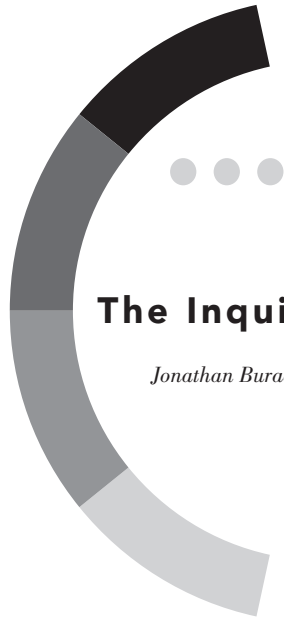


Classical Age



The Inquiry Arc in U.S. History

Jonathan Burack

Democracy in Ancient Athens

MindSparks®

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

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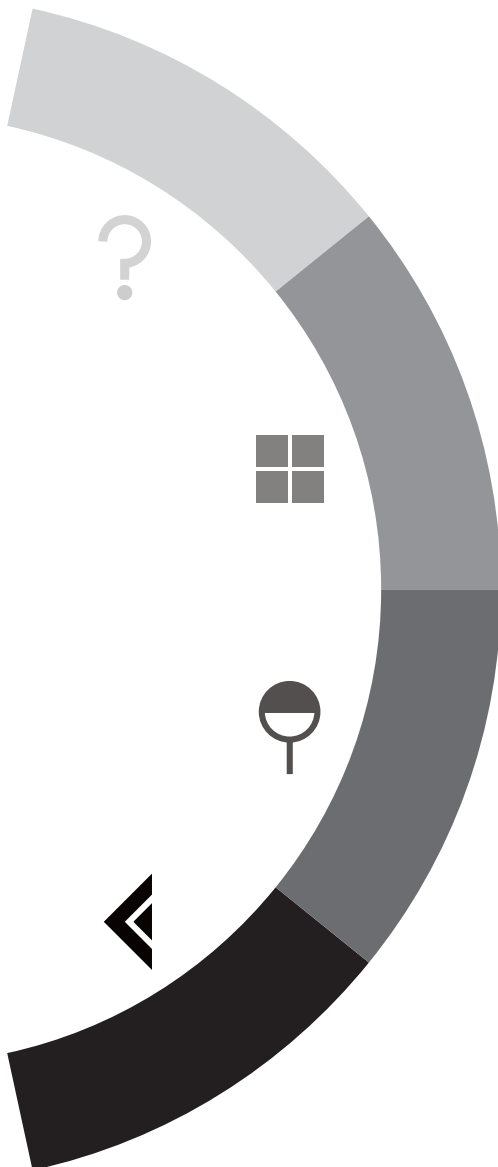
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C3 Framework

This book is based primarily on the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards. This C3 Framework is an effective tool offering guidance and support for rigorous student learning. The assignments encourage students to be active participants in learning and to explore the parts of history that they find most compelling. Central to the C3 Framework and our use of it is its Inquiry Arc—a set of four interrelated dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies. The lessons in this book are based on all four dimensions of the C3 Inquiry Arc. While the C3 Framework analyzes each of the four dimensions separately, they are not entirely separable in practice—they each interact in dynamic ways. As a result, the lessons combine some or all of the dimensions in various ways.



Four Dimensions of the Inquiry Arc

1 Developing compelling and supporting questions and planning inquiries

Questions shape social studies inquiries, giving them broader meaning and motivating students to master content and engage actively in the learning process.

2 Applying disciplinary concepts and tools

These are the concepts and central ideas needed to address the compelling and supporting questions students pose. The C3 Framework stresses four subject fields: history, civics, economics, and geography. Each lesson addresses all of these disciplines.

3 Evaluating sources and using evidence

The purpose of using primary and secondary sources as evidence is to support claims and counterclaims. By assessing the validity and usefulness of sources, including those that conflict with one another, students are able to construct evidence-based explanations and arguments.

4 Communicating conclusions and taking informed action

While this may take the form of individual essays and other writing assignments, these lessons stress other kinds of individual and collaborative forms of communication, including debates, policy analyses, video productions, diary entries, and interviews. Meaningful forms of individual or collaborative civic action are also incorporated into each lessons.

How to Use This Book

This book offers you the chance to implement the entire C3 Inquiry Arc in brief, carefully structured lessons on important topics in world history. Each lesson is driven by a central compelling question, and disciplinary supporting questions are provided. Each lesson asks students to apply understandings from all of the C3 disciplines—history, civics, economics, and geography—and each lesson includes individual and group tasks in an integrated way.

