ATHENS THROUGH TIME

Explore the beginnings of democracy by diving into ancient Greek history. Learn how the power of Athenian kings declined and common Athenians gained a voice in how they were governed.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How did ancient Athenians contribute to the development of democracy?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

• **Students will learn about the development of democracy.**
• **Students will explain specific roles played by citizens, such as jurors.**
• **Students will identify the values that underlie others' points of view about civic issues.**
• **Students will examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key US constitutional provisions.**
• **Students will create a multimedia presentation.**
• **Students will write a critique.**
• **Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.**

In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.
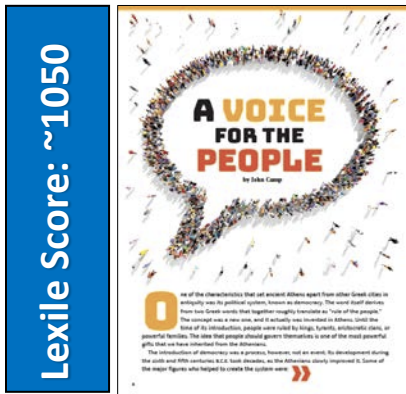
SELECTIONS

• **A Voice for the People**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1050L
• **Speaking for Themselves**
Expository Nonfiction, ~850L
• **At the Center of It All**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1150L

A Voice for the People

pp. 6–9, Expository Nonfiction

Discover how democracy was born in ancient Athens and explore the important roles played by different leaders of that time.

Lexile Score: ~1050

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the development of democracy.
- Students will explain specific roles played by citizens, such as jurors.
- Students will give a multimedia presentation.

KEY VOCABULARY

- *aristocratic* **(p. 6)** belonging to the highest social class in a society and having more power and money than other people in that society
- *tyrant* **(p. 6)** someone who uses power in a cruel way
- *magistrate* **(p. 7)** a local official who has some of the powers of a judge

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did ancient Athenians contribute to the development of democracy?

Have students attempt to define the word *democracy*. Make sure students understand that a democracy is a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting. Then prompt students to hypothesize how democracy developed as a form of government. What situations may have led people to desire democracy?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Next, have students work in pairs to decide how the words are connected. Then have them predict how these words will connect to the topic of democracy in the article. Invite students to share their ideas. Then tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- Why did Solon introduce democracy to ancient Athens?
- How did Solon change the judicial system used in ancient Athens?
- How did the Cleisthenes help promote equality among Athenians?

SKILL FOCUS: Explain Roles

INSTRUCT: Explain that citizens play different roles in a democratic society. One of these roles is that of a member of a jury. Tell students that they will find details in the article to help explain the role that jurors played in ancient Athenian society. Display the following question: *How did jurors help people from all levels of society have a voice in ancient Athens?*

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to review the article and identify information that can help them answer the question. Partners should work together to write a complete answer to the question using these details. Have pairs take turns reading their answers to the class.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students work in groups to create a four-slide multimedia presentation that summarizes the development of democracy in ancient Athens. Explain that presentations should include images (at least three) and information from "A Voice for the People" or another credible source. Invite groups to present to the class.

Speaking for Themselves

pp. 22–27, Expository Nonfiction

Discover what some of the most important social issues were for ancient Athenians by exploring what some of their most important thinkers wrote.

Lexile Score: ~850
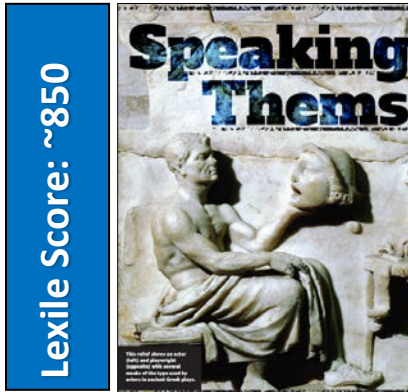
RESOURCES

- Comparing Values

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the development of democracy.
- Students will identify the values that underlie others' points of view about civic issues.
- Students will write a critique.

