

Ellie's Ancient Greek Great Debate

Learning objective: To analyse the legacy of Ancient Greece and compare the characteristics of Athenian democracy with modern systems of governance.

Ellie the Elephant is researching the foundations of democracy. Below is a list of features found in Ancient Athens and modern Britain. Sort the following items into two categories: 'Ancient Athenian Democracy' and 'Modern British Democracy'. Once sorted, use your historical knowledge to justify why some systems changed over time.

Word bank: Direct democracy · Representative democracy · Universal suffrage · Only male citizens vote · Secret ballot · Public debate in the Assembly · Member of Parliament · Council of 500

1. Categorise the items from the word bank into the correct system of government. Explain why 'Universal suffrage' is a feature of modern Britain but was not present in Ancient Athens. (3 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the role of a citizen in Athens with a citizen in the UK today. How does the concept of 'voice' differ in these two societies? (3 marks)

3. Justify why the Athenian system of 'Direct democracy' might be difficult to implement in a large, modern nation like the United Kingdom. (3 marks)

4. What might happen if the UK returned to a system where only a small, specific group of people were allowed to vote on new laws? (2 marks)

5. Identify one legacy of Ancient Greek culture (e.g., architecture, theatre, or the Olympics) and explain how it still influences our lives in the UK today. (2 marks)

6. If Ellie were holding a debate in the Assembly, what is one law she might propose to improve the lives of the citizens? Provide a reason for your choice. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of an Ancient Greek 'Agora' (marketplace). Include a group of citizens debating under a colonnade and add architectural details like Doric columns, which you have learned about in your studies.

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a reporter living in 5th Century BC Athens. Write a short, persuasive speech (150 words) that you would deliver to the Assembly, arguing for a new public building project to be funded by the city treasury. Consider the cost in drachmae and the benefit to the community.