

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
Class \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY SOURCE READERS

# SOCRATES

GREEK PHILOSOPHER



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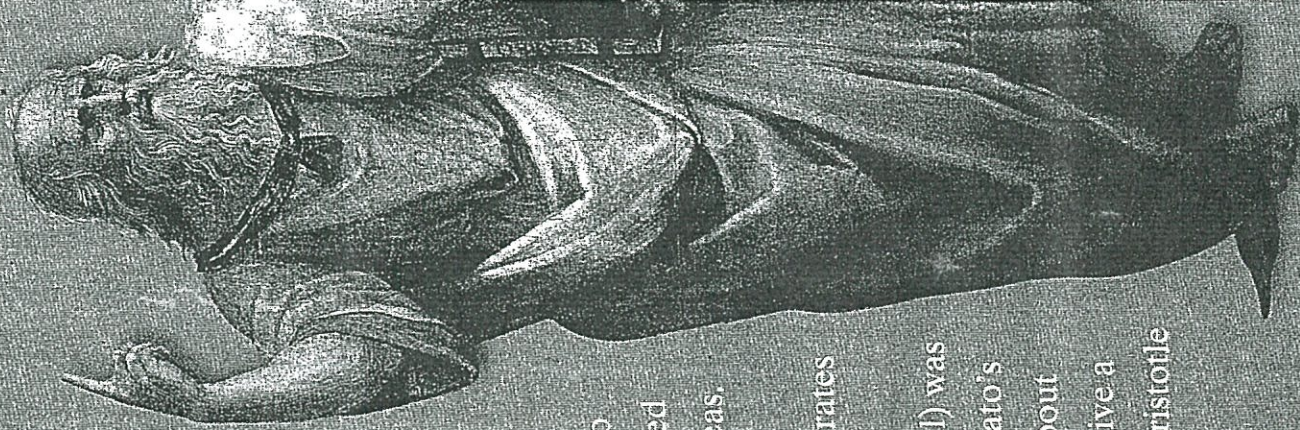


# WHAT WE KNOW

Socrates never wrote anything about his own life. Other people wrote everything known about him. For this reason, we do not know much about his early life.

Two men who wrote about Socrates were Plato and Xenophon (ZEN-uh-fuhn). Both these men were students of Socrates. Like Socrates, Plato was a philosopher. Plato included his own ideas with Socrates's ideas. Xenophon was a soldier and a farmer. His stories describe Socrates as a good person and teacher.

Aristotle (AIR-uh-stawt-uhl) was another philosopher. He was Plato's student. Aristotle also wrote about Socrates. His writings seem to give a fair account of Socrates. But, Aristotle never actually knew Socrates.



▲ P



Xenophon

► Xenophon's writings describe Socrates for people today.

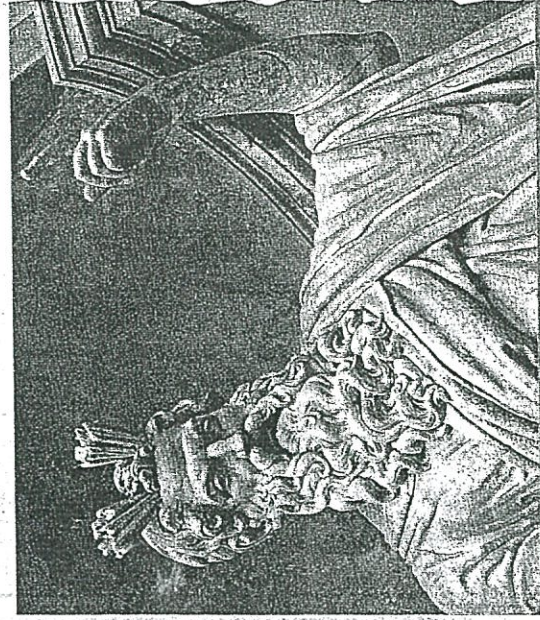
Plato recorded conversations Socrates had with people. These **dialogues** (DIE-uh-logs) are now classics of world literature. People today are not sure which thoughts are Plato's ideas and which are Socrates's ideas.

