

The population of Athens
Reading, Writing
Democracy in Athens: participation for everyone?

In the 5th century BC, Athens became a very wealthy city. Many people from other parts of Greece emigrated to the Athenian territory. These people were called *Metics*. Immigrants were allowed to settle in Athens, but they were not granted full citizens' rights. Other members of the population who had no citizens' rights included women, children, and, of course slaves, who by law belonged to another person as their property.

Look at this table about the population of Athens and its territories around 430 BC.

Population in total	310,000
Citizens entitled to vote	40,000
Citizens' wives and children	120,000
<i>Metics</i>	50,000
Slaves	100,000

1 Complete the text with the correct information.

Around 430 BC, the number of citizens and their families was almost equal to the number of 1 _____ and 2 _____. Political and legal decisions were taken by male citizens over 18, which meant that 3 _____ people had the right to rule over 4 _____ people who had no right to vote. Everyday work in Athens was done by the 5 _____ slaves, and by the 6 _____ metics. Meanwhile, the rich Athenian citizens could afford to spend part of their time involved in politics.

2 Change the dictionary definition to make it true for the democracy in ancient Athens.

Democracy: a system of government in which all men and women over 18 can vote and share in making decisions.

Democracy in ancient Athens: a system of government in which _____ could vote and share in making decisions.

The population of Athens

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Aims

- To learn about population structure in ancient society.
- To learn that a major part of the population was excluded from democratic processes.

Language Focus

Past tense, large numbers

Skills focus

Reading, writing

Preparation

Photocopy one worksheet for each student.

Time

15 minutes

Procedure

Read the introductory paragraph with the whole class.

- 1 Ask students to complete the text individually or in pairs. Go through the answers, checking that students are able to say the large numbers correctly and where the commas go in written large numbers: i.e. forty thousand, two hundred and seventy thousand, one hundred thousand, fifty thousand.

Answer key

1 immigrants 2 slaves 3 40,000 4 270,000 5 100,000 6 50,000

- 2 Discuss and complete the definition in class. Ask students about the number of people in their family and the number of family members who would have been allowed to vote in ancient Athens. Add this up for the class.

Answer key

Democracy in ancient Athens: a system of government in which male citizens over 18 could vote and share in making decisions.