citizen could speak, but men over 50 spoke first. Speeches were timed and citizens voted by raising their hands.

The Assembly of ancient Athens is an example of **direct democracy**. Direct democracy means that people make decisions in a vote that involves all of them. They do not use representatives to make decisions.



Pause

How does the idea of direct democracy compare to the different ways to make group choices that you investigated in Chapter 1?

At Pnyx Hill, speakers addressed the crowd by standing on this stone platform.



As Jason and Perseus watched this scene, they noticed a group of men standing to one side, ignoring the river of citizens flowing through the Agora. What could they be talking about that was so important? More important than whether to go to war?

Suddenly, the men grabbed up their long tunics and began to race in the direction of Pnyx Hill, knees and feet flying in undignified haste. Two Athenian guards, at either end of a long red rope, chased after them.

Jason and Perseus doubled up with laughter. It was the job of the guards to herd reluctant citizens to Pnyx Hill for important votes. Any citizen caught with red paint on his clothing could be fined and disgraced for not doing his duty.

Pnyx Hill had practically no place left to stand when Jason and Perseus got there. It was impossible to see who was speaking. The two boys wormed their way through the press of men, leaving their slaves far behind. They pushed between men with coarse homespun tunics and men with fine linen tunics. They trampled calloused bare feet and feet in fine leather sandals. Some men reeked of their trade — goats, wine, garlic, fish. Other men — wealthier — smelled of costly oils.

The speaker turned out to be a wine merchant. Jason had seen him many times in the Agora. Yet this ordinary man of no particular wealth commanded the skills of a trained speaker.

“Remember what war brings!” he boomed, one hand raised in warning. “It brings the destruction of our temples and our buildings. It brings terror to our women and children — to those it is our duty to protect! Think of the blood and sacrifice of war, my fellow men, before you vote!”



In these images by ancient **artisans**, you can see a tool maker at work, merchants weighing fabric and workers harvesting olives by beating trees. Did age or occupation determine if a citizen could vote in Athens?

They were just in time. The next speaker was Perseus's father, the general. He reminded the citizens that their first duty was to protect their city and then to protect their women, children and homes. He declared that Sparta was no match for the swift might of the Athenian navy. "Men of Athens, a smaller war now will prevent a larger war in the future. Think of that and raise your hands in a vote for war!"

The day wore on, speaker after speaker, some promoting war and others opposing it. Finally, the vote was called, the raised hands counted, the decision made.

The assembled men started slowly shuffling homewards. Jason and Perseus shoved their way through the crowd again, desperate to move. *Move!* They raced back through the Agora, their feet beating the same urgent rhythm, stride for stride.

As Jason burst into his courtyard, Menander blocked with him an outthrust arm. His pale, frightened face searched Jason for cuts and bruises.

"Where were you, Jason? I was terrified I had lost you..."

Jason pushed past Menander and sped upstairs to the women's rooms. Lydia looked up from her weaving, taking in Jason's breathless state.

"Lydia, what will happen to Father's business if Sparta attacks the ships that bring his timber? And will your marriage go ahead now that Philip will be called to join the navy? Oh, Lydia! Athens is at war."

Why were Athenian boys expected to have military training?



What were the ideas behind democracy in ancient Athens?

How fair and equitable were they?

What's important?

Beliefs about democracy have changed over time. As you read the ideas of two famous Athenian citizens, think critically about whether you agree or disagree with their statements.

- Our **constitution** is called a democracy because power is in the hands of the whole people, not of a **minority**.
- Everyone is equal before the law.
- In positions of responsibility, what counts is not class, but the actual ability that the man possesses.

– Adapted from Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*



Thucydides was an historian who wrote about the Athens and Sparta wars.



Aristotle was an Athenian **philosopher** who thought and wrote about democracy.

- Liberty and equality are achieved when all persons share in government.
- Because men are equally free, they can claim to be absolutely equal.
- A democracy exists whenever those who are free, and not well-off — the **majority** — are in control of government.