Each lesson also includes an introductory essay, detailed teaching instructions, a set of primary sources, and the handouts needed to implement the lesson's assignments. Rubrics for student evaluation and sources for further study are also provided. The teaching instructions suggest a time frame for completion of each lesson, but the assessments can easily be adapted to fit into any lesson plan.

Each lesson also is aligned with several C3 Framework standards and Common Core State Standards. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Literacy emphasize the reading and information texts, making these lessons ideal for integration into English Language Arts instruction.



C3 Disciplines



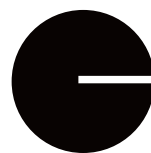
History



Civics



Economics



Geography



Democracy in Ancient Athens

How Democratic Was It?

Overview

Introduction

For about two centuries, a fully democratic system flourished in Athens in ancient Greece. The most important political body in it was the Assembly. It met in a public space out in the open. Citizens learned to speak their minds and take pride in their freedom and independence. Many top leaders were chosen by lot. Usually, those who held these leadership positions served only for a year. Each local grouping or district (called a *deme*) contributed fifty members for the 500-member Council that prepared topics and laws for the Assembly to debate and decide. Sizable juries of hundreds of citizens each judged cases before the courts. Athens gave ordinary citizens several kinds of public authority. The system was not without its critics—both at the time and ever since. Then, most of them said Athens was too democratic. Today, many say it was not democratic enough. How democratic was it? This lesson will focus on that compelling question. Students will work with ten sources. These sources form the core content for a set of tasks that will help them answer the lesson’s compelling question.

Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about democracy in Athens. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary and secondary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.
- ◆ **D2.His.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.His.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.His.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.Civ.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- ◆ **D2.Eco.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.Geo.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.

- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.
- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Teaching Instructions

Compelling Question

How democratic was ancient Athens?

Preparation

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.



Asking Questions about Democracy in Ancient Athens
This part of the task stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework

Day One

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class, and remind students to refer to the handout as they read the primary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, geography, or economics. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary and secondary sources for this lesson. Each group may share a source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.



Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence
This part of the task stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework

Day Two

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining seven sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary and secondary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about democracy in Athens from the group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or a related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

Day Three

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.

Communicating Results and Taking Action

This part of the task stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework

Students will complete a final project that expresses an understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the lesson's central compelling question. The project may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout, and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review the Democracy in Ancient Athens Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

- ◆ Divide students into small groups. Ask each group to use library resources and the internet to learn more about the specific buildings and other sites at the Agora, the Pnyx, and the Acropolis in ancient Athens. Diagrams and maps of these are not hard to find. Each group will create a map including the parts of each of these places that seem most important to the democracy of ancient Athens. Have each group prepare a five-minute presentation of its map. After all the presentations are completed, ask the class to vote on the map that best explains the key elements of Athenian democracy.
- ◆ Ask one small group of students to prepare a role-playing debate among Pericles, Plato, and the "Old Oligarch." As a starting point in planning this debate, the group should discuss Primary Sources 1.4, 1.5, and 1.8. Encourage them to read more on each of these three Athenians. Have them role-play their debate in front of the class. Assign other students the task of writing newspaper reports on the debate summarizing it in detail for other Athenian citizens. Each of these newspaper reports should use portions of the three sources mentioned here.
- ◆ Ask students to read and discuss Aristotle's comments on slavery in Primary Source 1.9. Based on this source, ask each student to write two detailed letters. The first letter should be to Aristotle expressing the student's own views on what Aristotle says in Primary Source 1.9. It should include specific references to ideas in at least two other sources for this lesson. Then have the student write a letter from Aristotle responding to the first letter as the student imagines Aristotle himself would have done.

Taking Action

- ◆ As a class, attend a session of your town, village, or city's elected council or other governing body. Ask students to take careful notes on what is discussed. They should also try to assess how much like or unlike Athenian democracy the meeting seems to be. As a follow-up, ask students to summarize their views in letters to the editor of a local newspaper or other nearby news source.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share the letters and any responses to them received from the newspaper or its readers.

Introductory Essay

Democracy in Ancient Athens



Nineteenth-century painting depicting Pericles delivering his famous funeral oration in front of the Assembly

Many early civilizations grew up on broad, fertile lands along major rivers. Ancient Greece was different. It has no single, large river uniting the lands around it. Mountains divide it into many separate regions. Its geography forced the Greeks to look to the sea. They had to trade with the islands of the Aegean Sea and many cities and states along the coasts of the Mediterranean. Because of its geography, Greece's many small regions remained separate city-states. These city-states went through many political changes over time. In some, a form of democracy developed. Our ideas today about democracy began to emerge in ancient Greece. The most important democracy was the city-state of Athens. In time, Athens became a powerful, sea-oriented empire ruled by elected officials and an assembly of citizens.

