

Chapter 1 : Socrates: The Good Life

The sophists were itinerant professional teachers and intellectuals who frequented Athens and other Greek cities in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. In return for a fee, the sophists offered young wealthy Greek men an education in aretē (virtue or excellence), thereby attaining wealth.

Lecture 8 Greek Thought: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle The political and social upheaval caused by the Persian Wars as well as continued strife between Athens and Sparta see Lecture 7 had at least one unintended consequence. In the 5th century, a flood of new ideas poured into Athens. In general, these new ideas came as a result of an influx of Ionian thinkers into the Attic peninsula. Athens had become the intellectual and artistic center of the Greek world. Furthermore, by the mid-5th century, it had become more common for advanced thinkers to reject traditional explanations of the world of nature. As a result of the experience of a century of war, religious beliefs declined. Gods and goddesses were no longer held in the same regard as they had been a century earlier. I suppose we could generalize and say that the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars taught that the actions of men and women determine their own destiny, and not "Moirai. The Greeks used their creative energies to explain experience by recourse to history, tragedy, comedy, art and architecture. But their creative energies were also used to "invent" philosophy, defined as "the love of wisdom. Over time, Greek thinkers began to suspect that there was a rational or logical order to the universe. Miletus was a prominent trading depot and its people had direct contact with the ideas of the Near East. What was so revolutionary about Thales was that he omitted the gods from his account of the origins of nature. It is also necessary to point out that Thales committed none of his views to writing. Anaximander of Miletus c. According to Anaximander, the cold and wet condensed to form the earth while the hot and dry formed the moon, sun and stars. The heat from the fire in the skies dried the earth and shrank the seas. Thales and Anaximander were "matter" philosophers -- they believed that everything had its origin in a material substance. Pythagoras of Samos c. The Pythagoreans, who lived in Greek cities in southern Italy, discovered that the intervals in the musical scale could be expressed mathematically and that this principle could be extended to the universe. In other words, the universe contained an inherent mathematical order. What we witness in the Pythagoreans is the emphasis on form rather than matter, and here we move from sense perception to the logic of mathematics. Parmenides of Elea c. What Parmenides did was to apply logic to the arguments of the Pythagoreans, thus setting the groundwork of formal logic. He argued that reality is one, eternal and unchanging. We "know" reality not by the senses, which are capable of deception, but through the human mind, not through experience, but through reason. As we shall see, this concept shall become central to the philosophic thought of Plato. Perhaps the most important of all the Pre-Socratic philosophers was Heraclitus of Ephesus fl. Known as "the weeping philosopher" because of his pessimistic view of human nature and "the dark one" because of the mystical obscurity of his thought, Heraclitus wrote *On Nature*, fragments of which we still possess. Whereas the Pythagoreans had emphasized harmony, Heraclitus suggested that life was maintained by a tension of opposites, fighting a continuous battle in which neither side could win a final victory. Movement and the flux of change were unceasing for individuals, but the structure of the cosmos constant. This law of individual flux within a permanent universal framework was guaranteed by the Logos, an intelligent governing principle materially embodied as fire, and identified with soul or life. Fire is the primordial element out of which all else has arisen -- change becoming is the first principle of the universe. Cratylus, a follower of Heraclitus, once made the remark that "You cannot step twice into the same river. The logical conclusion of this is the opposite of flux, that is, a belief in an absolute, unchanging reality of which the world of change and movement is only a quasi-existing phantom, phenomenal, not real. Democritus of Abdera c. His universe consisted of empty space and an infinite number of atoms a-tomos, the "uncuttable". Eternal and indivisible, these atoms moved in the void of space. An atomic theory to the core, Democritus saw all matter constructed of atoms which accounted for all change in the natural world. What the Pre-Socratic thinkers from Thales to Democritus had done was nothing less than amazing -- they had given to nature a rational and non-mythical foundation. This new approach allowed a critical analysis of theories, whereas mythical explanations relied on blind faith alone.

Such a spirit even found its way into medicine, where the Greek physician Hippocrates of Cos c. Physicians observed ill patients, classified symptoms and then made predictions about the course of a disease. For instance, of epilepsy, he wrote: The Sophists were men whose responsibility it was to train and educate the sons of Athenian citizens. There were no formal school as we know them today. The Sophists taught the skills sophia of rhetoric and oratory. Both of these arts were essential for the education of the Athenian citizenry. After all, it was the sons of the citizens who would eventually find themselves debating important issues in the Assembly and the Council of Five Hundred. Rhetoric can be described as the art of composition, while oratory was the art of public speaking. The Sophists abandoned science, philosophy, mathematics and ethics. What they taught was the subtle art of persuasion. In other words, what mattered was persuasion and not truth. The Sophists were also relativists. They believed that there was no such thing as a universal or absolute truth, valid at all times. According to Protagoras c. Nothing is good or bad since everything depends on the individual. Gorgias of Leontini c. And if he could, he could not describe it and if he could describe it, no one would understand him. The Sophistic movement of the fifth century B. He does not treat them as real seekers after truth but as men whose only concern was making money and teaching their students success in argument by whatever means. Aristotle said that a Sophist was "one who made money by sham wisdom. They wanted the freedom to sweep away old conventions as a way of finding a better understanding of the universe, the gods and man. The Sophists have been compared with the philosophes of the 18th century Enlightenment who also used criticism and reason to wipe out anything they deemed was contrary to human reason. Regardless of what we think of the Sophists as a group or individually, they certainly did have the cumulative effect of further degrading a mythical understanding of the universe and of man. What we do know is that his father was Sophroniscus, a stone cutter, and his mother, Phaenarete, was a midwife. Sophroniscus was a close friend of the son of Aristides the Just c. In his youth he fought as a hoplite at Potidaea , Delium and Amphipolis during the Peloponnesian Wars. To be sure, his later absorption in philosophy made him neglect his private affairs and he eventually fell to a level of comparative poverty. He was perhaps more in love with the study of philosophy than with his family -- that his wife Xanthippe was shrew is a later tale. Just the same, his entire life was subordinated to "the supreme art of philosophy. The true champion of justice, if he intends to survive even for a short time, must necessarily confine himself to private life and leave politics alone. What we can be sure about Socrates was that he was remarkable for living the life he preached. Taking no fees, Socrates started and dominated an argument wherever the young and intelligent would listen, and people asked his advice on matters of practical conduct and educational problems. Socrates was not an attractive man -- he was snub-nosed, prematurely bald, and overweight. But, he was strong in body and the intellectual master of every one with whom he came into contact. The Athenian youth flocked to his side as he walked the paths of the agora. They clung to his every word and gesture. He was not a Sophist himself, but a philosopher, a lover of wisdom. His most famous student, Plato, tells us, that he was charged "as an evil-doer and curious person, searching into things under the earth and above the heavens; and making the worse appear the better cause, and teaching all this to others. Oddly enough, the jury offered Socrates the chance to pay a small fine for his impiety. He also rejected the pleas of Plato and other students who had a boat waiting for him at Piraeus that would take him to freedom. But Socrates refused to break the law. What kind of citizen would he be if he refused to accept the judgment of the jury? No citizen at all. He spent his last days with his friends before he drank the fatal dose of hemlock. Although Socrates was neither a heretic nor an agnostic, there was prejudice against him. He also managed to provoke hostility. For instance, the Delphic oracle is said to have told Chaerephon that no man was wiser than Socrates. During his trial Socrates had the audacity to use this as a justification of his examination of the conduct of all Athenians, claiming that in exposing their falsehoods, he had proved the god right -- he at least knew that he knew nothing. Socrates has been described as a gadfly -- a first-class pain. He did not reveal answers. He did not reveal truth. Many of his questions were, on the surface, quite simple: But what Socrates discovered, and what he taught his students to discover, was that most people could not answer these fundamental questions to his satisfaction, yet all of them claimed to be courageous, virtuous and dutiful. So, what Socrates knew, was that he knew nothing, upon this sole fact lay the source of his wisdom. And there is a difference between the two. Plato Socrates wrote nothing himself.

