



Greek City States: Sparta vs. Athens

6th grade

Social Studies/Drama

by Linda Gold

Core Curriculum, Social Studies, Standard # 1

Students will understand how ancient civilizations developed and how they contributed to the current state of the world.

Objective 3 Explain how modern governments can trace some of their attributes to the systems of power, authority, and governance established in ancient civilizations.

Drama, Standard 6.T.CR.4:

Define roles, identify responsibilities, and participate in group decision making.

Standard 6.T.P.3:

Observe, listen, and respond in character to other actors throughout a scripted or improvised scene.

Standard 6.T.R.1:

Demonstrate audience skills of observing attentively and responding appropriately in classroom presentations, rehearsals, and live performance settings.

Standard 6.T.CO.3:

Investigate universal or common social issues and express them through a drama/theatre work.

Objective: Students will learn what life was like in the Greek City States of Sparta and Athens. They will be divided into two groups, each representing one of the city states. Each group will be given information sheets about their city state. They will create a tableau of the characters suggested by the information sheets. Each group will have the opportunity to thought track the characters in the other tableau in order to gather information about the other city state.

Materials:

Copies of the information sheets found at the end of this lesson.

Warm-up: Yes and Go.

The students stand in a circle. One person begins by calling out someone else's name. That person then says yes, giving the first person permission to walk across the circle and take their place. While player #1 is walking across the circle, player #2 calls out someone else's name. That person then says yes and the game continues in this manner. The students should try to make smooth transitions as they cross the room. Even though the person calling out the name cannot leave until the other person says yes, the person crossing should not have to wait to take over their spot. This game is very difficult and takes a lot of side-coaching and directing to help the students follow the rules. When they eventually get it, it is awesome and gives them a real sense of accomplishment.

Discussion: What did we have to do to be successful at this game? Why is it important to follow the rules? Are laws and rules the same thing? Do all countries around the world have the same laws? In the United States, does every state have the same laws? Did all of the City States in Ancient Greece have the same laws?

Instruction: There were over 200 City States in Ancient Greece. The main difference between the Greek City States and the United States is that the Greek City States had no central government. Every city state had their own type of government. Because of our Federal Government, we can travel from state to state and expect that most laws will be the same or similar. That was not the case in ancient Greece. There were even some city states who attacked and conquered other city states.

Tableaus: Divide the class in half and assign 1 group to represent Athens and the other group to represent Sparta. Give them information sheets regarding each city-state and have them go over the sheets in their groups. Each student will choose a scenario to represent. 2-3 students may work together on a scenario if they choose to. Instruct the students to use as many scenarios as possible. Talk to the students about their characters. Encourage them to establish realistic characters for the time and place.

Students will then set up a tableau of their city state. They should use good tableau techniques of level, plane, focus and facial expression. When the groups are ready, choose one group to go first. Group 1 will show their tableau to group 2. Group 2 will then have the opportunity to thought track the characters in group 1. When a character is tapped on the shoulder or elbow, they will come to life and tell the audience who they are and what they are doing. When they are finished speaking, they will return to their frozen position. You may choose to do this as a group or allow the individual students to wander through the tableau, tapping each student.

When group 2 has finished the thought tracking, they will set up their tableau. It is now group 1's turn to thought track.

Evaluation: Before beginning the evaluation, collect all of the information sheets. Who can tell me something that was the same in both city states? Who can tell me something that was different? (If you like, you can fill in a Venn diagram on the board during the discussion.) What was the main focus of each of these city states? How do these city states compare to our life today? What about life in the middle east?

Assessment: An informal assessment should be done during the course of the lesson. Are the students portraying their characters? Are they giving accurate information? Did the students pick up on the differences between the city states?