Athens was not always a democracy. Moreover, its democracy only lasted for about two centuries—the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. For a long time, a small group of pow-

erful aristocratic families ruled it. The Greeks called such a ruling group an *oligarchy*. Only these wealthy aristocrats could afford horses and military equipment. They led Athens in the many wars it fought. For that reason, many Athenians believed that oligarchy was the most natural form of government.

However, as Athens grew in population, new problems developed. Land was always in short supply in Attica, the small territory that Athens controlled. As population grew, land was divided into smaller and smaller plots. Many farmers went into debt trying to earn a living from these small plots. Many sold themselves as slaves to pay off their debts. Meanwhile, wealthier Athenians bought up these lands. Resentment of the small ruling oligarchy of wealthy aristocrats grew.



Greeks learned to fight in tightly organized formations of foot soldiers, shown here on the Chigi vase.

At the same time, Athens began to make important changes in the conduct of warfare. The Greek city-states were often at war with one another. At first, warfare was mainly carried on by those rich enough to own horses. But over time, Greeks learned to fight in tightly organized formations of foot soldiers. These soldiers were called *hoplites*. Less wealthy men could afford the sword, shield, and helmet needed for such fighting. Compact hoplite formations had to be skilled and highly motivated. Meanwhile, even poor and landless men could join Greek naval forces as rowers in Greece's famous triremes. The growing importance of such soldiers and sailors helped them win greater power as citizens. Ordinary Athenians came to be seen as important to the survival of the city-state. Even many wealthy Athenians agreed. It made sense to give these ordinary citizens more of a say in their government.

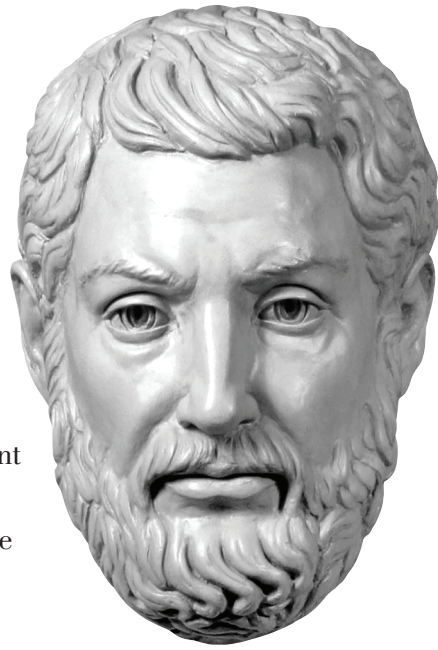
The most important reformer of Athens was himself a member of a powerful aristocratic clan. His name was Cleisthenes. His reforms in 508 BCE reduced the power of the aristocrats and gave a much greater role to ordinary citizens. He rearranged small districts, called *demes*, to weaken the control of powerful families over the people of each locality. And he gave all free male citizens a major say in choosing officials, passing laws, and debating issues.

As this democratic system developed, the most important body was the Assembly. It met in a public space out in the open. Citizens learned to speak their minds and take pride in their freedom and independence. Many top leadership positions were filled by lot. Usually, those who held those jobs served only for a year. This prevented any man from becoming too powerful over time.

Each deme contributed fifty members to the Council who prepared topics and laws for the Assembly to debate and decide. Sizable juries of hundreds of citizens judged cases before the courts. Athens gave ordinary citizens several kinds of public authority.

But these rights did not extend to everyone. Women, for example, could not vote or hold office. In fact, they took very little part in public life. Foreigners in Greek city-states usually had no political rights. Slavery was also a part of life in ancient Greece, as it was in every early civilization. Prisoners of war from all over the Mediterranean were enslaved and put to work in households, mines, and shops. These slaves enjoyed none of the rights of male Athenian citizens.

These are the flaws that people in our own times criticize most. However, few questioned these things at the time. In almost all societies then, women and slaves had few or no political rights. At the time, critics of Athenian democracy said it gave political rights to too many citizens, not too few. The objections of these critics are included in this lesson's primary sources, along with others who defended Athenian democracy. These sources should help you discuss and debate the lesson's central question—How democratic was Athenian democracy?