Sophist: Sophist, any of certain Greek lecturers, writers, and teachers in the 5th and 4th centuries bce, most of whom traveled about the Greek-speaking world giving instruction in a wide range of subjects in return for fees.

Man is the measure of all things There is relative truth only Everyone has his won truth Gorgias 2. If something does exist we can not know it 3. Might is right and accident and not fate nor the gods nor destiny makes might Thrasymachus: Might makes right The Sophists challenged and criticized and destroyed the foundations of traditions and the moral and social order and they put nothing in its place nor did they care to. While Socrates looked for objective and eternal truths the Sophists were promoting ideas of relativism and subjectivism, wherein each person decides for him or herself what the true and the good and the beautiful are. This appealed to the mob, the crowds, the unthinking horde but it is not an approach that serves as the foundation for a common life. Conflicts are resolved through the use of power. The Sophist held that might makes right. Socrates attempted another approach and in part due to the Sophists lost his life in his quest. Plato would be inspired by Socrates to take up the challenge and find answers to the questions that were most basic and most in need of answering in the quest after wisdom and the GOOD. Socrates could debate with Sophists and do quite well. Socrates was skilled in the art of reasoning. In his exchanges with the Sophists Socrates developed his ability to think using a dialectical process. This methodology would be not only an important part of his legacy to Plato but to Western thought as well. There were other influences on both Socrates and Plato. The sophists were criticized mercilessly by Socrates. These wandering teachers were the successors of the rhapsodes. Recently discovered fragments from the fifth and fourth centuries B. When material from more than one source was put together, interpreters were needed to translate anachronistic expressions and foreign words. Some of the earliest prose consists of their efforts to explain the meaning of traditional names and phrases in the old theogonies. Glosses, along with explanations of Homeric proper names and obscure words by "etymology," were developed, collected and transmitted by the rhapsodes. They also taught techniques of oral presentation and public speaking in addition to the use of an "art of memory," which was said to have been invented by Simonides. The early sophists wandered all over the Greek-speaking world. Later, they converged on Athens, the leading democratic city-state, where they could establish themselves as professional educators and gather their best students around them. For instance, at Protagoras a, there begins an extended passage in which the sophist explains a lyric poem by Simonides so as to rationalize some of its contradictions. The Sophist offers a number of different definitions and classifies sophists themselves as "deceptive image makers. This method, later called "dialectic," grew out of the observation that "thoughts" and certain "parts of speech," do not call up images in the same way as material things Quintilian Institutio Oratoria XI. The technique involved dividing the material to be remembered into manageable "lengths" which were then organized into a schematic "in which the more general or inclusive aspects of the subject came first, descending thence through a series of dichotomized classifications" to subdivisions containing more specialized, or individual aspects In contrast to the method which impressed material on memory by envisaging vivid and emotionally charged "images," the method of memorizing by "dividing and composing" stressed the use of cool analytic thought processes in the continuous rehearsal and recitation of the abstract order of the "divisions. There were those who wondered at the universe itself. They questioned its composition and origins. It is to these naturalists or physicalists, these metaphysicians that we next turn. In the next section we shall learn about the group of thinkers who are collectively known as, the Pre-Socratics.

Chapter 3 : Sophist - Wikipedia

The Sophists challenged and criticized and destroyed the foundations of traditions and the moral and social order and they put nothing in its place nor did they care to. While Socrates looked for objective and eternal truths the Sophists were promoting ideas of relativism and subjectivism, wherein each person decides for him or herself what the.

Since Homer at least, these terms had a wide range of application, extending from practical know-how and prudence in public affairs to poetic ability and theoretical knowledge. Notably, the term sophia could be used to describe disingenuous cleverness long before the rise of the sophistic movement. Theognis, for example, writing in the sixth century B. In the fifth century B. The Clouds depicts the tribulations of Strepsiades, an elderly Athenian citizen with significant debts. Deciding that the best way to discharge his debts is to defeat his creditors in court, he attends The Thinkery, an institute of higher education headed up by the sophist Socrates. When he fails to learn the art of speaking in The Thinkery, Strepsiades persuades his initially reluctant son, Pheidippides, to accompany him. Here they encounter two associates of Socrates, the Stronger and the Weaker Arguments, who represent lives of justice and self-discipline and injustice and self-indulgence respectively. On the basis of a popular vote, the Weaker Argument prevails and leads Pheidippides into The Thinkery for an education in how to make the weaker argument defeat the stronger. Strepsiades later revisits The Thinkery and finds that Socrates has turned his son into a pale and useless intellectual. In the first instance, it demonstrates that the distinction between Socrates and his sophistic counterparts was far from clear to their contemporaries. Although Socrates did not charge fees and frequently asserted that all he knew was that he was ignorant of most matters, his association with the sophists reflects both the indeterminacy of the term sophist and the difficulty, at least for the everyday Athenian citizen, of distinguishing his methods from theirs. Thirdly, the attribution to the sophists of intellectual deviousness and moral dubiousness predates Plato and Aristotle. He is depicted by Plato as suggesting that sophists are the ruin of all those who come into contact with them and as advocating their expulsion from the city Meno, 91cc. Hippocrates is so eager to meet Protagoras that he wakes Socrates in the early hours of the morning, yet later concedes that he himself would be ashamed to be known as a sophist by his fellow citizens. Plato depicts Protagoras as well aware of the hostility and resentment engendered by his profession Protagoras, c-e. It is not surprising, Protagoras suggests, that foreigners who profess to be wise and persuade the wealthy youth of powerful cities to forsake their family and friends and consort with them would arouse suspicion. Indeed, Protagoras claims that the sophistic art is an ancient one, but that sophists of old, including poets such as Homer, Hesiod and Simonides, prophets, seers and even physical trainers, deliberately did not adopt the name for fear of persecution. Protagoras says that while he has adopted a strategy of openly professing to be a sophist, he has taken other precautions “perhaps including his association with the Athenian general Pericles” in order to secure his safety. The low standing of the sophists in Athenian public opinion does not stem from a single source. No doubt suspicion of intellectuals among the many was a factor. New money and democratic decision-making, however, also constituted a threat to the conservative Athenian aristocratic establishment. In the context of Athenian political life of the late fifth century B. The development of democracy made mastery of the spoken word not only a precondition of political success but also indispensable as a form of self-defence in the event that one was subject to a lawsuit. The sophists accordingly answered a growing need among the young and ambitious. This is a long-standing ideal, but one best realised in democratic Athens through rhetoric. Rhetoric was thus the core of the sophistic education Protagoras, e , even if most sophists professed to teach a broader range of subjects. Suspicion towards the sophists was also informed by their departure from the aristocratic model of education paideia. Since Homeric Greece, paideia had been the preoccupation of the ruling nobles and was based around a set of moral precepts befitting an aristocratic warrior class. The sophists were thus a threat to the status quo because they made an indiscriminate promise “assuming capacity to pay fees” to provide the young and ambitious with the power to prevail in public life. This is only a starting point, however, and the broad and significant intellectual achievement of the sophists, which we will consider in the following two sections, has led some to ask whether it is possible or desirable to attribute them with a unique method or

