

# Sparta

Much less evidence survives about Sparta but we do know that it was a **military state**. Sparta was surrounded by mountains which protected it from invaders. Sparta developed into a city-state very unlike others. Especially, her great rival was Athens.

**Sparta** was the only city state which had a **full time army**. The Spartan men were well known for being brave and fierce, and they spent their whole lives training and fighting.

Spartans lived in harsh conditions, without luxuries, to make them tough fighters.

Physical training and fitness was considered to be an important part of a **Spartan child's education**. Girls did not fight in wars but they took part in physical activities because Spartans believed fit and strong women would have healthy babies that would be good soldiers. Boys went to live at an army barracks at the age of 7.

## Government

Sparta had its own system of government which was very different from the other city states. **Rule was shared between two kings, the Gerousia and the Assembly**. The changes which took place were traditionally referred to Lykourgos. He was a figure of shadowy identity, not only to us, but to the Greeks as well. To some he was a man, to others a god.

*I do not know whether to speak of you s a man or a god, but rather, lykourgos, I think you are a god. (Plutarch)*

Most citizens Spartans were either **Perioeci** (citizens who paid taxes, served in the army and were protected by Spartan laws) or **Helots** (people from lands conquered and ruled by Sparta who had no rights).

Spartan citizens were given land which was farmed for them by the Helots. The Helots were treated as **serfs (slaves)** and had to give half their crops to their Spartan master. The helots were treated badly. They were beaten if they did not work hard enough and killed if they protested.

## **1. Explain the following forms of government**

**Monarchy**

**Democracy**

**Oligarchy**

## **2. Which of these forms would best fit to Sparta?**

## **3. Who was Lykourgos?**

**4. Explain the system of government in Sparta.**

**5. What was the difference between Perioeci and Helots?**

**6. What was the most important for Sparta?**

**7. Why were seven-year old boys taken to live in an army camp?**

**8. Why were newborn babies who looked sick or ill left on mountains to die?**

**9. Why did children in Sparta belong to the city and not to their parents?**

**10. Spartan life. Imagine that you are a traveller who has just visited Sparta. Complete the following grid what you admire about their life and what make you shock.**

<b>I admire</b>	<b>Make me shock</b>

**11. What does the adjective Spartan stand for?**