Modern bust of Cleisthenes

Image Sources: Philipp Foltz, *Pericles' Funeral Oration*, 1852, painting.
Chigi vase, 7th century BCE.
Bust of Cleisthenes, 2012, The Ohio Statehouse.



History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

Democracy in Ancient Athens

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A disciplinary compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Some Athenians were critical of their democracy. What were they most critical of, and why did these aspects of the system bother them the most?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.5, 1.8, and 1.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Today, people look back at ancient Athens and note its failure to include large groups of people in its democratic system. Slaves, women, and foreign residents were all excluded from the political process in Athens. In the centuries since, most societies have outlawed slavery. Almost no one defends it as an institution. Most societies have given women equal rights in political life. So it is natural for people now to notice how lacking Athenian democracy was in those ways.

However, is this the fair way to judge Athenian democracy? It depends on whether you are judging ancient Athenians against modern society or other ancient societies. After all, no society really gave women full rights back then. Few gave them any rights at all. Many societies had slavery. Almost no one spoke out against it on moral grounds. Instead, critics at the time said Athens gave political rights to too many citizens, not too few. In Athens, large masses of citizens could speak, vote, and directly decide matters. Critics of Athenian democracy at the time worried about the excitable passion of large crowds. They felt the masses were easily swayed by speakers appealing to strong emotions. They also worried about the lack of expertise of most magistrates who could only serve for one year.

Does it make sense to judge Athens from our point of view today? Or should we judge it from the point of view of its supporters and its critics in its own day?

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 1.5

Primary Source 1.8

Primary Source 1.9

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Some Athenians were critical of their democracy. What were they most critical of, and why did these aspects of the system bother them the most?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



Civics Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

Democracy in Ancient Athens

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

In what ways does Athenian democracy seem most like and most unlike our own constitutional system?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 1.4, 1.6, and 1.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Democratic Athens was ruled by elected magistrates, large citizen-juries, and an Assembly of citizens. That Assembly met at the Pnyx, a hill out in the open. It met forty times a year or more. As many as six thousand citizens may at times have attended. They listened to proposals, heard speeches, and voted on matters put before them. A Council of 500 citizens prepared the Assembly's agenda. Each member of that Council was selected by lot to serve one year only. Most elected magistrates also served for just one year. Juries were selected by lot as well, with hundreds of citizens on each jury. In these ways, Athens is an extreme example of *direct democracy*. That is, it was a system in which people directly decided matters; they did not rely on elected representatives to do this.

In a direct democracy, a majority of citizens make all decisions. This raises the question of what happens to the minority of citizens who may disagree. Are there any protections for them or for their rights, or can the majority do whatever it wants to them? This concern for the minority's rights was central to those who framed the U.S. Constitution. It is a key reason they were not in favor of a pure, direct democracy.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 1.4

Primary Source 1.6

Primary Source 1.10

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

In what ways does Athenian democracy seem most like and most unlike
our own constitutional system?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.

**Economics Group**

GROUP MEMBERS:

Democracy in Ancient Athens

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Do economic conditions in ancient Athens help explain why the Athenians adopted a democratic system of government? Why or why not?

3. Read and discuss Secondary Sources 1.1 and 1.2, and Primary Source 1.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Most citizens of Athens and its surrounding lands in Attica made their living by farming. Grains such as wheat and barley were used to make bread, the main food in the Greek diet. Grapes were used to make wine. Yet Greece's rocky lands made farming difficult. Unlike ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia, ancient Greece did not have enough fertile land to support large numbers of people. From the start, trading and seafaring skills were key to this society's wealth and power. The Greeks traded pottery, wine, woolen cloth, tools, weapons, and other goods for timber, metals, and other resources.

The population of Attica was never more than about 400,000. Many economic tasks were undertaken by slaves. These were often captives of war. Resident aliens from outside of Attica also had no citizen rights. Like the slaves, they were not strongly loyal to Athens. Yet Athens often had to mobilize all its manpower to fight wars. It was surrounded by other, often hostile Greek city-states and powerful kingdoms outside of Greece.

The emphasis on trade in Athens meant it needed many sailors to man its merchant and war vessels. To survive, it had to depend on highly motivated citizens to work together to support what was always a small city-state in a dangerous world.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 1.1

Secondary Source 1.2

Primary Source 1.9

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Do economic conditions in ancient Athens help explain why the Athenians adopted a democratic system of government? Why or why not?