outlook that would serve as a unifying characteristic while also differentiating them from philosophers. Scholarship in the nineteenth century and beyond has often fastened on method as a way of differentiating Socrates from the sophists. For Henry Sidgwick, for example, whereas Socrates employed a question-and-answer method in search of the truth, the sophists gave long epideictic or display speeches for the purposes of persuasion. It seems difficult to maintain a clear methodical differentiation on this basis, given that Gorgias and Protagoras both claimed proficiency in short speeches and that Socrates engages in long eloquent speeches – many in mythical form – throughout the Platonic dialogues. It is moreover simply misleading to say that the sophists were in all cases unconcerned with truth, as to assert the relativity of truth is itself to make a truth claim. Kerferd has proposed a more nuanced set of methodological criteria to differentiate Socrates from the sophists. According to Kerferd, the sophists employed eristic and antilogical methods of argument, whereas Socrates disdained the former and saw the latter as a necessary but incomplete step on the way towards dialectic. Plato uses the term eristic to denote the practice – it is not strictly speaking a method – of seeking victory in argument without regard for the truth. Antilogic is the method of proceeding from a given argument, usually that offered by an opponent, towards the establishment of a contrary or contradictory argument in such a way that the opponent must either abandon his first position or accept both positions. This method of argumentation was employed by most of the sophists, and examples are found in the works of Protagoras and Antiphon. As Nehamas has argued, while the elenchus is distinguishable from eristic because of its concern with the truth, it is harder to differentiate from antilogic because its success is always dependent upon the capacity of interlocutors to defend themselves against refutation in a particular case. More recent attempts to explain what differentiates philosophy from sophistry have accordingly tended to focus on a difference in moral purpose or in terms of choices for different ways of life, as Aristotle elegantly puts it *Metaphysics IV, 2, b* Section 4 will return to the question of whether this is the best way to think about the distinction between philosophy and sophistry. Before this, however, it is useful to sketch the biographies and interests of the most prominent sophists and also consider some common themes in their thought.

Protagoras of Abdera c. Despite his animus towards the sophists, Plato depicts Protagoras as quite a sympathetic and dignified figure. Pericles, who was the most influential statesman in Athens for more than 30 years, including the first two years of the Peloponnesian War, seems to have held a high regard for philosophers and sophists, and Protagoras in particular, entrusting him with the role of drafting laws for the Athenian foundation city of Thurii in B. The first topic will be discussed in section 3b. This seems to express a form of religious agnosticism not completely foreign to educated Athenian opinion. Despite this, according to tradition, Protagoras was convicted of impiety towards the end of his life. As a consequence, so the story goes, his books were burnt and he drowned at sea while departing Athens. Apart from his works *Truth* and *On the Gods*, which deal with his relativistic account of truth and agnosticism respectively, Diogenes Laertius says that Protagoras wrote the following books: *Gorgias* Gorgias of Leontini c. The major focus of Gorgias was rhetoric and given the importance of persuasive speaking to the sophistic education, and his acceptance of fees, it is appropriate to consider him alongside other famous sophists for present purposes. Gorgias visited Athens in B. He travelled extensively around Greece, earning large sums of money by giving lessons in rhetoric and epideictic speeches. Gorgias is also credited with other orations and encomia and a technical treatise on rhetoric titled *At the Right Moment in Time*.

Antiphon The biographical details surrounding Antiphon the sophist c. However, since the publication of fragments from his *On Truth* in the early twentieth century he has been regarded as a major representative of the sophistic movement. *On Truth*, which features a range of positions and counterpositions on the relationship between nature and convention see section 3a below, is sometimes considered an important text in the history of political thought because of its alleged advocacy of egalitarianism: Those born of illustrious fathers we respect and honour, whereas those who come from an undistinguished house we neither respect nor honour. In this we behave like barbarians towards one another. For by nature we all equally, both barbarians and Greeks, have an entirely similar origin: Whether this statement should be taken as expressing the actual views of Antiphon, or rather as part of an antilogical presentation of opposing views on justice remains an open question, as does whether such a position rules out the identification of Antiphon the sophist with the oligarchical Antiphon of Rhamnus.

Hippias The exact dates for Hippias of Elis are unknown, but scholars generally assume that he lived during the same period as Protagoras. Hippias is best known for his polymathy DK 86A His areas of expertise seem to have included astronomy, grammar, history, mathematics, music, poetry, prose, rhetoric, painting and sculpture. Like Gorgias and Prodicus, he served as an ambassador for his home city. His work as a historian, which included compiling lists of Olympic victors, was invaluable to Thucydides and subsequent historians as it allowed for a more precise dating of past events. In mathematics he is attributed with the discovery of a curve – the quadratrix – used to trisect an angle. It is hard to make much sense of this alleged doctrine on the basis of available evidence. As suggested above, Plato depicts Hippias as philosophically shallow and unable to keep up with Socrates in dialectical discussion. Prodicus Prodicus of Ceos, who lived during roughly the same period as Protagoras and Hippias, is best known for his subtle distinctions between the meanings of words. He is thought to have written a treatise titled *On the Correctness of Names*. Prodicus spoke up next: There is a distinction here. We ought to listen impartially but not divide our attention equally: More should go to the wiser speaker and less to the more unlearned –! In this way our meeting would take a most attractive turn, for you, the speakers, would then most surely earn the respect, rather than the praise, of those listening to you. For respect is guilelessly inherent in the souls of listeners, but praise is all too often merely a deceitful verbal expression. Socrates, although perhaps with some degree of irony, was fond of calling himself a pupil of Prodicus Protagoras, a; *Meno*, 96d. Thrasymachus Thrasymachus was a well-known rhetorician in Athens in the latter part of the fifth century B. He is depicted as brash and aggressive, with views on the nature of justice that will be examined in section 3a. Major Themes of Sophistic Thought a. Nature and Convention The distinction between *physis* nature and *nomos* custom, law, convention was a central theme in Greek thought in the second half of the fifth century B. Before turning to sophistic considerations of these concepts and the distinction between them, it is worth sketching the meaning of the Greek terms. Some of the Ionian thinkers now referred to as presocratics, including Thales and Heraclitus, used the term *physis* for reality as a whole, or at least its underlying material constituents, referring to the investigation of nature in this context as *historia* inquiry rather than philosophy. The term *nomos* refers to a wide range of normative concepts extending from customs and conventions to positive law. Nonetheless, increased travel, as exemplified by the histories of Herodotus, led to a greater understanding of the wide array of customs, conventions and laws among communities in the ancient world. This recognition sets up the possibility of a dichotomy between what is unchanging and according to nature and what is merely a product of arbitrary human convention. The dichotomy between *physis* and *nomos* seems to have been something of a commonplace of sophistic thought and was appealed to by Protagoras and Hippias among others. Antiphon applies the distinction to notions of justice and injustice, arguing that the majority of things which are considered just according to *nomos* are in direct conflict with nature and hence not truly or naturally just DK 87 A His account of the relation between *physis* and *nomos* nonetheless owes a debt to sophistic thought. Callicles argues that conventional justice is a kind of slave morality imposed by the many to constrain the desires of the superior few. What is just according to nature, by contrast, is seen by observing animals in nature and relations between political communities where it can be seen that the strong prevail over the weak. Callicles himself takes this argument in the direction of a vulgar sensual hedonism motivated by the desire to have more than others *pleonexia*, but sensual hedonism as such does not seem to be a necessary consequence of his account of natural justice. Like Callicles, Thrasymachus accuses Socrates of deliberate deception in his arguments, particularly in the claim the art of justice consists in a ruler looking after their subjects. Justice in conventional terms is simply a naive concern for the advantage of another. Our condition improved when Zeus bestowed us with shame and justice; these enabled us to develop the skill of politics and hence civilized communal relations and virtue. Protagoras measure thesis is as follows:

