

DBQ
ATHENIAN
DEMOCRACY
&
CITIZENSHIP

BIG QUESTION

IS THE TERM "DEMOCRACY"
VALID TO DESCRIBE THE
POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE
ANCIENT ATHENIAN CITY-STATE?
(CONSIDER THE IDEA OF
CITIZENSHIP.)

Hook Exercise: Who Can Be A Citizen?

Part I

Directions: As of 2011, everyone born in the United States, or born to U.S. citizens overseas, automatically becomes a U.S. citizen. However, for an adult immigrant to become a U.S. citizen, he or she must go through a process called naturalization, which includes the eight requirements listed below. With a partner, discuss each requirement. Then check whether or not you support it. If you and your partner disagree, make two check marks.

	Support	Do Not Support
1. Must be at least 18 years of age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Must have been legally admitted to the U.S. (holder of a green card)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Must have lived in the United States for at least five years (if single)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Must have lived in the United States for at least three years (if married to a U.S. citizen)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Must have no prison record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Must be able to speak, read, and write English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Must pass a test on U.S. history and the Constitution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Must swear allegiance (loyalty) to the United States	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part II

There have been proposals to add other citizenship requirements. Which of the following would you support?

1. Must perform one year of national service, either in the military or a public agency like a school or the National Park Service.
2. Must have graduated from high school or received a GED certificate.
3. Must be in school, have proof of employment, or proof of a net worth of \$100,000.

Citizenship in Athens : WORTHY OF THE TERM "DEMOCRACY" ?

About 500 BCE, on the Greek and Italian peninsulas of the Mediterranean Sea, a new idea began to take shape. This was the notion that people were **citizens** of a state or empire, and that being a citizen meant not only meeting certain responsibilities, but also enjoying certain rights. Before this time, in places like Egypt, Babylonia, and ancient China, individuals were generally regarded as **subjects**, not as citizens. Power was largely in the hands of a pharaoh, king, or emperor and the thousands of administrators who carried out the ruler's command. But by the sixth century BCE, a new idea was emerging: that ordinary people should play a more significant role in the life of the state.

Citizenship is a status, or standing, given by a government to some or all of its people. In the modern world, citizenship often involves a balance between individual rights, such as the right to vote, and individual responsibilities, such as the duty to serve one's country. This balance has been called the **social contract theory of citizenship**. The individual does his or her part; the nation or state does its part.

It is probably accurate to say that in the **city-state** of Athens, the emphasis was more on citizen responsibility than citizen rights. The great Athenian leader Pericles said that Athenians who did not fully participate in voting, political debate, and holding office were "useless." The Greek philosopher Aristotle did him one better by declaring such Athenians to be beasts. It seems that many Athenians agreed. Participating in government and making the city-state

work was simply what good citizens should do. Citizenship was an action verb.

In Rome, the idea of a good citizen was a bit different. During the years of the Roman Republic, from 509 BCE until roughly 27 BCE, Roman citizenship qualifications and standards fluctuated but hovered around those described in this video. Unlike Athenians, a Roman citizen was judged more by how he behaved with his family, his neighbors, and his property. A Roman citizen who did not participate in local government

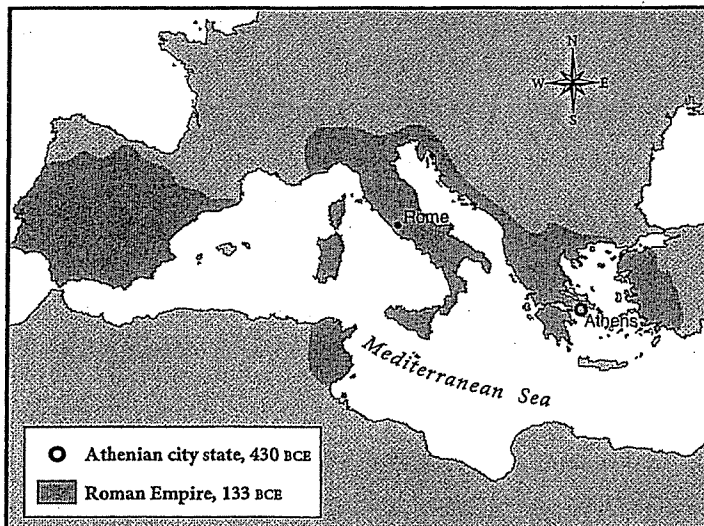
would not likely have been called a beast.

This important feature that distinguished Athens and Rome

in Rome was like

of the politics and development. Athens in 400 BCE had a population of about 300,000, including slaves.