State your group's claim here:

-
-
7. From the remaining seven sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

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8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



Geography Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

Democracy in Ancient Athens

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the democratic system of ancient Athens. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

How does the geography of ancient Athens and its surroundings help explain why a democratic system developed in that city-state?

3. Read and discuss Secondary Sources 1.1 and 1.2, and Primary Source 1.3.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The first great civilizations grew up in fertile valleys along rivers. Egypt emerged on the Nile. Early Mesopotamian cultures arose along the Tigris and Euphrates. The Indus civilization grew up along the river of that name. Ancient China appeared along the Huang He. These rivers provided the well-watered, fertile soil that such civilizations needed. Greece was different. Mountains divide mainland Greece into many separate regions. Its rocky hills and narrow valleys mainly lead to the coast. Greeks were forced to turn to trade with the islands of the Aegean Sea and to other cultures farther away.

At first, Attica had enough fertile land to support its people. Wealthy aristocrats owned large estates, but there was still land enough for many small farmers. However, as Attica's population grew, more and more poor farmers crowded onto smaller plots on the scarce land available. Resentment of the rich led to social conflict and political upheavals. One solution was to set up colonies elsewhere in the Aegean Sea, other parts

of the Mediterranean region, and far up into the Black Sea. This growing trading empire helped Athens keep people at home employed and well off. Democracy may have provided another safety valve. That is, it helped to keep a restless and growing population satisfied with the way their city-state was treating them.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the background information above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 1.1

Secondary Source 1.2

Primary Source 1.3

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can support with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

How does the geography of ancient Athens and its surroundings help explain why a democratic system developed in that city-state?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group’s discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group’s presentation.

How to Analyze a Primary Source

For this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differ from ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from those of our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special historical thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

◆ *Question the source.*

No primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, so you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective, and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

◆ *Consider the source's origins.*

This is often simply called “sourcing.” It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source’s purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator’s point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

◆ *Contextualize the source.*

“Context” here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be understood best in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide which context is most important.

◆ *Corroborate the source.*

This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source agree with or support those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with your source?

◆ *Above all, read the source carefully.*

Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source’s creator might have seen in it.

SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

I.I

Athens and Its Empire

When historians speak of ancient Athens as a city-state, they usually mean Athens itself and all of Attica. Attica is the triangular peninsula shown on this map jutting into the Aegean Sea. The free male inhabitants of Attica made up the citizens of the city-state of Athens. At the height of its power in the fifth century BCE, Athens also controlled a large empire of colonies scattered all around the Aegean. For a time, the wealth of these colonies helped to make Athens the richest and most powerful city-state of ancient Greece.



Original Document Source: Once in a Blue Moon, Map of the Delian League ("Athenian Empire") in 431 BCE, 2009, CC BY-SA 2.5 via Wikimedia Commons.

SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

1.2

The Greek Landscape

Many early civilizations grew up in fertile valleys along large rivers. Ancient Greece was different. Mountains divide mainland Greece into many separate regions. Its rocky hills and narrow valleys all seem to lead to the coast. To trade, Greeks were forced to look outward to the sea. This photo shows the ruins of an ancient Greek village in Attica called Rhamnous. It is located on the coast, looking across to the island of Euboea.



Original Document Source: Nefasdicere, *View of the Site of Rhamnous*, 2007, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

I.3

Hoplites and Triremes

The Greek city-states were often at war with one another. At first, warfare was carried on mainly by wealthy nobles rich enough to own horses. But over time, Greeks learned to fight in organized formations of foot soldiers called *hoplites*. The vase here shows a hoplite formation of men with javelins and spears. Moderately wealthy men could afford the sword, shield, and helmet needed for such fighting. Even the poor could join Greek naval forces as rowers in Greece's famous triremes.



Original Document Sources: Detail from the Chigi-vase, 7th century BCE, public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

From 431 to 404 BCE, Athens and its allies fought Sparta and its allies in the Peloponnesian War. After the first year of the war, the Athenians held a customary funeral for all those killed. The great Athenian politician and general Pericles spoke at the ceremony. His funeral oration is perhaps the most famous statement of Athenian democratic and patriotic ideas. The Greek historian Thucydides lived during this conflict and wrote a history about it. He reproduced Pericles's funeral oration based on what he knew about Pericles and the speech, not on an exact record of it.

Original Document

Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighboring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favors the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbor for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace. . . .