Chapter 4 : Lecture 8: Greek Thought: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle

Socrates and the Sophists (Plato's Dialogues) In chapter 4, *The Sophist: Protagoras*, Soccio does an excellent job discussing a group of teachers and thinkers known collectively as sophists, and the social environment in which they flourished for a time.

A huge subject broken down into manageable chunks Random Quote of the Day: It is the name often given to the so-called Seven Sages of 7th and 6th Century B. Greece see below , but also to many other early Greek philosophers who were more concerned with Man himself and how he should behave than with big questions about the Universe. Rather than a well-defined school or movement, however, it is more of a loose grouping of like-minded individuals. The term "sophism" comes from the Greek "sophos" or "sophia" meaning "wise" or "wisdom" , and originally referred to any expertise in a specific domain of knowledge or craft. After a period where it mainly referred to poets, the word came to describe general wisdom and, especially, wisdom about human affairs. Over time, it came to denote a class of itinerant intellectuals who taught courses in "excellence" or "virtue", often charging high fees for it , who speculated about the nature of language and culture, and who employed rhetoric to achieve their purposes which was generally to persuade or convince others. Sophists held relativistic views on cognition and knowledge that there is no absolute truth, or that two points of view can be acceptable at the same time , skeptical views on truth and morality, and their philosophy often contained criticisms of religion, law and ethics. Many Sophists were just as religious as most of their contemporaries, but some held atheistic or agnostic views. Typical Sophist quotations include "Man is the measure of all things" Protagoras and "Justice is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger" Thrasymachus, c. Sophists had considerable influence in their time, and were largely well-regarded. They were generally itinerant teachers who accepted fees in return for instruction in oratory and rhetoric, and they emphasized the practical application of rhetoric toward civic and political life. Their cultural and psychological contributions played an important role in the growth of democracy in Athens, not least through their rhetorical teaching, their adoption of Relativism and their liberal and pluralistic acceptance of other viewpoints. The early Sophists claimed that they could find the answers to all questions, which, along with their practice of taking fees and their questioning of the existence and roles of traditional deities, led to popular resentment against Sophist practitioners, ideas and writings. Some writers have included Socrates as a Sophist, although he was scrupulous in accepting no fees and making no claims of superior wisdom, and his most illustrious student, Plato , depicts Socrates as refuting the Sophists in several of his "Dialogues". It is Plato who is largely responsible for the modern view of the Sophist as a greedy and power-seeking instructor who uses rhetorical sleight-of-hand and ambiguities of language in order to deceive, or to support fallacious reasoning. Plato was especially dismissive of Gorgias , one of the most famous and successful of the early Sophists. Sophism was thought capable of perverting the truth because it emphasized practical rhetoric rather than virtue, and taught students to argue any side of an issue. In most cases, our knowledge of Sophist thought comes down to us from fragmentary quotations that lack context, many of these from Aristotle , who, like his teacher Plato , held the Sophists in slight regard. Owing largely to the influence of Plato and Aristotle , philosophy came to be regarded as distinct from Sophism, which gradually became synonymous with the practical discipline of rhetoric, so that, by the time of the Roman Empire, a Sophist was simply a teacher of rhetoric or a popular public speaker. Indeed, for a time, Sophists started to suffer persecution, threats and even assassination. In its largely derogatory modern usage, "sophism" or "sophistry" has come to mean a confusing or illogical argument used to deceive someone, or merely philosophy or argument for its own sake, empty of real content or value. The Seven Sages of ancient Greece were seven wise men philosophers, statesmen and law-givers: Thales of Miletus , famous for his maxim "To bring surety brings ruin". Solon of Athens c. Chilon of Sparta 6th Century B. Pittacus of Mytilene c. Bias of Priene 6th Century B. Cleobulus of Lindos died c. Periander of Corinth 7th Century B. Other well-known Sophists include Protagoras , Gorgias , Prodicus c.

Chapter 5 : The Sophists (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Sophism, academia and Greek economics The sophists and fee-based education The sophists and competition Plato downplays the market Aristotle and the economics of moderation Plato, the Academy and virtue Aristotle's Lyceum and the endowment model Virtue or sophism in Greek education Conclusion 3.

