

COMPARING DEMOCRACIES

Learning Objective: The student will

Identify characteristics of democracy in Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and the United States.

Evaluate democratic practices in Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and the United States.

TEKS: WH.1B; WH.20A

Materials Needed: Sets of cards for each group of three to four students

Teaching Strategy:

1. Divide the class into groups of three to four students and give each group a set of the cards. Explain to the students that the cards are examples of life in Ancient Athens, Ancient Rome, or the United States.
2. Have the students sort the cards into three piles: cards representing democracy in Ancient Athens, cards representing democracy in Ancient Rome, and cards representing democracy in the United States.
3. Starting with any card from Ancient Greece, the groups should then find the corresponding idea from Ancient Rome and the United States. They should match up all of the cards in the same manner as the first. (See the key for answers.)
4. After they have the cards sorted correctly, have groups select the card they feel represents the most **unique feature** in each, the card they feel is the **least democratic** in each, and the card they feel is the **most democratic** in each. They should be prepared to discuss their reasoning for each choice.
5. Have each group share their choices and reasoning before the class.
6. Debrief with the following questions:
 - What aspect from Ancient Athenian democracy do you feel has had the greatest impact on American democracy, and why?
 - What aspect for Ancient Roman democracy do you feel has had the greatest impact on American democracy, and why?

KEY

	 Ancient Athens	 Ancient Rome	 United States
Citizenship	Male citizens—18 years old, parents both have to be born in Athens	Free-born adult male landowners—citizenship later granted to other free males	Citizens include all native-born or naturalized persons
Legislative Function	Lawmaking function accomplished by an assembly of all citizens	Lawmaking function shared by the Senate representing the aristocrats, and other assemblies representing the common class of citizens	Lawmaking function shared by two bodies, one representing the interests of the states (Senate), and the other the interests of the population (House of Representatives)
Selection of the Executive	Leader chosen by lot or voting by all the citizens for an indeterminate length of time	Two leaders chosen by the assembly for a term of one year to execute the laws and command the army	Leader chosen directly by the Electoral College and indirectly by the citizens' popular vote for a term of four years
Characteristics of a Jury	Juries for trials varied as to the number of citizens over 30 years of age	Juries of citizens used in the most serious cases, or other times the presiding judge would make the decision	Citizens are guaranteed a jury of peers in all cases (Amendments 6 and 7) unless they waive the right
Role of a lawyers (or advocate in a trial)	Citizens argued their own cases before the jury	Citizens argued their cases or used legal experts for advice	Citizens rarely argue their cases, as the right to an attorney is guaranteed in Amendment 6
Law Code	Laws codified (written down) by two rulers; many laws considered harsh	Legal code, known as the Twelve Tables, was used as the basis of the legal system	Legal code known as the Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land
Use of the Death Penalty	Death penalty used for a variety of crimes; however, the accused could go into permanent exile to avoid the punishment	Death penalty often used for anyone convicted of treason toward the state; the use of crucifixion set aside for slaves and non-Romans	Death penalty used for capital crimes and only in the states which have legislated its use
Length of Time a Democracy	Direct democracy present for approximately 32 years	Indirect democracy present for approximately 500 years	Indirect democracy present for over 200 years
Use of Slavery	Slavery very common, but slaves served in multiple roles and often not distinguishable from poorer citizens	Slavery very prevalent because most conquered people became slaves; slaves could be freed by their owners	Slavery used until it was abolished after a civil war and prohibited legally by a Constitutional amendment (Amendment 13)
Position of Women	Women not allowed any political rights and could exercise little personal freedom	Women (even though not citizens) exercised personal freedom, could own property and testify in court, but could not vote	Women eventually allowed to become citizens and vote after a Constitutional amendment (Amendment 19)



**Male citizens-18
years old, parents
both have to be
born in Athens**





**Free-born adult
male landowners-
citizenship later
granted to other
free males**





**Citizens include all
native-born or
naturalized persons**




**Lawmaking
function
accomplished by an
assembly of all
citizens**




**Lawmaking
function shared by
a Senate
representing the
aristocrats and
other assemblies
representing the
common class of
citizens**

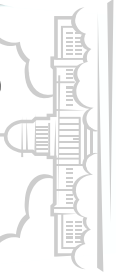


**Lawmaking function
shared by two bodies,
one represents the
interests of the states
(Senate), and the
other the interests of
the population (House
of Representatives)**









Leader chosen by lot or voting by all the citizens for an indeterminate length of time





Leader chosen directly by the Electoral College and indirectly by the citizens' popular vote for a term of four years





Two leaders chosen by the assembly for a term of one year to execute the laws and command the army




Juries for trials varied as to the number of citizens over thirty years of age



Juries of citizens used in the most serious cases or other times the presiding judge would make the decision



Citizens are guaranteed a jury of citizens in all cases by the Bill of Rights (Amendments 6 and 7), unless they waive the right





**Citizens argued
their own case
before the jury**





**Citizens rarely
argue their case as
the right to an
attorney is
guaranteed in
Amendment 6**





**Citizens argued
their cases or used
legal experts for
advice**



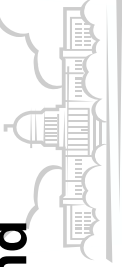
**Laws codified
(written down) by
two
rulers; many laws
considered harsh**