Even though the population in



of the world's population. Athens, a land-locked city-state, was about the size of Rhode Island. The Roman Republic (see map) was

In Athens, citizenship was something to be honored and protected. Not everyone could have it, and those who did had a special relationship to the state. The documents that follow should help deepen your understanding of how Athenians viewed the matter. Imagine life as a citizen of Athens. Then address the question:

IS THE TERM "DEMOCRACY" VALID TO DESCRIBE THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE ANCIENT ATHENIAN CITY-STATE ?

EV

Background Essay Questions

1. What two Mediterranean societies are being compared? During what approximate time period?
2. The essay says that citizenship often strikes a balance between rights and responsibilities. Give an example of a citizen's rights and an example of his or her responsibilities.
3. What point was being made by the Athenians Pericles and Aristotle when they used the words "useless" and "beast"?
4. What was the ~~difference in~~ population and area ^{of} between the city-state of Athens [?] ~~and the Roman Republic?~~
5. Can you make a logical guess how size might affect a nation's willingness to grant citizenship?
6. Define these terms:

citizen

subject

social contract theory of citizenship

city-state

philosopher

~~Roman Republic~~

~~753 BCE – Traditional date for the founding of Rome~~

500s BCE – Establishment of direct democracy in Athens

~~509 BCE – Beginning of Roman Republic~~

~~443 BCE – Office of the censor created in Rome~~

431 BCE – Pericles Funeral Oration praising Athenian democracy

300s and 200s BCE – Democracy maintained, but Athens heyday over

~~287 – 133 BCE – Senate supreme in Rome. Focus on military and diplomacy~~

~~27 BCE – End of Roman Republic. Beginning of Roman Empire~~

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Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

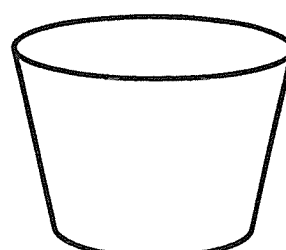
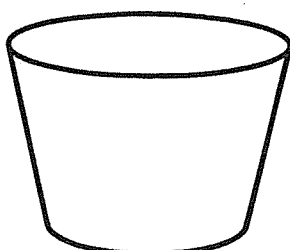
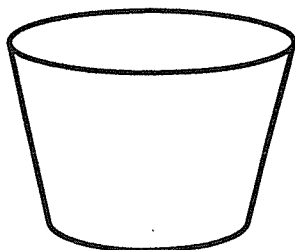
Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?
2. What terms in the question need to be defined?
3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

EV

Pre-Bucketing

Directions: Using any clues from the Mini-Q question and the document titles on the cover page, Think of possible analytical categories and label the buckets.



Document A

TYPE OF DOCUMENT?
PRIMARY OR SECONDARY

Source: Chart created from various sources.

Athens & Rome: Who Could Be a Citizen?

	Athens	Roman Republic	Requirements
Free, native-born adult males	Yes	Yes	Athens: If parents were free-born Athenians Rome: If parents were married in certain areas of Roman Empire
Free, native-born adult females	No	Yes	Rome: But had limited rights. Could own property, but could not vote or hold public office.
Free, native-born male children	No	Yes	Athens: First, had to complete education and two years of military training before being granted citizenship Rome: At birth, if parents were citizens
Female children	No	Yes	Rome: At birth if parents were citizens
Slaves	No	No	
Freed slaves	No	No	
Sons of freed slaves	No	Yes	

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* OTHER NOTES: MILITARY CENSUS DATA (THUCYDIDES)

• FREE MALE CITIZENS (MOSTLY LANDOWNERS) - 50,000

• FREE MALE NON-CITIZENS - 50,000

→ FOREIGN BORN OR W/ FOREIGN PARENTS

Document Analysis

1. What was required for an adult male to become a citizen of Athens? ~~and Rome?~~
2. Could women become citizens in Athens ~~and Rome?~~ Could slaves?
3. In which society were children granted citizenship?
4. In your opinion, ~~which system in Athens or Rome, was more generous in granting citizenship to its people?~~ How GENEROUS WAS ATHENS IN GRANTING CITIZENSHIP TO ITS PEOPLE? EXPLAIN.

• FREE FEMALES - ALL AGES - 100,000
• SLAVES 115,000
TOTAL > 315,000

Document B

DOCUMENT TYPE?
PRIMARY OR SECONDARY

Source: From a speech titled *"The Polity of Athenians"* by The Old Oligarch, circa 424 BCE.