Protagoras A key figure in the emergence of this new type of sophist was Protagoras of Abdera, a subject city of the Athenian empire on the north coast of the Aegean. Abdera was also the birthplace of Democritus, whom some later sources represented as the teacher of Protagoras. In all probability Democritus was the younger of the two by about thirty years, and the only solid evidence of intellectual relations between them is a statement by Plutarch Against Colotes. Can we form any conception of the means by which this ambitious project of education in self-improvement and good citizenship was to be put into effect? Relevantly to this, he is reported as a pioneer of some aspects of linguistic theory, and of its application to literary criticism. He wrote on correctness in language orthoepeia, Plato, Phaedrus c: So Protagoras taught argumentative strategies, but we have comparatively little evidence of what these actually were. According to Diogenes Laertius IX. The technique of adversarial argument clearly has some connection with two specific claims for which Protagoras was famous or notorious. According to Diogenes Laertius he was the first to maintain that on any matter there are two theses, statements or perhaps arguments *logoi* opposed to one another IX. While relativism, particularly in the area of morality, is popularly seen as characteristic of sophists generally see Bett , in fact Protagoras is the only sophist to whom ancient sources ascribe relativistic views, and even in his case the evidence is ambiguous. On that interpretation, the way things seem to an individual is the way they are in fact for that individual. First illustrated by Socrates, who quotes this sentence, as a claim concerning sensory appearances, e. If the wind feels cold to me, and I consequently believe that it is cold, there is no objective fact of the matter by reference to which that belief can be false; but if I believe that infanticide is wrong, whereas infanticide is sanctioned by the laws and customs of the state of which I am a citizen, then my belief is straightforwardly false, though of course it would come to be true if the state of which I am a citizen changed its laws and customs so as to condemn infanticide. Within a single Platonic dialogue, then, Protagoras is represented as maintaining both universal subjectivism and limited social relativism, though those two versions of relativism are mutually inconsistent. And there is a further twist. In the very passage of the Theaetetus where, according to Socrates, Protagoras maintains the social relativity of moral judgments *bâ€”c* , he gives a pragmatic justification of the role of the expert, both in the individual and in the social context. In the individual case, while no appearance is truer than any other, some appearances are better than others, and it is the role of the expert for instance, the doctor to produce better appearances instead of worse as those appearances are then judged even by the patient ; while in the case of cities, some judgments of what is just etc. He adds *c7â€”d1* that the sophist improves those whom he educates in the same way, implying that not merely collective judgments but also individual judgments about what? This account of the role of the expert may imply that there are matters of fact of what is better and worse independent of the judgement of those whom the expert persuades. The evidence of the Theaetetus on Protagorean relativism is therefore ambiguous, since in that dialogue he is represented as maintaining a universal subjectivism, b social relativism in morality and c objective realism on questions of advantage. The evidence of Aristotle and Democritus transmitted by Sextus indicates that he did in fact maintain a , but leaves it open whether the attribution to him of b and c is historically accurate, thereby indicating inconsistency on his part, or is due to misinterpretation, deliberate or inadvertent, on the part of Plato. The portrayal in the Protagoras shows little trace of relativism, either individual or social; instead he maintains that the essential social virtues are justice and self-restraint, and that without universal inculcation of those virtues the survival of society is impossible. These claims are presented as universal truths; there is not the slightest suggestion that in making them Protagoras is merely expressing a preference for these virtues which happens to prevail, e. It is clearly implied by his exposition that no such city could exist. Yet a further epistemological position is attributed to Protagoras in a papyrus fragment of the biblical commentator Didymus the Blind fourth century CE , published in In this he appears neither as a

subjectivist nor as a social relativist, but as a sceptic. On this account there is an objective fact of the matter, which is undiscoverable because different individuals have different appearances of what is the case, whereas given subjectivism there is no fact of the matter over and above the individual appearances which establish how each thing is for the one being appeared to. This might be yet another inconsistency on the part of Protagoras, but if so it is one which has no confirmation from any other source. It is more likely that what the fragment presents is a garbled instance of Protagorean subjectivism. Since the subjectivist thesis is that every belief is true for the person who has it, from the premisses that A believes that I am sitting and B does not believe that I am sitting because B has no belief one way or the other, the correct Protagorean conclusion is not that it is unclear whether I am sitting or not sitting, but that it is true for A that I am sitting and that it is neither true for B that I am sitting nor true for B that I am not sitting. All of this leaves it unclear what we are to make of the assertion that on every matter there are two *logoi* opposed to one another, and the claim to make the weaker *logos* the stronger. The former cannot be understood as the assertion of universal subjectivism, since it is in fact inconsistent with it. Given universal subjectivism, the claim that the wind is cold for me is not opposed to the claim that it is warm for you, since both are relatively true. Nor, for the same reason, can it be understood as an assertion of social relativism: Perhaps we should not try to tie this claim tightly to any general metaphysical position, but interpret it more loosely as the claim that that on a great many matters there are two sides to the question. What this might involve is perhaps indicated by the so-called *Dissoi Logoi* i. This text consists for the most part of a series of short discussions of pairs of standardly opposed moral properties, e. Mostly the arguments for identity depend on the relativity of the application of the property, e. Plainly, there is no inconsistency between the theses of identity and of non-identity, and it is not clear that the reader is supposed to be required to choose one rather than the other. Similarly, the claim to make the weaker *logos* the stronger has nothing to do with relativism, either individual or social. Since, as we have seen, relativized beliefs are not in conflict with one another, arguments in favor of them are not in conflict either, and hence neither the beliefs themselves nor the arguments in favor of them can be weaker or stronger than one another. In any case of this kind, where it is assumed that the facts cannot be established with certainty, considerations of what is plausible may, given sufficient ingenuity, be adduced on either side, and similar arguments can be adduced in the context of political deliberation, where the future outcome cannot be certain and the decision has to turn on the balance of probabilities. It is likely, then, that this slogan was a sales pitch for Protagoras as a teacher of forensic and deliberative rhetoric. How ambitious the claim was is hard to determine. It is hard to believe that he ventured to claim always to make the *prima facie* weaker case carry the day which is equivalent to the claim to make every case whatever carry the day, but equally implausible that he merely claimed to make the weaker case stronger than it was before he devised arguments in its favor. Perhaps he simply claimed that he was capable, in the appropriate circumstances, of devising arguments which would turn the weaker case into the stronger one. Hence, since of contradictory statements one must be false, it is not possible to contradict *ouk estin antilegein* Euthydemus b. In the case of the latter two the thesis connects with other more general theses about language which they are reported to have held. Thus Cratylus has attributed to him by Plato the thesis that each thing has its own proper name, which expresses, through its etymology, the nature of the things it names, and which has significance only when correctly applied, but is otherwise a mere empty sound. Hence there can no such thing as the misapplication of a name since a misapplied name is not a name, but a mere sound, and hence no such thing as a false statement, since it is assumed every false statement involves the misapplication of some name. Similarly Antisthenes held that each thing has its own proper definition or description, which cannot be applied to anything else, from which again the impossibility of falsehood follows. In the case of Protagoras it is hard to find any such connection. Though Protagoras seems to have had a fairly high tolerance threshold for inconsistency, it is hard to see how one and the same person could assert both that it is impossible to contradict and that on every matter there are two opposed *logoi*. The wording of the attribution to Protagoras in the Euthydemus is suspiciously vague, suggesting that Plato is attributing to Socrates a vague memory of Protagorean subjectivism, rather than precise recall of any particular doctrine. The debate was fundamentally about the status of moral and other social norms; were such norms ever in some sense part of or grounded in

