

# Education in Ancient Greece

## The first organized education

**Educating the mind  
without educating the heart  
is no education at all.**

**– Aristotle**

**THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT** aspects of the aristocratic education were that it aimed at producing an individual hero, who would outdo his rivals and that it worked by means of personal example.

Sparta was the first Greek city (polis) to drop these two ideals. In place of the idea of personal success, the idea of the success of the polis and community was put forward, and in place of the idea of entrusting the upbringing of a child to an individual, Sparta turned to a system of education firmly organized and controlled by it.

The Spartan educational system was designed to produce courage and loyalty to the city. The

ideal of patriotism and community spirit were of paramount importance in the education of the young Spartans. It was the community that mattered and not the individual hero, as in the Homeric or aristocratic education.

The organization of Spartan education was so careful that for every year of his life, the child was known by a different title. Thus, a **propais** was a young boy, probably aged eleven; he was one year younger than a **pratopampais** and one year older than a **mikizomenos**. These titles were not so important, however. From the age of seven onwards, the Spartan child became a member of a group in which he spent his entire day; and from

the age of twelve, he left home and lived with the other members of this group.

In charge of the city's education was the **Paidonomos** (Supervisor of Education). He was assisted by a staff of young men with whips, who tried to keep the boys in order. The children were divided into groups and placed under the authority of various **eirenes** (young men of nineteen or twenty years) who were coming to the end of their education.

According to Plutarch, the Spartan girls had to wrestle, run and throw the javelin in order to become healthy and strong mothers. The idea was for the women not to be gentle or frail. Another ancient writer comments on the aims of the Spartan education "the Spartans do not approve of children learning music, writing and reading, or if they were taught some, it accommodated their necessities of living".

So, when we ask what the Spartan children learnt, we should not have in mind rows of desks, bits of information, debate and thought. The Spartans learnt a way of living, and they learnt it by living it every minute of every day.

In Athens, which was considered as the city of freedom and variety, it comes as no surprise that the education there bore hardly any resemblance with the **agoge** in Sparta. It is much more like a continuation of the Homeric education. Most upper-class children went to school, although the example and the friendship of older boys and young men was regarded as an important part of their education. It should not be imagined that "school" meant one building to which several hundred boys went. The English word "school" is derived from the Greek word *schole*; but *schole* did not come to mean anything like "school" until late in history.

Originally it meant "leisure" and it changed its meaning because discussion and argument were things that people did in their leisure time and what we now call school.

There were three kinds of **didaskalos** (teacher) in Athens. The **paidotribes** (the physical training instructor), the **kitharistes** (lyre-player/music teacher) and the **grammatistes** (elementary schoolmaster) whose name literally means "one who teaches, letters". The boy was accompanied to the schoolroom by a **paidagogos** who carried his equipment and remained with him throughout the lessons. He supervised the boy, watched over his behavior and punished him when necessary.

Writing was done on wooden tablets, covered with wax. The pupil learnt by copying the teacher, using a stylus to scratch the wax. When he made progress, he was allowed to use ink and papyrus. Then, once he was familiar with the letters, he learnt to read, which must have been hard since the script was continuous, which means there were no divisions between the words. Moreover, the boys were taught some mathematics such as counting, addition, division and multiplication, which were taught on the abacus.

Undoubtedly, the most important part of their education was the reading, recitation and learning of Homer's great poems, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The Athenian education was not what we should call a practical or useful education, as if it did not help anybody to get a job or to do a particular kind of work. It was concerned to develop the individual physically and mentally and to equip him to live a certain kind of life; a gentleman's life. This is no surprising, as this education obviously grew out of the old aristocratic education given to the heroes.



■ SECTION A • Reading Comprehension

● EXERCISE A

Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. The education in Athens derived from the old aristocratic education.  
True  False
2. The Athenian education aimed at developing physically healthy, independent-minded, courageous citizens.  
True  False
3. Spartan education was not compulsory.  
True  False
4. The boys in Sparta were taught discussion, debate and expression of their ideas.  
True  False
5. Spartan education focused mainly on the individual development of the pupils.  
True  False
6. The epic poems of Homer constituted a major part of the education in Athens.  
True  False
7. The Athenian and the Spartan education were not similar.  
True  False
8. The word "Schole" in ancient Greece had a similar meaning with the word "school" in modern times.  
True  False
9. In Athens, only the well-born children received education.  
True  False
10. In Sparta, not all the boys were considered equal and their education was related to their social status.  
True  False

## ● EXERCISE B

Read the text and answer the following questions.

1. How did Ancient Greece influence education?
2. What subjects were most important to education in Ancient Greece?
3. Why did only boys go to school in Athens and Sparta?
4. What were ancient Greek teachers called?
5. What was the aim of the Greek education?