Note: The identity of The Old Oligarch (an oligarch is a person of power) is unknown.

EV

"I shall say that at Athens [...] it is the poor which mans the fleet and has brought the state her power, and the steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the shipwrights – these have brought the state her power much rather than the ... best-born and the elite. This being so, it seems right that all should have a share in offices filled by lot [lottery] or by election, and that any citizen who wishes should be allowed to speak.... For if the poor and the common people and the worse elements are treated well, the growth of these classes will exalt [glorify] the democracy...."

Document Analysis

1. What is The Old Oligarch's main idea when he says it is the steersmen and the shipwrights (shipbuilders) who have brought the city-state power?
2. What is the significance of the fact that Athenians allowed a poor and common man to win a position in the government by lot?
3. Do you think that election by lottery was a wise practice by the Athenians? Explain.

Document D

DOCUMENT TYPE?
PRIMARY OR SECONDARY

Source: Diodorus Siculus, *History, Book XI*, written between 60 and 30 BCE.

And the law is as follows: Each citizen wrote the name of the man who in his opinion had the greatest power to destroy the democracy; and the man who got the largest number of ostraka was obliged to go into exile from his native land for a period of ten years.

The Athenians, it appears, passed such a law, not for the purpose of punishing wrongdoing, but in order to lower through exile the [position] of men who had risen too high. Now Themistocles, having been ostracized in the manner we have described, fled as an exile from his native city to Argos....

Note: Only one ostraka, or ostracism, was permitted in Athens per year.

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Source: Peter Walsh, "In the Realm of the Censors: From the Coliseum to Capitol Hill," *Boston Review*, February 1991.

In conducting the census of the Roman population, the censors (they were elected in pairs) not only counted Rome's citizens but ... ranked them into distinct classes.... The censors' ranking, based on wealth, heritage [family standing], administrative competence, marital status, and physical and moral fitness, determined the citizen's political privileges, his level of taxation, and his military service. Anyone who didn't meet the standards of the censors could be demoted in rank. If the offender was a senator, this meant expulsion from the Senate.

Note: The Roman census was conducted every five years.

Document Analysis

1. What did it mean when Athenians ostracized a fellow citizen? What was the purpose?
2. Do you think ostracism was a good idea? Explain.
3. IS THIS OSTRACISM POLICY CONSISTENT W/ YOUR VIEW OF "DEMOCRACY"?

Document E

DOCUMENT TYPE?