the reality of things, or were they in every case mere products of human customs, conventions or beliefs? The question was crucial to the perceived authority of norms; both sides agreed in seeing nature as authoritative for correct human behavior, and as the ultimate source of true value. We find examples of the critical stance both in some Platonic dialogues and in some sophistic writings. The starkest expression of the opposition between *nomos* and *physis* is that expressed in the *Gorgias* by Callicles, a pupil of Gorgias though there is no suggestion in the dialogue or elsewhere that Gorgias himself held that position: Callicles holds that conventional morality is a contrivance devised by the weak and unintelligent to inhibit the strong and intelligent from doing what they are entitled by nature to do, viz. He is thus an inverted moralist, who holds that what it is really right to do is what it is conventionally wrong to do. He agrees with Callicles in praising the ruthless individual above all the tyrant who is capable of overcoming the restraints of morality, but whereas Callicles calls such self-assertion naturally just, Thrasymachus abides by conventional morality in calling it unjust. Both agree that a successful life of ruthless self-assertion is supreme happiness, and that that is what nature prompts us to seek; both, then, accept the normative authority of nature over *nomos*. The difference between them is that Callicles takes the further step of identifying the authority of nature with that of real, as opposed to conventional morality, whereas for Thrasymachus there is only one kind of morality, conventional morality, which has no authority. The conventions which make them treat each other as strangers distort the reality by which they are all alike; hence they should recognise that reality by treating each other as friends and members of the same family, not as strangers. The vignette gains added point from the fact that Hippias, speaking in Athens, is a citizen of Elis, a Peloponnesian state allied to Sparta in the war against Athens. Nature prompts us to do only what is advantageous to us, and if we try to act contrary to its promptings we inevitably suffer for it as a natural consequence, whereas morality typically restrains us from doing what is advantageous to ourselves and requires us to do what is disadvantageous, and if we violate the requirements of morality we come to harm only if we are found out. Legal remedies are insufficient to prevent the law-abiding person from harm, since they are applicable only after the harm has been done, and there is always the chance that the law-abiding person will lose his case anyway. Another part of the papyrus fragment B suggests that some legal norms are self-contradictory; it is just to bear true witness in court, and unjust to wrong someone who has not wronged you. So someone who bears true witness against someone who has not wronged him e. The argument here depends on an illicit assimilation of harming with wronging: Moreover, he thereby puts himself in danger of retaliation by the person whom he has wronged; so once again obedience to *nomos* is disadvantageous. Morality, for Protagoras, consists in justice and self-restraint, dispositions which involve the replacement of Thrasymachean egoism by genuine regard for others as of equal moral status with oneself, and the crucial lesson of the Great Speech is that those dispositions, so far from requiring the stunting of human nature as Glaucon maintains, in fact constitute the perfection of that nature. This defence of the authority of *nomos* rests on the idea that *nomos* itself, in the sense of legal and moral convention, arises from *physis*. There is, then, no uniform sophistic position in the *nomos-physis* debate; different sophists, or associates of sophists, are found among the disputants on either side. Such speculations were not without their implications for the traditional Olympian pantheon; Xenophanes clearly intends to mock the cultural relativity of anthropomorphism, pointing out that different races of humans depict their gods in their own image, and suggesting that if horses and cattle could draw they would do the same DK 21B15â€” On the positive side he proclaims a single supreme non-anthropomorphic divinity, which appears to be identified either with the cosmos itself or with its intelligent directive force DK 21B23â€”6. This type of theology is naturalistic, but non-reductive; Heraclitus is not saying that God is nothing but cosmic fire, implying that that fire is not really divine, but rather that divinity, or the divinities that matter, is not a super-hero like Apollo, but the everlasting, intelligent, self-directing cosmos itself. In the fifth century the naturalistic approach to religion exhibits a more reductive aspect, with a consequent move towards a world-view which is not merely naturalistic, but in the modern sense secular. Some sophists contributed to that process of secularisation. It is convenient to start with Anaxagoras, who, though not generally counted as a sophist, in that he did not offer instruction in how to live or teach rhetoric, nevertheless shared the scientific interests of sophists such as Hippias, and personified the growing rationalistic approach to natural phenomena. Plato, *Apology* 26d, he did mean that it was nothing

other than a rock, i. So, Plutarch reports, the people admired Anaxagoras but admired Lampon even more when Thucydides was ostracized soon afterwards. The naturalistic approach to meteorology etc. Among the phenomena for which reductive explanations were offered in the fifth century was the origin of religious belief itself. An alternative account, or rather two accounts, equally reductive, of the origin of religion is attributed to Prodicus, who is reported by various sources as holding that the names of gods were originally applied either to things which are particularly important in human life, such as the sun, rivers, kinds of crops etc. It was presumably on the basis of this that Prodicus was counted as an atheist in antiquity Aetius I. Of course atheism expressed by a character in a play cannot be directly attributed to the author, whoever he was; this is merely one of the expressions in fifth-century drama of a wide range of attitudes to religion, ranging from outright atheism e. The significance of the Sisyphus fragment is rather as further evidence of the fact that in the late fifth century the rationalistic approach to the natural world, including human nature, provided the intellectual foundation of a range of views hostile to traditional religion, including explicit atheism. From Protagoras himself we have a first-person declaration, not of atheism, but of agnosticism, in what was apparently the opening of his work *On the Gods*: According to some sources the outrage occasioned by this work led to his books being publicly burned and his being forced to flee from Athens to escape prosecution, and he is said by some to have drowned while trying to escape by sea DK 80A1â€”4. It is probable, then, that Protagoras was supportive of traditional religious practice, while the wording of his proclamation of agnosticism does not even offer a direct challenge to conventional belief. He cannot know whether or not the gods exist or what they are like; this presumably though in the light of Protagorean subjectivism the inference is not as secure as it would otherwise be implies that no-one can know these things, but lack of knowledge is no bar to belief, particularly if that belief is socially useful, as Protagoras probably thought it was. Euenus is otherwise known chiefly as a poet though Plato Phaedrus a mentions some contributions to rhetorical theory , and his appearance in this context indicates the continuation into the sophistic era of the older tradition of the poet as moral teacher see above. If Gorgias is included in this context among the teachers of excellence, there is a difficulty in that at Meno 95c Meno, a pupil of Gorgias, says that what he most admires about him is that not only does he never claim to teach excellence, but that he makes fun of those who do. Consistently with that, in the dialogue named after him he begins by claiming that what he has to teach is not any system of values, but a technique of persuasion, which is in itself value-free, but is capable of being employed for whatever purposes, good or bad, are adopted by the person who has mastered it, just as skill in martial arts can be used for good ends or bad â€”c. But in fact the distinction is not so clear, since Gorgias is readily induced to agree that a political orator has to know what is right and wrong, and that he Gorgias will teach his pupil those things if he happens not to know them already â€”c. Perhaps it is assumed that normally the pupil will know in advance what is right and wrong, so Gorgias will not have to teach him that, and can concentrate on the essential skill of persuasion. But the point of learning to persuade will be to gain power over others, and thereby to achieve personal and political success.

Chapter 6 : Sophism - By Movement / School - The Basics of Philosophy

Socrates differed from the Sophists because he believed in looking for the absolute truth in an objective fashion, while the Sophists believed that people should make decisions based on what they felt was "true" inside of themselves.

