

ATHENS

OR

SPARTA

How were the governments of Athens and Sparta different?

Hello! It is so nice to meet you! My name is Mr. Athens and I am thrilled to tell you about how the best city-state in all of Greece operates. First and foremost, our government is supreme. In fact, the way we do things became the envy of all other city-states -- we call this system democracy. This is a type of government where the people make decisions for how the government operates! We think it is best that all people have a right to participate in their own government. In our democracy, there is a group called the Assembly. This group makes our laws! How can one get in the Assembly, you ask? By being a free male and being at least 18 years old. If you satisfy those requirements, you are in! Don't meet the requirements to be in the Assembly? No worries! We also have a group called the Council of 500. Any citizen, rich or poor, is free to join this group! But, we have a set number of how many people can be in the Council. Can you guess how many? It's 500! To be one of these 500 you have to win a lottery. If you are lucky enough to get in, let me give you a quick summary of what you would be responsible for. Are you ready? All you need to worry about is proposing the laws that the Assembly votes on. Sounds simple, right? Oh, and did I mention you get paid for serving in the Council? The last thing I have to stress to you before you take off is about our leadership. What scares us Athenians the most is placing all the power of our beloved city-state in the hands of one individual. Just think of what would happen to our beautiful land if he became corrupt? So, we developed a genius plan to avoid having one person in charge! We choose 10 very experienced generals to lead Greece! These generals command the army and the navy. Oh, and you might see them in court too since they also act as our judges. So, what do you think? Athens sounds pretty sweet, right?

"Hey, what's up? My name is Mr. Sparta. So you want to know how the government over here works, do ya? Well, first I want clear up a few things about Athens. First, you can't trust Athenians. Second, you can't trust Athenians. Have I made myself clear? Why would you trust a system that willingly creates anarchy among its people? I mean, letting the common man, with little education or experience, play important roles in government? Please! In Sparta, we place the power to rule in older, experienced men, since they have the wisdom to know what is best. We choose an oligarchy as our system of government. This means that we have more than one equal ruler -- we actually have two kings that lead us everywhere! In Sparta, we laugh at the idea of letting 18-year old "boys" vote on laws. Ha! We have a Council of Elders made up of 30 of our most respected men. You must be 60 years old to be part this elite group. These wise men write our laws and prepare them for vote by the Assembly. Who do you think will make better laws -- an inexperienced 18 year-old boy, or a wise, experienced, 60 year-old man? I think the answer is simple. Where do laws go once written, you ask? They go to the Assembly where they are voted on to become official. We relax the rules a little bit here - you only have to be 30 years old to join, and all males can participate if they wish to. Now, while we have two Kings in Sparta, we too are concerned that they may become corrupt. After all, once you get that much power it becomes rather easy to make bad decisions. What do we do to prevent this? Each year the Assembly elects 5 men to watch over the kings -- we call them ephors. The ephors have a great deal of power, so don't cross them! They can even ignore laws passed by the Assembly! So what do you think about Sparta? It's the best of both worlds! The kings are kept in check, people are still involved in their government, and we don't let "boys" have great power!

Name _____

Period _____

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SPARTA

How were the governments of Athens and Sparta different?

How was the Athenian government structured?

Democracy: _____

The Assembly: _____

The Council of 500: _____

What role do generals play? _____

How was the Spartan government structured?

Oligarchy: _____

The Assembly: _____

Council of Elders: _____

What role do ephors play? _____

UNDER WHICH SYSTEM WOULD YOU RATHER LIVE? BACK IT UP WITH AT LEAST 3 EXAMPLES FROM THE TEXT!