We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians . . . instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Our constitution does not copy anyone else's. Others copy ours. Athens' constitution favors the many instead of the few. That is why it is called a democracy. Our laws grant equal justice to all in their private differences. If a man has no social standing or status, he can still advance in public life based on his reputation and his merit. Nor does poverty bar him. If he can serve the state, he is not hindered. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, we do not interfere with each other. We do not get angry at anyone for doing what he likes, nor do we even look down on him at all. But all this tolerance for private behavior does not make us lawless as citizens. We do use fear to ensure this. That is, we are taught to obey the magistrates and the laws. This is especially so with laws to protect the injured or wronged. It is so when these laws are actually on the statute book, and it is so when they are part of an unwritten code that we cannot break without disgrace.

We are culturally refined but not extravagant or frivolous. We use our wealth, but do not show it off. We see no disgrace in admitting to being poor, but we do see a disgrace in refusing to struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to. And even if our ordinary citizens must deal mainly with their own business concerns, they are still fair judges of public matters. Unlike other nations, we view a man who takes no part in civic activity not merely as unambitious but as useless. We Athenians do not look on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action. Instead, we think it is necessary before taking any wise action at all.

Plato was an Athenian citizen who grew up during the Peloponnesian War and the troubled times that followed. He was probably a student of the philosopher Socrates. Socrates was seen as a severe critic of Athenian society. In 399, he was tried and executed for having "corrupted the youth of Athens." This unjust execution may have affected Plato's own attitudes toward Athenian democracy.

Original Document

In such a state of society the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors; young and old are all alike; and the young man is on a level with the old, and is ready to compete with him in word or deed; and old men condescend to the young and are full of pleasantry and gaiety; they are loth to be thought morose and authoritative, and therefore they adopt the manners of the young. . . . And above all, I said, and as the result of all, see how sensitive the citizens become; they chafe impatiently at the least touch of authority and at length, as you know, they cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten; they will have no one over them. . . . The excess of liberty, whether in States or individuals, seems only to pass into excess of slavery. . . . And so tyranny naturally arises out of democracy, and the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery out of the most extreme form of liberty?

Adapted Version

In a democracy, the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors. Young and old are treated as alike. The young man is on the same level as the old man. He feels he has a right to compete with him in word or deed. The old men lower themselves by treating the young with nothing but pleasantry and gaiety. They do not want to be seen as morose and authoritative, so they adopt the manners of the young. Above all, see how sensitive the citizens become. They resent impatiently the least touch of authority. At length, as you know, they cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten. They will have no one in authority over them. The excess of liberty, whether in states or individuals, seems only to pass into the excess of slavery. And so tyranny naturally arises out of democracy. And the most extreme form of tyranny and slavery arises out of the most extreme form of liberty.

All male citizens could vote in the Assembly. However, the Council controlled what topics would be discussed. In a crisis, the tasks of Council and Assembly had to be performed smoothly and rapidly. This passage is from the famous Greek leader and orator Demosthenes. In 339 BCE, Macedonia had conquered the nearby city of Elatia. This directly threatened Athens. Demosthenes describes what happened when news of this threat came to Athens.

Original Document

Evening had already fallen when a messenger arrived bringing to the presiding councillors the news that Elatea had been taken. They were sitting at supper, but they instantly rose from table, cleared the booths in the marketplace of their occupants, and unfolded the hurdles, while others summoned the commanders and ordered the attendance of the trumpeter. The commotion spread through the whole city. At daybreak on the morrow the presidents summoned the Council to the Council House, and the citizens flocked to the place of assembly. Before the Council could introduce the business and prepare the agenda, the whole body of citizens had taken their places on the hill.

The Council arrived, the presiding Councilors formally reported the intelligence they had received, and the courier was introduced.

Adapted Version

The messenger arrived at evening to tell the Councilors that Elateia had been taken. They were at supper. Yet they instantly went out to close the booths in the marketplace and set up hurdles to shut it down. Others summoned the commanders and the trumpeter. The commotion spread through the whole city. At daybreak on the next day, the presiding Councilors summoned the entire Council to the Council House. The citizens flocked to the place of assembly. Before the Council could introduce the business and prepare the agenda, the whole body of citizens had taken their places on the hill.

The Council arrived. The presiding Councilors formally reported what they had learned. The messenger was then introduced.

SECONDARY SOURCE ►

I.7

Where the Assembly Met

The meetings of the Athenian Assembly were open to all male citizens. At times, as many as 6,000 or more would gather for its regular meetings. The Assembly met in the Pnyx, an open space below the Acropolis. The Pnyx is shown in the foreground in this somewhat idealized painting of what the Acropolis might have looked like.