Sophist, any of certain Greek lecturers, writers, and teachers in the 5th and 4th centuries bce, most of whom traveled about the Greek-speaking world giving instruction in a wide range of subjects in return for fees. History of the name The term sophist Greek sophistes had earlier applications. This would explain the subsequent application of the term to the Seven Wise Men 7th-6th century bce, who typified the highest early practical wisdom, and to pre-Socratic philosophers generally. Plato and Aristotle altered the meaning again, however, when they claimed that professional teachers such as Protagoras were not seeking the truth but only victory in debate and were prepared to use dishonest means to achieve it. Finally, under the Roman Empire the term was applied to professors of rhetoric, to orators, and to prose writers generally, all of whom are sometimes regarded as constituting what is now called the Second Sophistic movement see below The Second Sophistic movement. The 5th-century Sophists The names survive of nearly 30 Sophists properly so called, of whom the most important were Protagoras, Gorgias, Antiphon, Prodicus, and Thrasymachus. Plato protested strongly that Socrates was in no sense a Sophist—he took no fees, and his devotion to the truth was beyond question. But from many points of view he is rightly regarded as a rather special member of the movement. The actual number of Sophists was clearly much larger than 30, and for about 70 years, until c. Thereafter, at least at Athens, they were largely replaced by the new philosophical schools, such as those of Plato and Isocrates. Most of the major Sophists were not Athenians, but they made Athens the centre of their activities, although travelling continuously. The importance of Athens was doubtless due in part to the greater freedom of speech prevailing there, in part to the patronage of wealthy men like Callias, and even to the positive encouragement of Pericles, who was said to have held long discussions with Sophists in his house. Athens was a democracy, and although its limits were such that Thucydides could say it was governed by one man, Pericles, it nonetheless gave opportunities for a successful political career to citizens of the most diverse backgrounds, provided they could impress their audiences sufficiently in the council and the assembly. A Sophistic education was increasingly sought after both by members of the oldest families and by aspiring newcomers without family backing. The changing pattern of Athenian society made merely traditional attitudes in many cases no longer adequate. Criticizing such attitudes and replacing them by rational arguments held special attraction for the young, and it explains the violent distaste which they aroused in traditionalists. Plato thought that much of the Sophistic attack upon traditional values was unfair and unjustified. But even he learned at least one thing from the Sophists—if the older values were to be defended, it must be by reasoned argument, not by appeals to tradition and unreflecting faith. Seen from this point of view, the Sophistic movement performed a valuable function within Athenian democracy in the 5th century bce. It offered an education designed to facilitate and promote success in public life. All of the Sophists appear to have provided a training in rhetoric and in the art of speaking, and the Sophistic movement, responsible for large advances in rhetorical theory, contributed greatly to the development of style in oratory. Naturally the balance and emphasis differed from Sophist to Sophist, and some offered wider curricula than others. But this was an individual matter, and attempts by earlier historians of philosophy to divide the Sophistic movement into periods in which the nature of the instruction was altered are now seen to fail for lack of evidence. The 5th-century Sophists inaugurated a method of higher education that in range and method anticipated the modern humanistic approach inaugurated or revived during the European Renaissance. La Hire, Laurent de: Rhetoric, oil on canvas by Laurent de La Hire, In a private collection Nature of Sophistic thought A question still discussed is whether the Sophists in general had any real regard for truth or whether they taught their pupils that truth was unimportant compared with success in argument. Eristic, for Plato, consists in arguments aimed at victory rather than at truth. Antilogic involves the assignment to any argument of a counterargument that negates it, with the implication that both argument and counterargument are equally true. Antilogic in this sense was especially associated with Protagoras; but Plato, no doubt correctly, attributes its

use to other Sophists as well. He regards the use of antilogic as essentially eristic, whether it be used to silence an opponent by making his position seem self-contradictory, or whether it be used mechanically to negate any proposition put forward in debate. He concludes that the widespread use of antilogic is evidence that Sophists had no real regard for the truth, which must itself be free from antilogic. Plato conversing with his pupils Plato conversing with his pupils, mosaic from Pompeii, 1st century bce; in the National Archaeological Museum, Naples. For example, if a person is tall in relation to one object, he will be short in relation to another object. In so characterizing the phenomenal world, Plato certainly did not wish to be called eristic—he regarded the application of antilogic to the description of the phenomenal world as an essential preliminary to the search for the truth residing in the Platonic forms, which are themselves free from antilogic. Seen in this perspective, the Sophistic use of antilogic must be judged less harshly. To the extent that it was used irresponsibly to secure success in debate it was eristic, and the temptation so to use it must often have arisen. But where it was invoked in the sincere belief that antilogic elements were indeed involved, or where it was used for analyzing a complex situation in order to reveal its complexity, then antilogic was in no way inconsistent with devotion to truth. This raises the question to what extent the Sophists possessed any general view of the world or gave expression to any genuine philosophical views, whether original or derived. Ancient writers, influenced by Plato and Aristotle, seem to have excluded the Sophists, apart from Protagoras, from their schematized accounts of early Greek thinkers. Modern writers have frequently maintained that, whatever else they were, the Sophists were in no sense philosophers. Even those who acknowledge the philosophical interest of certain particular doctrines attributed to individual Sophists often tend to regard these as exceptions and claim that, inasmuch as the Sophists were not a school but only independent teachers and writers, as a class they were not philosophers. Two questions are involved: Among moderns, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was one of the first to reinsert the Sophists into the history of Greek philosophy. He did so within the framework of his own dialectic, in which every thesis invokes its own opposite, or antithesis; thus, he treated the Sophists as representing the antithesis to the thesis of the group of philosophers known collectively as the pre-Socratics. Pre-Socratics such as Thales, Heracleitus, and Parmenides sought the truth about the external world with a bold enthusiasm that produced a series of explanations, each claiming to be correct. None of these explanations of the physical world paid attention to the observer and each was driven to reject more and more of the phenomenal world itself as unreal. Finally, with the Eleatics, a 5th-century school at Elea in Italy that held that reality is a static one, of which Parmenides and Zeno are representatives, little or nothing of the phenomenal world was left as real. This trend in turn produced a growing distrust of the power of human beings to attain knowledge of the ultimate basis of natural phenomena. Philosophy had reached an impasse, and there was a danger of complete skepticism. To Hegel, the Sophists were subjective idealists, holding that reality is only minds and their contents, and so philosophy could move forward by turning its attention to the subjective element in knowing. Whether any of the Sophists actually were subjective idealists may be doubted. The conclusion depends in part on whether Protagoras held that phenomena had subjective existence only, or whether he thought that all things perceived had objective existence but were perceived differently according to the nature of the percipient and their relation to him. It is fairly clear, however, that the Sophists did concentrate very largely upon human beings and human society, upon questions of words in their relations to things, upon issues in the theory of knowledge, and upon the importance of the observer and the subjective element in reality and in the correct understanding of reality. This emphasis helps to explain the philosophical hostility of Plato and Aristotle. Particularly in the eyes of Plato, anyone who looks for the truth in phenomena alone, whether he interprets it subjectively or relativistically, cannot hope to find it there; and his persistence in turning away from the right direction virtually amounts to a rejection of philosophy and of the search for truth. Many a subsequent thinker for whom metaphysics, or the investigation of the deepest nature of reality, was the crowning achievement of philosophy has felt with Plato that the Sophists were so antimetaphysical that they have no claim to rank as philosophers. But since the mid-th century there has been growing appreciation of a number of problems and doctrines recurring in the discussions of the Sophists in the 5th and 4th centuries bce. In the 18th and early 19th centuries the Sophists were considered charlatans. Their intellectual honesty was impugned, and their doctrines were blamed for weakening the moral fibre of Greece.