KEY VOCABULARY

- *custom* (p. 24) a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something
- *critique* (p. 25) a careful judgment in which an opinion is given about the good and bad parts of something
- *hypocrisy* (p. 26) behavior that does not agree with what someone claims to believe or feel

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did ancient Athenians contribute to the development of democracy?

Help students understand that American society highly values the three principles listed below.

- **equality** (being equal in rights, status, opportunities)
- **liberty** (the freedom to act and speak)
- **rule of law** (law applies equally to all people, regardless of status)

Then ask students to predict whether ancient Athenians also valued these principles. Tell them to check their predictions as they read.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Next, display the list below and have students work in pairs to complete the tasks.

1. Describe a custom in the United States.
2. Name something you would ask a friend to give you a critique of.
3. Give an example of a person behaving in a way that shows hypocrisy.

Invite students to share their responses. Then remind students to look for these words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What aspect of Athenian society did Euripides criticize?
- What qualities did Aristophanes think made good citizens?
- What did Plato think about the equality of citizens?

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Values

INSTRUCT: Explain that a value is a strongly held belief about what is important or acceptable. Point out that different people have different values. Then explain that the article explores the values of different people in ancient Athens. Distribute the *Comparing Values* worksheet to all students and review the directions.

ASSESS: Have students work in small groups to complete the worksheet. Then have groups share their responses with the class.

EXTEND

Language Arts Challenge students to write a critique—serious or humorous—of a musical performance, album, book, movie, or something else they have experienced. Explain that in their critiques, students should identify and describe the event or item, include a thesis statement that expresses their opinion, and cite details from the event or item to support their opinion. Invite students to share their critiques.

Comparing Values

A **value** is a judgment about what is important or acceptable. People from different cultures, places, and times may have similar or different values. Fill in the chart below to compare values of ancient Athenians with your values today.

Writer or Philosopher	What values are revealed in his writings?	How are these values similar to or different from your values today?
Euripides		
Aristophanes		
Socrates		
Plato		

At the Center of It All

pp. 22–27, Expository Nonfiction

Learn about different democratic institutions in ancient Athens and how each played an important role in ensuring that the government was effective.
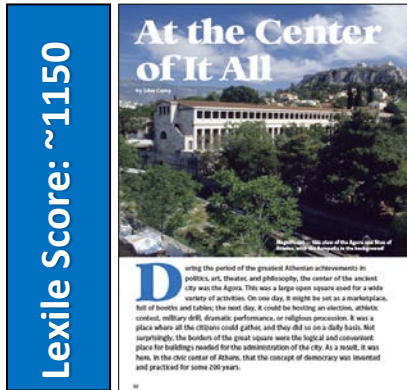
Lexile Score: ~1150

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the development of democracy.
- Students will examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key US constitutional provisions.
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

KEY VOCABULARY

- *administration* **(p. 32)** the group of people who run a government
- *executive* **(p. 33)** responsible for making sure laws are carried out and for managing the affairs of a nation or state
- *legislative* **(p. 33)** relating to the making of laws

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did ancient Athenians contribute to the development of democracy?

Ask students to share what they know about the three branches of the US government (executive, legislative, judicial). What purpose does each branch serve? Who participates in each branch? Then tell students that they'll be reading about the ancient origins of these branches.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then write the sentence below on the board and have students use the vocabulary words to complete it. Go over the correct answers and then remind students to look for these words as they read.

- The Athenian _____ had both an _____ and a _____ branch.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- Who was responsible for enforcing laws in Athenian society? What powers did this group have?
- How did Athenians make laws?
- How did Athenians judge cases involving the law?

SKILL FOCUS: Examine Origins

INSTRUCT: Explain that the roots of American democracy lie in ancient Athens. Also explain that the structure of our government is similar to the structure of the ancient Athenian government. Ask students to name the structures of the ancient Athenian government and write correct answers on the board: council, assembly, courts.

ASSESS: Have students work in small groups to discuss the purpose of each branch of the Athenian government. Then have students compare these branches to the branches of the US government and discuss specific similarities and differences. Invite groups to share their ideas with the class.

EXTEND

Science Have students conduct research to learn about four different scientific thinkers of ancient Greece. Tell students to create a poster that uses both words and pictures to tell about these people. Display posters in the classroom.