

Experiments in Early Greek Government

Monarchy: *Rule by the king*

This form of government usually developed from strong warriors who could be relied upon to defend the city-state or area. Sparta had a hereditary monarchy, but there was often friction between the two kings over succession. They were commanders of the army and had some judicial powers. However, there were no palaces. Macedonia had a hereditary monarchy from 650 BCE. The kings were military commanders.

Aristocracy/Oligarchy: *Rule by the top or of the few*

Power was held by a minority of wealthy people, called nobles, who held large amounts of land. Although citizens could be a part of an oligarchy, they did not have full political rights. Political power was given to a council. They lost much power after the 8th century BCE. If it were overthrown, it was usually replaced by a tyranny.

Tyranny: *Rule by a dictator who takes power by force*

This was a form of monarchical government in which wealthy and ambitious leaders seized power unconstitutionally. These rulers often were patrons of the arts and of the festivals. From the 5th century BCE, this type of rule suggested terror and bad government. The rulers were usually replaced by oligarchies.

Direct Democracy: *Rule by the people*

The pure idea of one person, one vote – this system was created in Athens by Solon. Every full citizen (only males, though) could be a juror, could vote in the Assembly, and could be elected to any state office. Politicians were known as orators and generals. People in the Assembly made the decisions, which were carried out by magistrates and the council.

Scenario: A dispute between two neighbors in Ancient Greece

Gregorios, a wealthy landowner, is trying to claim the land of his poorer neighbor, Pavlos. Pavlos says Gregorios just wants to increase the size of his already large estate. Pavlos says he needs the land since his expenses have increased.

Fill in the chart on the next page based on this scenario and the above forms of government.

Forms of Government – Scenario Application

	Who has the power to make a decision about the scenario?	What is the basis of that power?	Which side of the dispute are they likely to be on, and why?
Monarchy			
Aristocracy/ Oligarchy			
Tyranny			
Direct Democracy			