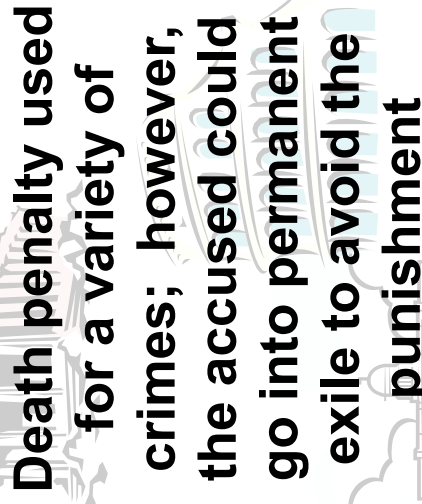


**Legal code known
as the Twelve
Tables that were
used as the basis of
the legal system**

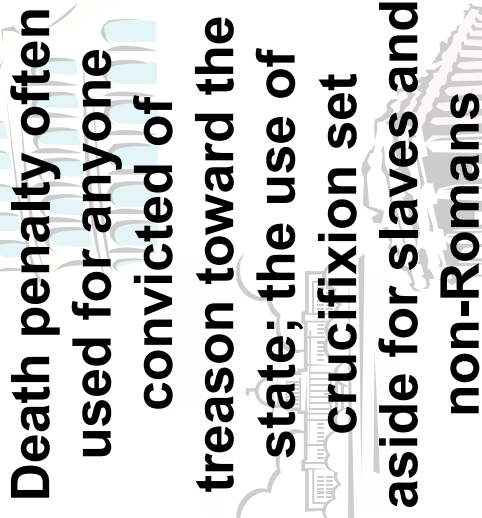


**Legal code known
as the Constitution
which is the
supreme law of the
land**

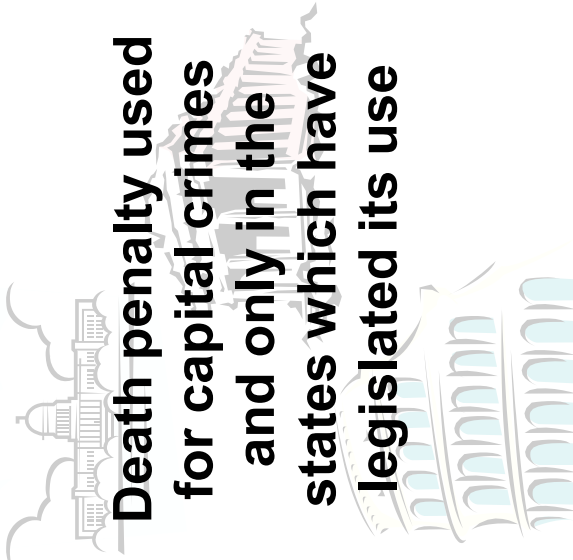




Death penalty used for a variety of crimes; however, the accused could go into permanent exile to avoid the punishment



Death penalty often used for anyone convicted of treason toward the state; the use of crucifixion set aside for slaves and non-Romans




Death penalty used for capital crimes and only in the states which have legislated its use



Direct democracy present for approximately 32 years



Indirect democracy present for approximately 500 years



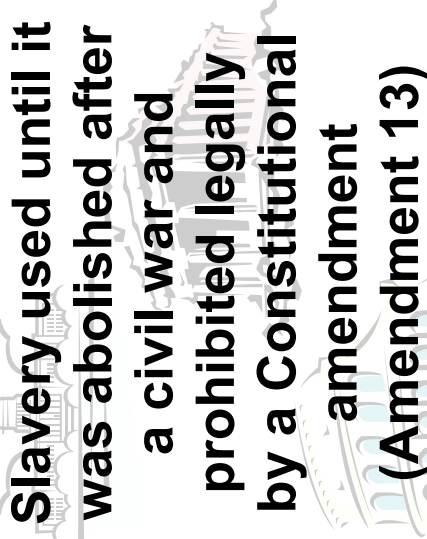
Indirect democracy present for over 200 years



Slavery very common, but slaves served in multiple roles and often not distinguishable from poorer citizens



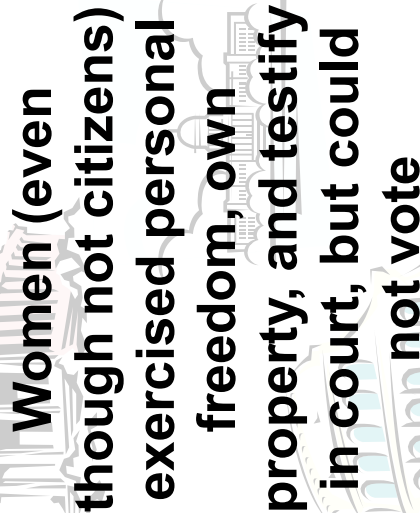
Slavery very prevalent because most conquered people became slaves; slaves could often be freed by their owners



Slavery used until it was abolished after a civil war and prohibited legally by a Constitutional amendment (Amendment 13)



Women not allowed any political rights and could exercise little personal freedom



Women (even though not citizens) exercised personal freedom, own property, and testify in court, but could not vote



Women eventually allowed to become citizens and vote as a result of a Constitutional amendment (Amendment 19)