

Democracy Begins

Trace democratic ideas from Ancient Athens to later governments.

6.10.C “identify historical origins of democratic forms of government such as Ancient Greece.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each sentence that describes a feature or idea of Athenian democracy, and circle each phrase that shows who was excluded or how modern democracies differ. Your marks will help you identify Athens as an origin of democratic government while noticing its limits.

Athens and Democratic Government

- ① More than 2,500 years ago, Athens, a city-state in Ancient Greece, developed a form of democracy. The word democracy comes from Greek words meaning “people” and “power.” In Athens, citizens could take part in government themselves instead of choosing representatives to make most decisions. This was called direct democracy. It did not include everyone living in Athens. Citizens were free adult men born to Athenian parents. Women, enslaved people, and resident foreigners could not be citizens or vote.
- ② At meetings of the Assembly, eligible citizens listened to speakers and voted on laws, taxes, and war. Any citizen could speak, although wealthy citizens often had more time and influence. Many government jobs were filled by lottery, or random selection, rather than by election. Large citizen juries decided court cases. These practices showed an important idea: citizens should share political power. Still, Athenian democracy was limited because only a small part of the population had the rights of citizens.
- ③ Athenian democracy influenced later ideas about government, even though modern democracies are different. In many democracies today, citizens elect representatives, and voting rights are broader than they were in Athens. Yet the ancient example helped spread the belief that government should get its authority from citizens and should follow laws. Studying Athens helps historians identify an origin of democratic government: people participating in public decisions. It also reminds us to ask who was included, who was excluded, and how a democracy has changed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why does the passage call Athens a direct democracy instead of a representative democracy?

2 Name two ways eligible Athenian citizens could participate in government.

3 What made Athenian democracy limited?

4 What idea from Athens does the passage identify as an origin of later democratic government?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write three sentences explaining which Athenian practice or idea is the strongest early example of democratic government. Include one fact about how it worked, one limitation, and one way modern democracies are different.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each sentence that describes a feature or idea of Athenian democracy, and circle each phrase that shows who was excluded or how modern democracies differ. Your marks will help you identify Athens as an origin of democratic government while noticing its limits. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the passage call Athens a direct democracy instead of a representative democracy?	Citizens took part in government and made most decisions themselves instead of choosing representatives.
2	Name two ways eligible Athenian citizens could participate in government.	Answers may include voting in the Assembly, speaking at Assembly meetings, being chosen by lottery for government jobs, or serving on citizen juries.
3	What made Athenian democracy limited?	Only free adult men born to Athenian parents could be citizens and vote. Women, enslaved people, and resident foreigners were excluded.
4	What idea from Athens does the passage identify as an origin of later democratic government?	The idea that citizens should participate in public decisions and that government should get its authority from citizens.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Assembly is the strongest early example of democratic government because eligible citizens voted directly on laws, taxes, and war. This system was limited because women, enslaved people, and resident foreigners could not vote. Modern democracies usually elect representatives and give voting rights to a much broader group of citizens.

Accept equivalent descriptions of citizen participation, such as voting, speaking in the Assembly, serving on juries, or being selected by lottery. For the open response, require all three parts: an Athenian practice or idea, a limitation, and an accurate comparison to modern democracy.