

KS2 History – Ancient Greeks

Comparing the lives of Athenian and Spartan Women

This lesson will highlight to children all the ways the lives of women in Athens differed from those living in Sparta. They will learn that Athenian women lived in a democracy and Spartan women in an oligarchy. The children will use a variety of sources to investigate the role of women in each state. They will consider the advantages and disadvantages for women living in each one. They will also be encouraged to reflect on women in other parts of the world today and whether they have different lives from women in the UK.

Learning Objectives:

To know the difference between a democracy and oligarchy

To understand the roles of Athenian and Spartan women

To determine the advantages and disadvantages for women living in different Ancient Greek states

Success Criteria:

Children should be able to:

Describe the features of a democracy and oligarchy

Explain how life differed for Athenian and Spartan women

Discuss reasons why life was better for women in one Ancient Greek state compared to another

KS2 National Curriculum Links:

History – 5a: *to recall, select and organise historical information, 12a:* *a study of the way of life, beliefs and achievements of the people living in Ancient Greece and the influence of their civilisation on the world today*

Citizenship - 2g: *to know what a democracy is, and about the basic institutions that support it locally and nationally, 4:* *to think about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs*

Literacy – 1e: *to vary their writing to suit the purpose and reader*

Resources:

Image of map of Ancient Greece

Statements describing *democracy* and *oligarchy*

Ancient Greece text books

Information cards with facts about women in Athens and Sparta
Images of women from around the world

Introduction:

Ask the children to imagine they had a pen pal in Canada – how would they describe themselves? Ask them to think about what makes them all the same in the class? Explain to the children the meaning of nationality, and the difference between Britain and England, Scotland, Wales. Describe to the children how the Ancient Greeks would have viewed themselves as members of different states or ‘polis’, and rivals with different forms of government. Show the children the location of Athens and Sparta on a map of Ancient Greece.

Explain to the children that they are going to compare what life was like for women in Sparta and Athens but that first they will ‘set the scene’ by investigating how the rules and customs of democracies (Athens) and oligarchies (Sparta) differ.

Teacher led activity:

Give the children statements that describe the features of democracies and oligarchies. In pairs, ask the children to discuss each statement and sort them into two groups. To help the children, remind them that the UK is a democracy. Ask the children to share their ideas and then sort the statements together as a whole class.

Development:

Paired Activity:

Using a variety of sources, including text books, information cards and the internet, ask the children to find out and take notes on what life was like for women in Athens and Sparta.

Independent Activity:

Allocate the states of Athens or Sparta to the children. Ask them to design and create posters advertising the benefits for women in their state. For example, they write statements like; ‘Live in Sparta – you will be taught how to fight like the men’ or ‘Athenian women take part in fun festivals not fighting!’ on their posters to argue their points of view.

Differentiation:

G&T – Using knowledge gained from their paired work, ask the children to make their own choice between Athens and Sparta for their poster advert.

EAL/SEN – Ask the children to look at the BBC Schools website together:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/ancient_greeks/sparta

Ask an adult to help the children read the website and take notes on interesting facts about the women of Sparta. The children decide whether they think it would be a good or bad place for women to live. They then design a poster persuading or dissuading other women from living there.

Plenary:

Ask the children to display all their posters at the front of the class, sorted into Athens and Sparta. Read out some of the persuasive sentences the children have used on their posters. Ask them to vote for the state they think was better for women. Ask them to explain why they made their choice. Did anyone have a hard time deciding?

Ask them to consider whether they think women have similar lives to each other all over the world today. Can they think of any countries where women have very different roles to women in the UK? Look at images of women from all over the world. Ask the children to think about their lives. Can they think of any advantages and disadvantages to being a woman in another country?

Assessment For Learning:

Ask the children to look at a partner's poster. They tell their partner two things they like about their posters, and one thing they could improve.

Homework/ Extension:

Ask the children to investigate what life was like for men and women in an Ancient Greek state other than Athens and Sparta.

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