Athens

Men

1. The birth of a baby boy is announced by pinning olive leaves to the front door. This symbolizes success and victory. It was expected that a son would achieve more than a daughter.
2. At the age of three, boys are given wine in a jug called a chous. This symbolizes their entry in manhood.
3. During public festivals, animals are sacrificed to the gods and all Athenians get a share of the meat. Meat isn't something Athenians eat on a regular basis so everyone looks forward to the festivals. Boys are typically given more food than the girls.
4. At age six, the boys go to school. Here they must memorize the works of Homer, a famous Greek poet. They also learn to sing and play the lyre. They have physical activity in the gymnasium which is an open area used for sports and meetings.
5. Along with going to school, boys are taught the traits of their fathers. Some traits would include farming, fishing, goldsmithing, playwriting, acting, ship building, and carving. Slaves do most of the difficult work.
6. At age 18, boys are required to serve for two years in the military.
7. Only free male boys can vote. Girls and slaves cannot.
8. For entertainment, men would attend a symposium. They would drink, play games and enjoy music and dancing provided by hired entertainers. Free women were not allowed to attend a symposium.
9. Men were required to fulfill jury duty. They would be paid $\frac{1}{2}$ a day's wages to listen to trials and help decide the outcome. Everyone on the jury had an equal vote and there could be over 300 men on one jury.
10. Recorded theater began in Athens. Only men could act in the plays and only men could watch the plays. Actors wore masks to depict their characters.

Athens

Women

1. The birth of a baby girl is announced by pinning sheepskin to the front door. This symbolizes a life of work in the home. If a child is unwanted at birth, it is left in a public place to die or to be picked up and raised as a slave.
2. Girls are not allowed to go to school. They are taught by their mothers to take care of the home and children. They learn to spin wool into yarn and to weave cloth. They make their own clothes and bed linens along with wall hangings and cushions. Anything they make that they don't need is sold at the market place.
3. Women and girls are expected to stay indoors. If there are errands to be run to the market place, slaves are sent to do them.
4. Athenian girls marry around the age of 14. Their husbands are usually much older than them, somewhere in their late 20s or early 30s. Marriages are arranged by the parents and most couples meet each other for the first time on their wedding day. When married, the girl becomes the property of her husband.
5. Even though most Athenians have slaves to do their work for them, the women still spin and weave. It is an honor to make clothing for the statues of the goddesses.
6. When someone in the family dies, the women wash the body, wrap it in cloth and place flowers and herbs around it. The women cut their hair short as a sign of respect for the dead person. Mourning continues for 30 days. After this time, the soul is set free and the house is swept. The sweepings are put in the tomb with the body.

Sparta

Men

1. When a boy is born into a Spartan family, he is immediately taken to be inspected by a group of elders. He is tested for strength and health. When he passes the tests, he is given back to his father who is also given a plot of land. If he does not pass the test, he is left to die.
2. At age 7, a boy is taken from his home and put in the state's education program. He will live in barracks with other Spartan boys until he is 30 years old.
3. Up to the age of 12, a boy is schooled in reading, writing, music and dancing. The biggest concern, however, is his physical training. To make him tough, he will have to go barefoot and only wear one piece of clothing, no matter what the weather is like.
4. They are not given enough food and are encouraged to steal food. This way they can learn to survive in hard times. If they are caught stealing, they are punished but not for stealing. They are punished for getting caught!
5. At age 12 their training becomes more serious. They are trained in a military style and are punished if they show weakness or fail in any way.
6. At age 18, some of the boys are chosen to train in a special Secret Service Brigade. They have to live in the wild and provide for themselves. At night they must kill any Helots that they come across so that killing becomes easy for them. Helot is a slave of Sparta.
7. `It is better for a boy to die in battle than to return home a coward.
8. At age 30, the men are allowed to live with their wives and families instead of in the barracks.

Sparta

Women

1. Girls in Sparta spend much of their time exercising. Dancing is something they enjoy very much.
2. At age 13, girls are allowed to participate in the Heraia festival. It is an athletic competition, honoring the goddess Hera. Hera is the goddess of marriage and the wife of Zeus.
3. Girls marry around the age of 18. They cannot live with their husband until he turns 30 and can leave the barracks.
4. Giving birth to strong children and becoming a mother is the most important thing a Spartan woman can do.
5. The state pays people with food instead of money. There is always plenty of barley and the women get the same portion as the men.
6. When a son turns 7, women must turn them over to be raised by the state.