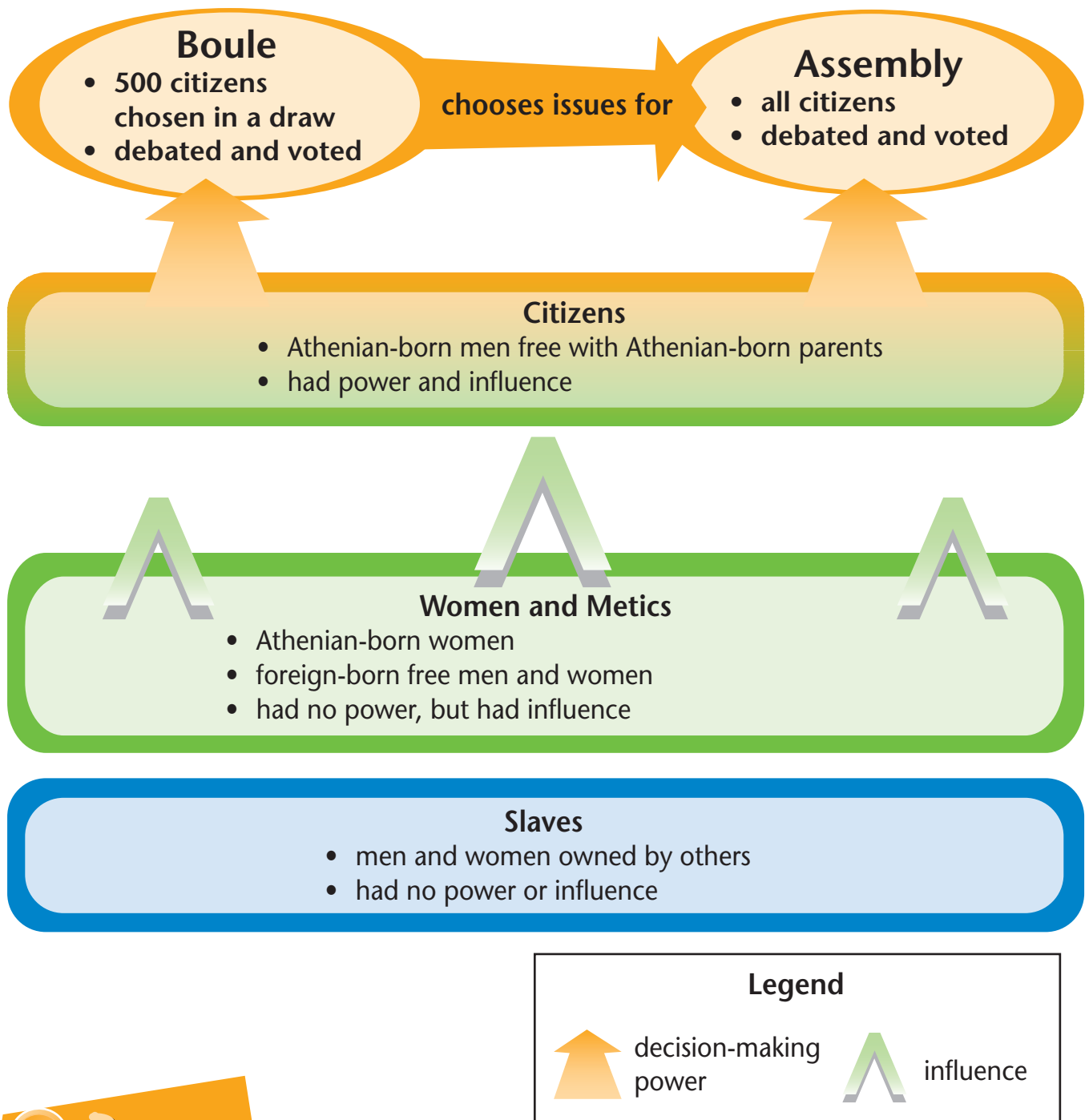
– Adapted from Aristotle, *The Politics*



Pause

How do the writings for these two ancient Athenians help us understand their beliefs about Athenian society and democracy?