## ■ SECTION B • Vocabulary / Word Building

**Vocabulary list:** Work out the meanings of the following words from their context and try to guess their meaning. Add to the list other unknown words you might have from the text.

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outdo	authority	leisure	scratch
rival	wrestle	instructor	abacus
ideals	gentle	physical	division
put forward	frail	elementary	count
entrust	aim	literally	addition
upbringing	accommodate	accompany	multiplication
firmly	necessity	equipment	recitation
loyalty	row	throughout	grow out of
community spirit	have in mind	supervise	mental
paramount	debate	watch over	bits
in charge of	variety	pupil	bear resemblance
whip	upper-class	wax	derive

# Characteristics of students who are gifted and talented

**What makes a child gifted and talented may not always be good grades at school, but a different way of looking at the world and learning.**  
– Paul Black

## **CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUOTATION:**

Of all the students you are teaching in a given class, which group do you think will probably learn the least this year? It may surprise you to find that in a class that has a range of abilities (and which class doesn't?), it is the most able, rather than the least able, who will learn less new material than any other group (Winebrenner, 1992).

### **How can this occur?**

Think about **Henry**, a fifth-grade student who knows all the spelling words at the beginning of the week. He gets a grade of 100 percent on the spelling test, but has he learned anything?

Think about **Mina**, a sixth-grade student who is a voracious reader and is particularly interested in astronomy. She skims the chapter in her general

science textbook, quickly gets its gist, and realizes that the content is basic and boring. The class lecture does not go beyond answering the end-of-chapter questions. Mina does not have the opportunity to share what she really knows and “tunes out” during class discussion. She gets a grade of 70 percent on a chapter test because she simply doesn't care about “proving” what she knows.

Think about **Caroline**, an eighth-grade student who has known all about the eight parts of speech since third grade. Even if she had forgotten the eight parts of speech in third grade, it wouldn't have mattered because they were also taught in fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. She gets a grade of 100 percent on a grammar unit test, but has she learned anything?

Think about **Thaddeus**. Thaddeus loves to draw and does so constantly at home and at school. Unfortunately, he would rather draw than do anything else, and his teacher frequently reprimands him for “doodling” rather than completing assignments. The once-a-week art class does not provide Thaddeus with the instruction he needs to develop his talent.

You’ve got the picture. Frequently, students who are gifted or talented and other high-achieving students already know the material being covered in the general curriculum. Can you imagine spending seven hours a day, five days a week, school year after school year, reviewing information you already know? Can you imagine having genuine artistic talent and not having the opportunity to develop that talent or to share it with others?

There are **two common** (and conflicting) misconceptions about individuals who are gifted (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1991). One is that gifted individuals are intellectually advanced but physically, socially, and emotionally behind. The



other misconception is that gifted individuals are “superhuman” and exceptional in every way. The longitudinal research initiated by Terman starting in the 1920s has made a major contribution to dispelling these misconceptions. The reality is that gifted individuals are human beings with special gifts in certain areas—areas that differ considerably depending on the individual.

As a classroom teacher, you’ll need to get beyond these misconceptions and stereotypes to recognize the characteristics of students with extraordinary gifts and talents so that you can help identify students for special services and provide appropriate instruction for gifted students who are members of your class. This section describes the cognitive and affective characteristics of the intellectually gifted and creatively gifted or talented.

### Intellectually Gifted

Students who are intellectually gifted are exceptional learners. They tend to excel both in the classroom and on standardized tests, but they are not homogeneous in their thinking strategies. Some are **convergent thinkers** who approach tasks in a sequenced, linear fashion. Others are **divergent thinkers** who employ creativity and innovation to express ideas. **Concrete thinkers** exhibit a wealth of specific information, whereas **abstract thinkers** have the ability to understand complex ideas and create mental structures of concepts that may be vague to their understanding (Berger, 1994).

Students who are intellectually gifted usually respond more quickly and appropriately to questions than their peers. Given several alternatives, these students will usually select the best course of action, the preferred outcome, or the most accurate response. They are usually very curious and ask

numerous questions about the topic or subject under discussion. During discussions and in their writing, the intellectually gifted demonstrate the ability to make applications and abstractions from their knowledge. They tend to perform in a goal-related manner and can clearly define the final goal or outcome of an activity or project.

**There are downsides** to these seemingly desirable student behaviors in general education classrooms. The gifted student's insatiable curiosity can interfere with the teacher's lesson, taking the lesson off track and in directions far beyond the other students' level of understanding. Gifted students' high verbal ability can lead to domination of class discussions. Usually understanding general principles, gifted students may become impatient when the teacher focuses on specific steps or details in a procedure for the benefit of other students in the class. They may become frustrated or bored when others are not able to understand a concept quickly. Intellectually gifted students sometimes focus on their personal educational goals and ignore those set by the teacher, thus causing misperceptions that the child is stubborn or self-centered (Tuttle et al., 1988).