Original Document Source: Leo von Klenze, *The Acropolis at Athens*, 1846, oil on canvas, 40½ × 58.1" (102.8 × 147.7 cm), Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany, <https://www.pinakothek.de/kunst/leo-von-klenze/ideale-ansicht-der-akropolis-und-des-areopag-athen>.

A writer usually referred to as "the Old Oligarch" was a critic of Athenian democracy. This is a passage from a treatise he wrote in the late fifth or early fourth centuries BCE. In the past, the Old Oligarch was wrongly identified as Xenophon by Professor Fred Fling in the book from which this passage is taken.

Original Document

As for the constitution of the Athenians, their choice of this type of constitution I do not approve, for in choosing thus they choose that thieves should fare better than the elite. This then is why I do not approve. First of all, then, I shall say that at Athens the poor and the commons seem justly to have the advantage over the well-born and the wealthy; for it is the poor which mans the fleet and has brought the state her power, and the steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the shipwrights—these have brought the state her power much rather than the hoplites and the best-born and the elite. This being so, it seems right that all should have a share in offices filled by lot or by election, and that any citizen who wishes should be allowed to speak. Then, in those offices which bring security to the whole people if they are in the hands of good citizens, but, if not, ruin, the poor desires to have no share. They do not think that they ought to have a share through the lot in the supreme commands or in the cavalry commands, for the poor realize that they reap greater benefit by not having these offices in their own hands, but by allowing men of standing to hold them. All those offices, however, whose end is pay and family benefits the poor do seek to hold. . . .

In every land the elite are opposed to democracy. Among the elite there is very little license and injustice, very great discrimination as to what is worthy, while among the poor there is very great ignorance, disorderliness, and thievery; for poverty tends to lead them to what is disgraceful as does lack of education and the ignorance which befall some men as a result of poverty.

Adapted Version

I do not approve of the constitution the Athenians have chosen. For in choosing it, they choose that thieves should do better than the elite, or the best of society. First of all, I say that the poor and the commoners of Athens do seem to deserve their advantage over the well-born and the wealthy. For it is the poor that man the fleet and bring the state her power. The steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the shipwrights have all brought the state her power. They have done so more than the hoplites and the best-born and the

CONTINUED

elite. This being so, it seems right that all should share in offices filled by lot or by election, and that any citizen who wishes to speak should be allowed to. However, the poor do not want offices that bring security to everyone as long as they are in the hands of good citizens. They don't want to share through the lottery in the supreme commands or in the cavalry commands. For the poor realize that they are much better off if they do not have those offices in their own hands. They realize they are better off by allowing men of standing to hold them. However, the poor do seek all those offices that provide pay and family benefits.

In every land, the elite is opposed to democracy. Among the elite there is very little loose behavior and injustice. There is great care to define and promote what is worthy. Among the poor, on the other hand, there is ignorance, disorderliness, and thievery. For poverty tends to lead people to what is disgraceful, just as does lack of education and the ignorance which befall some men as a result of poverty.

Democracy in Athens was for its free male citizens. It was not for foreigners living in Athens. Nor was it for the large number of slaves there. Slavery was an accepted form of dependent labor in ancient Greece as in almost all other major ancient civilizations. Few even spoke much about it at all. One who did write about it briefly was the philosopher Aristotle.

Original Document

Hence we see what is the nature and office of a slave; he who is by nature not his own but another's man, is by nature a slave; and he may be said to be another's man who, being a human being, is also a possession. And a possession may be defined as an instrument of action, separable from the possessor. But is there any one thus intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature? There is no difficulty in answering this question, on grounds both of reason and of fact. For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule. . . . Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind. . . . It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right. There is a slave or slavery by law as well as by nature. The law of which I speak is a sort of convention—the law by which whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors. But this right many jurists impeach, as they would an orator who brought forward an unconstitutional measure: they detest the notion that, because one man has the power of doing violence and is superior in brute strength, another shall be his slave and subject. Even among philosophers there is a difference of opinion.

Original Document Source: Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1855), 4–9.

Late in the fourth century BCE, King Philip II of Macedon threatened Athens. Macedon was a growing power located just north of Greece. Philip defeated Athens and several other Greek states in the battle of Chaeronea (338 BCE). He promised not to harm Athenian democracy. However, many Athenians feared that some among them might seek Philip's aid and put an end to their democracy. In 336 BCE, therefore, the Athenians passed this law to prevent anyone from imposing a tyranny on them.