Ancient Athens: Structure of Government



Pause

1. What does this diagram tell you about representation? What is different about our ideas of representation today?
2. Think about the guideline you developed in Chapter 1 about how to participate in groups. If you lived in ancient Athens, do you think you would have developed the same guideline? Why or why not?

THE ANCIENT ATHENIAN

Ancient news – today!

All the News Men Need to Read

ATHENS VOTES FOR WAR!

Reported by Phineas

The Assembly decided today to declare war on Sparta.

Yesterday, the Boule put the war vote on the Assembly's agenda in a near-**unanimous** decision.

The Assembly, however, was far from unanimous. Many citizens climbed the speaker's platform at Pnyx Hill and spoke passionately about their point of view. Some had to be booed off the stage when they continued to speak after their allotted time.



More than 6500 citizens took part in this historic vote. When the vote was called, it took more than two hours to count the hands raised first for war, and then against.

This reporter caught up to a group of citizens in the Agora after the vote. They had this to say.

"It was a hard decision for me. I have no wish to go to war, but a no-war vote would signal to Sparta that we're weak."

Today's Issue

Editorial



Letters to the editor, page 2

Citizen's Guide

Know your rights and responsibilities, page 3



Sports

Another win for Olympian Doros in wrestling, page 3



Theatre

Listing of this season's comedies and tragedies, page 4

"You say it was a hard choice, but I saw you raise your hand quick enough! I voted for war, too. The general spoke very well and he persuaded me."

"I think that general's becoming too powerful. I'm going to vote to **ostracize** him this year."

In Other News

Citizens Escape Fine

Some young citizens narrowly escaped a fine this morning.

"We knew this vote was important and it would be a long day," explained one. "We had paused in the Agora to talk over what to buy for snacks. We just couldn't agree! And then the guards chased us with the red rope!"

But the group, which included Olympic sprinter Agapetos, proved faster than the guards.

"We did spend the day hungry, though," one youth remarked.

Editorial Column

Citizen Responsibilities

Conversation at the Agora recently has centered around our Athenian young men. A number have just qualified as citizens. However, their absence during debates and voting at assemblies has been noted.

The editorial staff believe that these young citizens need to be reminded of their duties as citizens in our beloved Athens. It is suggested that the attention of all of our youth be directed to the following checklist:

A Citizen's Guide to Responsibilities

All Athenian Citizens are expected to:

- Do two years of military service, usually from age 18 to 20.
- At age 20, participate in the Assembly
- At age 30, serve on the Council and run for any public position
- Pay taxes.
- Until the age of 60, be prepared to serve in the army or navy.

Letter to the Editor

Justice for All: That Is the law

Tomorrow, the citizen who tried to **bribe** the Council to support his bid to build a road will be sentenced. In his trial, the citizen said the money was a "gift" to Athens. The Council is to be congratulated for turning down the "gift." In a democracy, **justice** says that all people have to follow the law. That includes rich road builders.

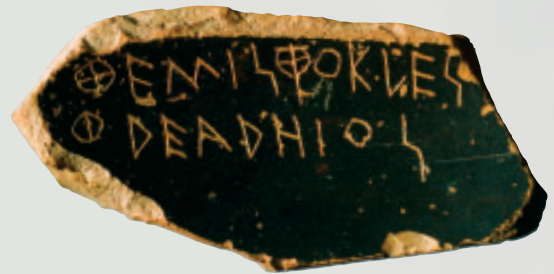
Dorotheos

Letter to the Editor

Ostracism

Next week's assembly will include the annual opportunity for ostracizing a citizen. Ostracism is meant to banish citizens that are too powerful — for ten years. If the General has his name scratched on a fragment of pottery, as Agora gossip suggests will happen, a vote will take place. What will happen in our war with Sparta if one of our great military leaders is banished? As a minimum of 6000 votes is needed for ostracism, we hope that Athenians will see sense and not ostracize him.

