**Athens Overview**

The Greeks believed that each city-state in ancient Greece had a [**god or a goddess**](http://greece.mrdonn.org/greekgods/index.html) in charge of it, their special patron. For Athens, the patron was [**Athena, goddess of wisdom**](http://greece.mrdonn.org/greekgods/athena.html).Perhaps because Athena was their patron, Athenians put a great deal of emphasis on education.

Athenians thought of themselves as the shining star of the Greek city-states. They were famed for their literature, poetry, drama, theatre, schools, buildings, and government.

Girls learned at home from their mothers. They learned how to run a home, and how to be good wives and mothers.

Boys were educated quite differently. Until age 6 or 7, boys were taught at home by their mothers. From 7-14, boys attended a day school outside the home. There, they memorized Homeric poetry and learned to play the lyre. They learned drama, public speaking, reading, writing, math, and perhaps even how to play the flute. After middle school, they went to a four year high school and learned more about math, science, and government. At 18, they attended two years of military school. There was just cause for Athens to be proud of its system of education for its citizens.

Each city-state chose its own form of government. Most Greek city-states were ruled by kings. In Athens, citizens (the men) met each week to discuss problems. They worked on solutions.  The men of Athens experimented with government. For about 100 years, Athens was a [**direct democracy**](http://greece.mrdonn.org/athensdemocracy.html)!