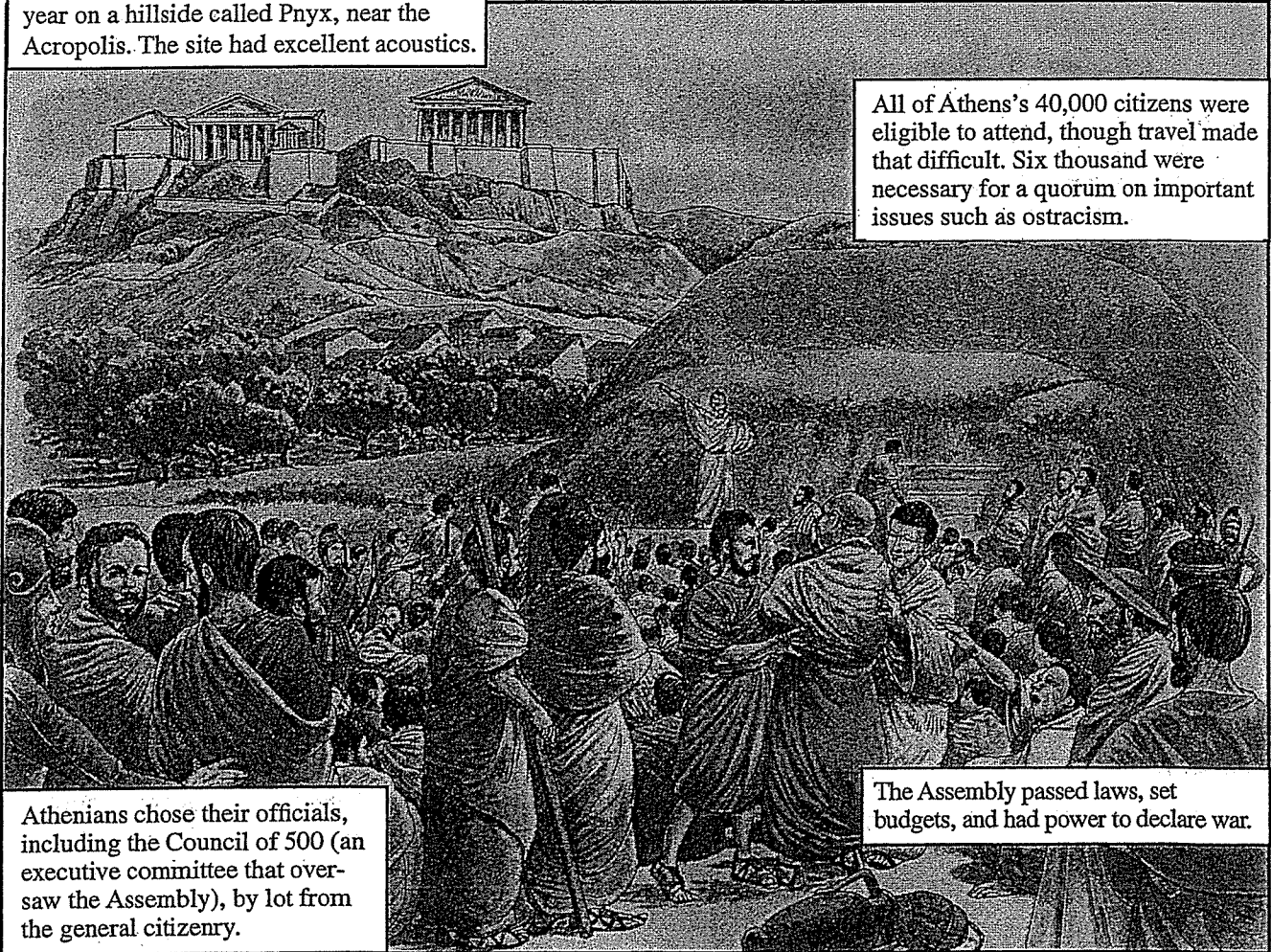
PRIMARY OR SECONDARY

Source: Illustration from *The Greek World* by Anton Powell, Routledge Press, 1987.

The Athenian Assembly

The Athenian Assembly met 40 times a year on a hillside called Pnyx, near the Acropolis. The site had excellent acoustics.

All of Athens's 40,000 citizens were eligible to attend, though travel made that difficult. Six thousand were necessary for a quorum on important issues such as ostracism.



Athenians chose their officials, including the Council of 500 (an executive committee that oversaw the Assembly), by lot from the general citizenry.

The Assembly passed laws, set budgets, and had power to declare war.

EV

Document Analysis

1. What percent of adult male citizens in Athens could vote in the Assembly? What percent were eligible to become members of the smaller Council of 500?
2. Judging by the illustration and the quorum requirement, what generalization can you make about the attendance of Athenian citizens at Assembly meetings?
3. What does it mean that the Council of 500 was chosen "by lot"? Was that a good idea?
4. Assume that the scene in the drawing is reasonably accurate. Does it strengthen or weaken an argument that Athens had a better system of citizenship than Rome? Explain.

DOCUMENT "F"

THE FUNERAL ORATION OF
PERICLES (THUCYDIDES
~ 431 BCE)

DOCUMENT TYPE?
PRIMARY OR SECONDARY

7 Athenian Greatness

The fifty years following the Persian Wars marked Athens' golden age. The central figure in Athenian political life for much of this period was Pericles (c. 495–429 B.C.), a gifted statesman and military commander. In the opening stage of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431–404 B.C.), Pericles delivered an oration in honor of the Athenians who died. In this speech, as reconstructed by the historian Thucydides, Pericles brilliantly described Athenian greatness.

Thucydides

THE FUNERAL ORATION OF PERICLES

Pericles contrasted Sparta's narrow conception of excellence with the Athenian ideal of the self-sufficiency of the human spirit. The Spartans subordinated all personal goals and interests to the demands of the Spartan state. As such, Sparta—a totally militarized society—was as close as the ancient Greeks came to a modern totalitarian society. The Athenians, said Pericles, did not require grinding military discipline in order to fight bravely for their city. Their cultivation of the mind and love of beauty did not make them less courageous.

To be sure, Pericles' "Funeral Oration," intended to bolster the morale of a people locked in a brutal war, idealized Athenian society. Athenians did not always behave in accordance with Pericles' high principles. Nevertheless, as both Pericles and Thucydides knew, Athenian democracy was an extraordinary achievement.