Original Document

Be it resolved by the Nomothetai [lawgivers]: If anyone rise up against the People with a view to tyranny or join in establishing the tyranny or overthrow the People of the Athenians or the democracy in Athens, whoever kills him who does any of these things shall be blameless. It shall not be permitted for anyone of the councilors of the Council of the Areopagus—if the Demos [the People] or the democracy in Athens has been overthrown—to go up into the Areopagus or sit in the Council or deliberate about anything. If anyone, the Demos or the democracy in Athens having been overthrown, of the councilors of the Areopagus does go up into the Areopagus or sits in the Council or deliberates about anything, both he and his progeny shall be deprived of civil rights and his substance shall be confiscated and one tenth given to the Goddess. The secretary of the Council shall inscribe this law on two steles of stone and set one of them by the entrance into the Areopagus . . . and the other in the Assembly. For the inscribing of the steles the treasurer of the People shall give 20 drachmas from the moneys expendable by the People according to decrees.

Adapted Version

The lawgivers have decided this: Anyone who tries to overthrow the Athenian people and impose a tyranny can be killed. Whoever kills him shall be blameless. If the people or the democracy is overthrown, no councilor of the Council of the Areopagus may go into the Areopagus. None may sit in the Council or deliberate about anything. If anyone does this after the democracy has been overthrown, both he and his family shall lose their civil rights. Their property shall be taken from them and one tenth given to the religious institutions. The secretary of the Council shall inscribe this law on two stone slabs. One is to be set by the entrance into the Areopagus. The other shall be set in the Assembly. The treasurer shall give 20 drachmas of the people's money to pay for the inscribing of these steles.

Communicating Results and Taking Action

Communicating Results

- ◆ Working in a group, use library resources and the internet to learn more about the specific buildings and other sites at the Agora, the Pnyx, and the Acropolis in ancient Athens. Diagrams and maps of these are not hard to find. Your group should create a map including the parts of each of these places that seem most important to the democracy of ancient Athens. Prepare a five-minute presentation of your group's map.
- ◆ In a small group, prepare a role-playing debate among Pericles, Plato, and the "Old Oligarch." As a starting point in planning this debate, discuss Primary Sources 1.4, 1.5, and 1.8. Read more on each of these three Athenians. Role-play your debate in front of the class. Other students will write newspaper reports on the debate summarizing it in detail for other Athenian citizens. Each of these newspaper reports should use portions of the three primary sources mentioned here.
- ◆ Read and discuss Aristotle's comments on slavery in Primary Source 1.9. Based on this source, write two detailed letters. The first letter should be to Aristotle expressing your own views about what Aristotle says in Primary Source 1.9. It should include specific references to ideas in at least two other sources for this lesson. Then write a letter from Aristotle responding to the first letter as you imagine Aristotle himself would have done.

Taking Action

- ◆ As a class, attend a session of your town, village, or city's elected council or other governing body. Take careful notes on what was discussed. Also try to assess how much like or unlike Athenian democracy the meeting seemed to be. Summarize your views in letters to the editor of a local newspaper or other nearby news source.
- ◆ Based on the work in the previous assignment, use social media to share your letters and any responses to them received from the newspaper or its readers.

Democracy in Ancient Athens Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
Focus	Tries to respond to task instructions but lacks clear focus on a central idea or thesis	Addresses the task instructions adequately but focus on a central idea or thesis is uneven	Responds to the task instructions appropriately and convincingly; has a consistent focus on a central idea or thesis	Responds to all task instructions convincingly; has a clear and strong focus on a well-developed central idea or thesis
Research	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a way that is relevant to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources well but does not always connect these clearly to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources accurately and usually connects these to the task instructions and a central idea	Refers to relevant sources accurately and in great detail and connects these clearly to the task instructions and a central idea
Development/Use of Evidence	Uses some details and evidence from sources but does not make clear the relevance to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources generally but not always in support of a clear focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources in a way that effectively supports a focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources along with clear explanations demonstrating deep understanding of the task purpose or instructions
Content	Refers to disciplinary content without clearly understanding it or while using it in an irrelevant or inaccurate manner	Refers to disciplinary content with some understanding but not always with a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Accurately uses disciplinary content and demonstrates a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Uses disciplinary content effectively and explains thoroughly and in depth its relation to the overall task
Conventions	Demonstrates only limited control of standard English conventions, with many errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions, with limited errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates adequate command of standard English conventions, with few errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions, with few errors and a use of language appropriate to the audience and the purpose of the task

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Model of a Greek trireme. Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany.
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