## The Clouds

Aristophanes (air-uh-STAWF-uh-nee-z) wrote a comic play called *The Clouds*. This play makes fun of Socrates. The play shows a lot about Socrates's life as a young philosopher. The play is still performed today in theaters around the world.

## Greek Myths

The Greeks believed that the gods controlled every part of their lives. Greek myths are stories about these gods. Legends include human heroes with the gods. There are many different versions of these stories. Greek mythology is still studied and enjoyed.



► Zeus was king of the gods.



How do we know about Socrates?  
Four Ancient Greeks wrote about Socrates.

Use the clues to figure out who in this column matches the clue.

Who wrote about Socrates?	Occupation	What did he write about Socrates?
1.		Socrates was a good teacher and a good person.
2.		He wrote about his own ideas along with Socrates' ideas.
3.		He didn't know Socrates, but what he wrote was probably right.
4.		He made fun of Socrates. His play was called The Clouds.

Hint: Do person  
4 first.

3



1a. How did Socrates gain wisdom?

1b. Why did he gain wisdom in that way?



## CURIOUS SOCRATES

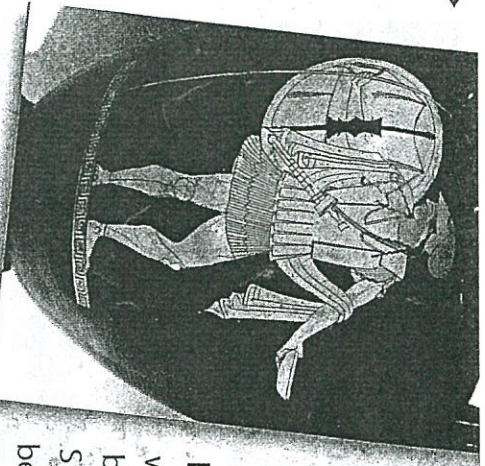
From the time Socrates was a young man, he searched for wisdom and truth. He gained wisdom by asking questions. Many people in

Athens thought that they had answers. Socrates asked them questions. He argued with them about different topics. He did not think they had the knowledge they claimed to have.

During his time, there was a group of people called Sophists (SAWF-ists) in Athens. Sophists were paid to lecture and teach people



Cartan  
Soldier



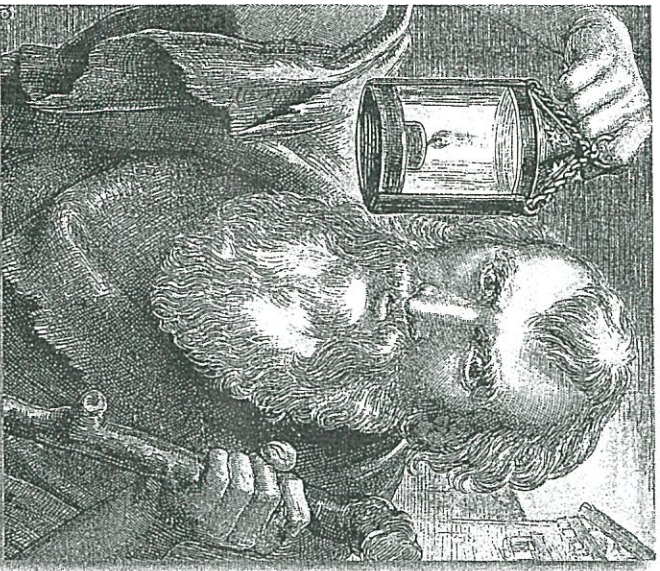
## Sparta

Sparta was a **city-state** at the same time as Athens. Life in Sparta was very different from life in Athens. Sparta was a city that was led by military leaders. In Sparta, people had to be disciplined and loyal. These were the traits most valued in a person.

## Building New Ideas

Socrates challenged false ideas people had about things like justice, love, or courage. He would break down the ideas people held. Then, he built new, more accurate ideas. Socrates felt that this was what philosophy was all about. Since then, great philosophers have used this method to find the truth.

They taught men how to speak well and influence others. But, they also used their abilities to cheat people out of money. Many people thought that Socrates was a Sophist because of the way he spoke. But, he was not a Sophist.