"Let me say that our system of government does not copy the institutions of our neighbours. It is more the case of our being a model to others, than of our imitating anyone else. Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty. And, just as our political life is free and open, so is our day-to-day life in our relations with each other. We do not get into a state with our next-door neighbour if he enjoys himself in his own way, nor do we give him the kind of black looks which, though they do no real harm, still do hurt people's feelings. We are free and tolerant in our private lives; but in public affairs we keep to the law. This is because it commands our deep respect.

"We give our obedience to those whom we put in positions of authority, and we obey the laws themselves, especially those which are for the protection of the oppressed, and those un-

written laws which it is an acknowledged shame to break.

"And here is another point. When our work is over, we are in a position to enjoy all kinds of recreation for our spirits. There are various kinds of contests [in poetry, drama, music, and athletics] and sacrifices regularly throughout the year; in our own homes we find a beauty and a good taste which delight us every day and which drive away our cares. Then the greatness of our city brings it about that all the good things from all over the world flow in to us, so that to us it seems just as natural to enjoy foreign goods as our own local products.

"Then there is a great difference between us and our opponents, in our attitude towards military security. Here are some examples: Our city is open to the world, and we have no periodical deportations in order to prevent people observing or finding our secrets which might be of military advantage to the enemy. This is because we rely, not on secret weapons, but on our own real courage and loyalty. There is a difference, too, in our educational systems. The Spartans, from their earliest boyhood, are submitted to the most laborious training in courage; we pass our lives without all these restrictions, and yet are just as ready to face the same dangers as they are. Here is a proof of this: When the Spartans invade our land, they

do not come by themselves, but bring all their allies with them; whereas we, when we launch an attack abroad, do the job by ourselves, and, though fighting on foreign soil, do not often fail to defeat opponents who are fighting for their own hearths and homes. As a matter of fact none of our enemies has ever yet been confronted with our total strength, because we have to divide our attention between our navy and the many missions on which our troops are sent on land. Yet, if our enemies engage a detachment of our forces and defeat it, they give themselves credit for having thrown back our entire army; or, if they lose, they claim that they were beaten by us in full strength. There are certain advantages, I think, in our way of meeting danger voluntarily, with an easy mind, instead of with a laborious training, with natural rather than with state-induced courage. We do not have to spend our time practising to meet sufferings which are still in the future; and when they are actually upon us we show ourselves just as brave as these others who are always in strict training. This is one point in which, I think, our city deserves to be admired. There are also others:

"Our love of what is beautiful does not lead to extravagance; our love of the things of the mind does not make us soft. We regard wealth as something to be properly used, rather than as something to boast about. As for poverty, no one need be ashamed to admit it: the real shame is in not taking practical measures to escape from it. Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well: even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well-informed on general politics—this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all. We Athenians, in our own persons, take our decisions on policy or submit them to proper discussions: for we do not think that there is an incompatibility between words and deeds; the worst thing is to rush into action before the consequences have been properly debated. And this is another point where

we differ from other people. We are capable at the same time of taking risks and of estimating them beforehand. Others are brave out of ignorance; and, when they stop to think, they begin to fear. But the man who can most truly be accounted brave is he who best knows the meaning of what is sweet in life and of what is terrible, and then goes out undeterred to meet what is to come.

"Again, in questions of general good feeling there is a great contrast between us and most other people. We make friends by doing good to others, not by receiving good from them. This makes our friendship all the more reliable, since we want to keep alive the gratitude of those who are in our debt by showing continued goodwill to them: whereas the feelings of one who owes us something lack the same enthusiasm, since he knows that, when he repays our kindness, it will be more like paying back a debt than giving something spontaneously. We are unique in this. When we do kindness to others, we do not do them out of any calculations of profit or loss: we do them without afterthought, relying on our free liberality. Taking everything together then, I declare that our city is an education to Greece, and I declare that in my opinion each single one of our citizens, in all the manifold aspects of life, is able to show himself the rightful lord and owner of his own person, and do this, moreover, with exceptional grace and exceptional versatility. And to show that this is no empty boasting for the present occasion, but real tangible fact, you have only to consider the power which our city possesses and which has been won by those very qualities which I have mentioned. Athens, alone of the states we know, comes to her testing time in a greatness that surpasses what was imagined of her. In her case, and in her case alone, no invading enemy is ashamed at being defeated, and no subject can complain of being governed by people unfit for their responsibilities. Mighty indeed are the marks and monuments of our empire which we have left. Future ages will wonder at us; as the present age wonders at us now."

**ON THE
BACK:**

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to Pericles, what are the chief characteristics of a democratic society?
2. What were the attitudes of the Athenians to such things as wealth, learning, and public affairs?

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