Athanasius



Athenians vote to ostracize a citizen by scratching his name on a piece of pottery, such as this. If a citizen receives 6000 or more votes, he must leave Athens.

Kallie's Laundry

Don't get your tunic in a twist!

Were you late for the Assembly again? Rounded up by the rope? They keep the ropes dripping with red ochre, and that stuff stains!

Kallie and her slaves will get your tunic clean and white again, in plenty of time for the next Assembly. Red on your tunic? Red in the face? Call on Kallie!

The Society and Government of Ancient Athens

What is the structure of the society?

- Athenian citizens had most privileges. Citizens were only men who were free, Athenian-born and had Athenian parents.
- Metics were people living in Athens without Athenian citizenship and privileges.
- Women had a role as mothers and caregivers and were in charge of households.
- Boys went to school or worked, depending on the origins and wealth of their families. Girls were confined to the household.
- Slaves were owned by others and had no choices about their situation.

What rights and responsibilities do members of the society have in government?

- Athenian citizens were expected to participate in government. They had to pay taxes and do military service.
- Athenian citizens viewed participating in government as a right and a responsibility. Only citizens could vote and serve in government positions. They also had to pay taxes and do military service.
- Metics had no rights: they could not vote or serve in government positions. They had a responsibility to pay taxes and do military service.
- Women had no rights or responsibilities in government.
- Slaves had no rights or responsibilities in government.



<p>What is the procedure for making government decisions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Boule was made up of representatives. The representatives were citizens chosen in a draw. The Boule made decisions about day-to-day affairs and decided what questions the Assembly would vote on. • The Assembly included all the citizens of Athens. • In both the Boule and the Assembly, citizens voted to make decisions. • Debate and discussion took place before voting and were an important part of the procedure. All citizens had a right to speak. • Non-citizens, such as metics and women, could influence citizens and how they voted.
<p>How do members of society influence government decisions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens debated and voted. • All other members could try to persuade citizens to take their point of view into account.

Pause

Democracy means “people power.” In what way was the government of ancient Athens a democracy? How fair and equitable was the democracy in ancient Athens?



The image on this ancient jar shows workers carrying olive oil in jugs. What class might these workers have come from? What role might they have had in democracy of ancient Athens?

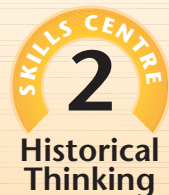
This photo shows a view of Athens today. Athens has been a city continuously since ancient times. You can still find traces of the Agora, the Bouleterion and Pnyx Hill in Athens today.



SKILLS at Work

Athens is part of a democracy today, and it was a democracy in ancient times. But it has not always been a democracy during the past two thousand years. What do you think might cause forms of government to change?

- use examples of events to describe cause and effect and change over time



REVIEW! REVIEW!

1. **What was the social structure of ancient Athens?** Construct a diagram or mind map to show how society in ancient Athens was organized.
2. **What were the opportunities for ancient Athenians to participate in decision making?**

How did the classes of the people you met in this chapter affect how they could participate in Athenian government? Use the characters below to play out a talk show for television, or to provide comments for a newspaper column. When you interview each of these people, ask them to explain what their role or influence would be in the decision-making process.

- Jason's father
- Jason's mother
- Menander
- Lydia
- Perseus's father

3. **What were the ideas behind democracy in ancient Athens?**

Imagine you are an Athenian writing a letter to a friend living in Egypt. You are describing how your form of government reflects fairness and equity. Provide specific examples from your society to support your answer.

4. **If democracy means "the power of the people" how democratic was the ancient Athens government?** Provide specific examples from the chapter to support your answer.

