

Where Would be a Better Place to Live: Ancient Athens or Sparta?

Lesson Plan for Writing Activity

Suggested length: 1- 2 class periods (45-55 minutes each)

Lesson components:

- Opener (5-15 minutes)
- Activity
 - Part A: Exploring the Kialo discussion & filling out graphic organizer (focus of 1-2 class periods)
 - Part B: Beginning the argumentative essay (5 minutes)
- Optional closer (2 minutes)

Assessment:

Independent writing assignment on the prompt: *Which ancient Greek city-state would be better to live in: Athens or Sparta? Give three reasons to support your choice, and explain your reasoning.* (see suggested rubric in **provided materials**)

Opener (5-15 minutes)

1. Spark student interest by posing one or both of the following questions. Ask students to discuss in pairs:
 - a. Which do you think is more important for a society: being the best at arts and culture, or being the strongest and most powerful militarily?
 - b. Which society would you rather live in: a freer society, or a more stable, secure society?
2. Explain that these are some points to consider when dealing with today's topic: *Which ancient Greek city-state would be better to live in: Athens or Sparta?* Inform students that they will use this class period to prepare for and possibly begin composing an individual writing assignment on the topic.

Optional extension (11 min.): Activate knowledge by showing two TED-Ed videos, [A day in the life of an ancient Athenian](#) and [This is Sparta: Fierce warriors of the ancient world](#)

Activity

Part A: Exploring the Kialo discussion & filling out the graphic organizer (focus of 1-2 class periods)

1. Explain that the writing prompt directly corresponds to the Kialo discussion topic: *Which ancient Greek city-state would be better to live in: Athens or Sparta? Give three reasons to support your choice, and explain your reasoning.* Distribute and go over the assignment rubric.
2. Distribute and go over the graphic organizer.
3. Instruct students to consult the Kialo discussion for ideas on the topic, taking notes and/or filling out the graphic organizer.

TIP: Encourage students to explore the entire Kialo discussion, not just the branches whose top claims support the students' chosen city-state. Useful information can be found in all branches of the Kialo discussion.

Optional differentiation: Direct students in need of a greater challenge to also search for information from outside sources (i.e. those not present in the Kialo discussion).

Part B: Beginning the argumentative essay (5 minutes)

1. When students are finished exploring the Kialo discussion, direct them to begin planning and writing their essays. Students should use the information from the graphic organizer to organize and form their body paragraphs, while writing their own introduction and conclusion paragraphs.

Optional closer (2 minutes)

1. Remind students that there is no "right" answer to the question of which city-state is better, since Athens and Sparta are equally important entities that have had an enormous influence on Western civilization.