► Diogenes (di-AWJ-uh-nee-z)  
was a well-known Sophist.

2a. What is a Sophist?

2b.

How was life in Sparta different from Athens?

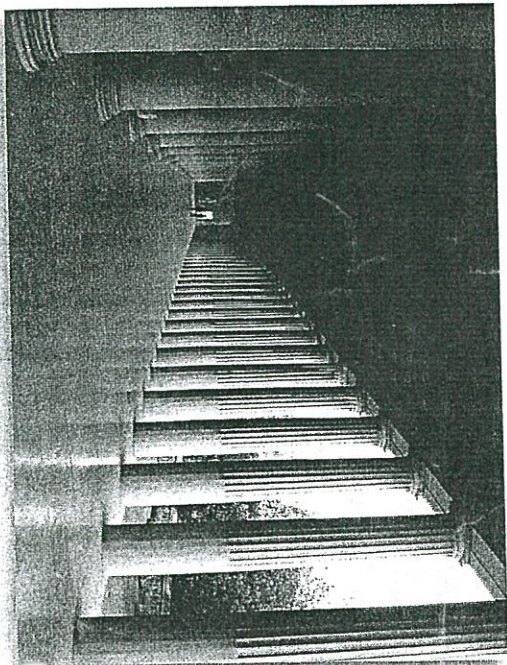


# WORK FOR FREE

Throughout his life, Socrates showed no interest in money. He was also not interested in material items. Socrates would allow groups of men to listen to him speak. And, he would never take money from them. He always wore the same clothes, no matter the season.

Socrates argued that his life was better because he had no material wealth. He felt that he enjoyed his food more. He said that he was stronger and healthier because he was not affected by the weather. Socrates said that happiness came not from having more but from wanting less.

▶ Socrates often wore ragged clothing.



6 This is a rebuilt stone *stoa* in Athens. ▶

## Greek Slaves

In ancient Greece, slaves were a very important part of society. Wealthy women did not leave their homes. So, their slaves took care of everyday household chores. Shopping, getting water, and buying food were jobs for slaves.

## The Republic

Plato wrote a set of ten books about justice. The books were called the *Republic*. Plato's *Republic* is carefully studied around the world today.

## Taking a Stand

Socrates would stand on a *stoa* (STOH-uh), or platform, while teaching others. Ruins of stone *stoas* can still be seen in Athens today.

3a. What did Socrates say about happiness?

3b.

Do you agree why or why not?



4. Socrates told people what to think.

True or False

Circle one

5. How should students decide what they truly believe?

## GENUINE SELF-KNOWLEDGE

When he talked to people, Socrates liked to ask questions. He did not have certain answers that he wanted. He just wanted to find the truth. Socrates spent a lot of time revealing false beliefs that people held.

He used this method to teach his students. Socrates did not teach anything specific. He wanted students to learn how to decide what they truly believed. To do this, they needed to understand their own feelings and beliefs. That is why he asked so many questions.

▼ Socrates questioning his students







Homer

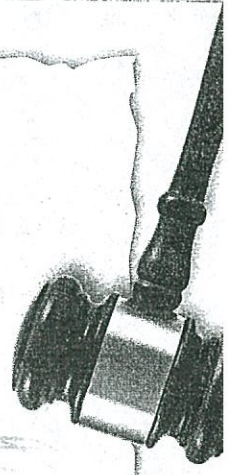
This method of asking questions is called the Socratic (suh-KRAT-ik) Method. Its goal is to help people find truth. It is important that people know the truth, even if it is negative. Socrates thought that questioning was the only way to become a true philosopher.

## Greek Literature

Homer was a Greek poet. In Greek schools, teachers used Homer's writings. His two epic poems were the *Iliad* (IL-ee-uhd) and the *Odyssey* (AWD-uh-see). These long poems were used to teach young Greek boys how to read.

## Socrates and the Law

The Socratic Method is very important in modern-day law schools. This method is used to start classroom discussions about laws. When a teacher asks many questions, students are able to think through a problem. Answering questions lets students study their own beliefs more closely. They might even realize that their beliefs are false.



6a. What is the name of the method of questioning Socrates used?

How could you use Socrates's method in your life?

6b.