### **Creatively Gifted or Talented**

Creatively gifted or talented students display their unique abilities within the framework of the visual or performing arts. They demonstrate a superior ability to express ideas through various forms of communication (drawing, music, singing, writing, and acting). Significant factors in talent development are early and ongoing paternal support, early commitment followed by intense and continuous work in the specific area, opportunities for interaction with a peer group of similar interests and abilities, opportunities for out-

of-school learning, and motivation to be superior at a talent (Durden & Tangherlini, 1993).

Students with artistic talent are enthusiastic about expressing themselves and enjoy participating in art activities that allow incorporation of different media. They display unusual and creative solutions to artistic challenges. Students with musical ability display a lifelong interest in music and look for opportunities to listen to and create music. They can hear small differences in musical tones and can remember and reproduce these tones easily and accurately. Students with dramatic talent effectively incorporate gestures, facial expressions, body language, and voice to communicate feelings and to express meaning. They can hold the attention of others when they tell a story or perform. Students who are talented writers are able to make their point clearly and to revise and edit without losing the essence of their ideas (Renzulli & Smith, 1979).

Talented students who don't have an outlet for their gifts, can run into problems in the general education class. They can become totally focused on their area of interest and exclude the tasks set forth in the curriculum. Teachers of talented students need to find ways to incorporate these students' interests and talents into the daily routines.

It is obvious that some characteristics relate to academic factors, while others refer to social and emotional factors, and some characteristics are positive, whereas others are negative. Note that not all gifted or talented students demonstrate every one of these characteristics.

As you might expect, there is a wide range of individual differences in the physical, academic, social, and behavioral traits of students who are gifted.

■ SECTION A • Reading Comprehension

● EXERCISE A

Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. Gifted students learn a lot in a classroom compared with the other students. True  False
2. There is a misinterpretation relating to gifted students that they are considered in general to have abilities in all aspects. True  False
3. Teachers should approach prodigies in a similar way as the other students. True  False
4. Gifted students have the same thinking and learning perspective. True  False
5. Gifted students can be convergent or divergent thinkers. True  False
6. Teachers may be completely impeded during their lesson by their gifted students. True  False
7. Teachers may ponder that intellectually gifted students have an easy and enjoyable approach to their lessons. True  False
8. Gifted and talented children have the ability or potential to develop significantly ahead of their peers. True  False
9. Various factors characterize a gifted student, and not all of them illustrate the same characteristics. True  False
10. Talented students who do not have a vent for their abilities might create issues during the lessons. True  False



# English grammar exercises

## ■ UNIT 1 • TENSE REVIEW

### ● EXERCISE 1

Complete the following paragraphs with the simple present, present continuous, or present perfect sense of the verbs. In some sentences, more than one tense may be correct.

a) Ali and Roberto ..... **(be)** graduate students in the department of physics at Harvard University. They ..... **(be)** students at Harvard for one year. This institution of higher learning ..... **(be)** the oldest university in the United States, and it ..... **(have)** the distinction of being a very prestigious school.

This quarter, Roberto ..... **(work)** in the library on Friday and Saturday nights. He ..... **(take)** only two courses this quarter, so he ..... **(have/not)** many assignments. His girlfriend ..... **(try)** to convince him to quit his job so that they can go out on the weekends.

- b) It's noon now, so they ..... **(eat)** lunch in the student union. Many students ..... **(stand)** in line and ..... **(wait)** for someone to take their orders. Ali and Roberto ..... **(be)** in line for nearly twenty minutes, and they ..... **(get)** a little impatient. Although they ..... **(have)** lunch in the union a few times a week, Roberto ..... **(prefer)** to eat in the dorm cafeteria because the service ..... **(be)** faster.
- c) Their spring-break ..... **(begin)** next week, and Ali ..... **(fly)** to his country by airplane to visit his family. He ..... **(receive, already)** a big check from his father, so he ..... **(plan)** to fly first class. His flight ..... **(depart)** at seven o'clock in the morning. Both Ali and Robert ..... **(register)** for a course in aerodynamics next quarter because the phenomenon of flying ..... **(fascinate)** them since they were children.

## ● EXERCISE 2

Complete the following sentences with either the present perfect or present perfect continuous. For some sentences, either tense may be appropriate.

### Group 1

1. Jack ..... **(fail)** his driving test three times because he doesn't know how to park. However, he ..... **(practice)** three hours every day for the past week, and I think he ..... **(make)** a lot of improvement.
2. My brother ..... **(pass/not)** his driving test either.
3. He ..... **(worry)** about this for two months.