The charge was based on two contentions, both correct: Much less weight is now attached to these charges. First, many of the attacks on the traditional morality were in the name of a new morality that claimed to be of greater validity. Attacks upon particular doctrines often claimed that accepted views should be abandoned as morally defective. Furthermore, even when socially disfavoured action seemed to be commended, this was frequently done to introduce a principle necessary in any satisfactory moral theory. Finally, there is no evidence that any of the Sophists were personally immoral or that any of their pupils were induced to immoral actions by Sophistic teaching. The serious discussion of moral problems and the theory of morality tends to improve behaviour, not to corrupt it. It has usually been supposed that the writings themselves hardly survived beyond the period of Plato and Aristotle, but this view requires modification in the light of papyrus finds, admittedly few, that were copied from Sophistic writings in the early Common Era. It also has been possible to identify in the works of later writers certain imitations or summaries of 5th-century Sophistic writers, whose names are unknown. This evidence suggests that while most later writers took their accounts of the Sophists from earlier writers, especially from Plato, the original writings did in many cases survive and were consulted.

Particular doctrines As part of his defense of the Sophists against the charge of immoral teachings, the English historian George Grote " maintained that they had nothing in common with each other except their profession, as paid teachers qualifying young men to think, speak, and act with credit to themselves as citizens. This denial of common doctrines cannot be sustained"the evidence is against it. While the Sophists were not a sect, with a set of obligatory beliefs or doctrines, they had a common interest in a whole series of questions to which they sought to apply solutions along certain clearly defined lines. No complete writings survive from any of the Sophists to check the accounts found in Plato, and later writers were often, but not always, dependent upon what they found in Plato. Consequently, almost everything that is said about particular Sophistic doctrines is subject to controversy. Theoretical issues Relativism and skepticism have often been regarded as common features of the Sophistic movement as a whole. But it was early pointed out that only in Protagoras and Gorgias is there any suggestion of a radical skepticism about the possibility of knowledge; and even in their case Sextus Empiricus, in his discussion of skepticism, is probably right when he declares that neither was really a skeptic. Protagoras does seem to have restricted knowledge to sense experience, but he believed emphatically that whatever was perceived by the senses was certainly true. This led him to assert that the tangent does not touch the circle at a point only but along a definite length of the circumference; clearly he was referring to human perception of drawn tangents and circles. Gorgias, who claimed that nothing exists, or if it does exist it cannot be known, or if it exists and is knowable it cannot be communicated to another, has often been accused of denying all reality and all knowledge. Yet he also seems to have appealed in his very discussion of these themes to the certainty of perceived facts about the physical world; e. Others dismiss his whole thesis as a satire or joke against philosophers. Probably neither view is correct. There is evidence that other Sophists e. The Sophists, in fact, were attempting to explain the phenomenal world without appealing to any principles outside phenomena. They believed that this could be done by including the observer within the phenomenal world. Their refusal to go beyond phenomena was, for Plato, the great weakness in their thinking. A second common generalization about the Sophists has been that they represent a revolt against science and the study of the physical world. The evidence is against this, inasmuch as for Hippias, Prodicus, Gorgias, and Protagoras there are records of a definite interest in questions of this kind. One of the most famous doctrines associated with the Sophistic movement was the opposition between nature and custom or convention in morals. It is probable that the antithesis did not originate in Sophistic circles but was rather earlier; but it was clearly very popular and figured largely in Sophistic discussions. The commonest form of the doctrine involved an appeal from conventional laws to supposedly higher laws based on nature. Sometimes these higher laws were invoked to remedy defects in actual laws and to impose more stringent obligations; but usually it was in order to free the individual from restrictions unjustifiably imposed by human laws that the appeal to nature was made. In its extreme form the appeal involved the throwing off of all restraints upon self-interest and the desires of the individual e. On other occasions the terms of the antithesis were reversed and human laws were explicitly acclaimed as superior to the laws of nature and as representing progress achieved by human endeavour. In all cases the laws of nature

were regarded not as generalized descriptions of what actually happens in the natural world and so not like the laws of physics to which no exceptions are possible but rather as norms that people ought to follow but are free to ignore. Thus, the appeal to nature tended to mean an appeal to human nature treated as a source for norms of conduct. See also natural law. To Greeks this appeal was not very novel.

Chapter 7 : Table of contents for Economics, competition and academia

The Greek word sophist's, formed from the noun sophia, 'wisdom' or 'learning', has the general sense 'one who exercises wisdom or learning'. As sophia could designate specific types of expertise as well as general sagacity in the conduct of life and the higher kinds of insight associated with seers and poets, the word originally meant 'sage' or 'expert'.

The Good Life Socrates is generally considered the first major philosopher of Western civilization. Before him there lived about a dozen other Greek thinkers, the so-called Pre-Socratics, who also produced significant work from about BCE on. But little of that work has come down to us. Socrates is the first Western philosopher about who a good deal is known. He was a widely discussed figure among the Greeks of his day, and he has remained an icon of wisdom in the history of Western thought. It is primarily through him that the West has gotten the idea of what philosophy is, and what it may be like to live a philosophical life. Socrates, one might say, gave us a philosophical definition of the good life. Socrates was born in , and he died in His entire life he lived in Athens. Athens emerged from that victory not only as one of the most important commercial centers of the Mediterranean world, but also as the leader of a military alliance that quickly transformed the city into a dominant naval power. By controlling the funds of the alliance, Athens managed to channel a significant portion of the annual contributions of her allies into a lavish building program that turned the city into a place of architectural and cultural splendor. Under the supervision of the famed sculptor Phidias, the Parthenon and other monumental structures were erected on the Acropolis. And around the agora--the market place and civic center of the city--numerous temples, court structures, halls, shrines and statues formed an environment that functioned as the visual and administrative center of a thriving imperial metropolis. Not far from the agora, the Odeon and the Theatre of Dionysus provided spaces for elaborate musical and theatrical productions. Twice a year such playwrights as Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes competed for prizes with splendid performances for thousands of spectators. During official festivities countless visitors from all around the Mediterranean Sea came to admire the wonders of Athenian culture. The Acropolis of Athens During most of the 5th century Athens was a democracy. In addition, most court cases were decided by large juries of ordinary citizens. That made effective public speaking and forensic debating skills highly important for anyone who wanted to succeed in any area of public life. As a consequence numerous teachers of public speaking and forensic debating--known as the sophists--were attracted to Athens from all parts of Greece; the growing wealth of the city could afford handsome fees for their tutorial services. The presence of many sophists in the city was a primary reason for the transformation of Athens into the main center of Greek intellectual life. Sophists did not only educate the sons of the upper classes, they also absorbed and debated the works of Greek--and probably foreign--thinkers among themselves, thus creating an atmosphere of broad-minded intellectual exchange that laid the groundwork for a cosmopolitan civilization. While many smaller cities and outlying regions produced outstanding thinkers and artists, it was primarily in Athens that the various minds would meet and publish their work. Through cross-fertilization and competition within the context of a thriving and powerful metropolis, these minds developed their talents and productions to the high degrees of excellence by which classical Athens established itself as the first major center of Western civilization. Pericles was a powerful speaker and skillful politician. During the public funeral of the first casualties of the Peloponnesian War the popular leader of the city flattered his fellow-citizens by assuring them that they were the best, and that Athens was vastly superior to any other commonwealth in sight. Thus he declared, among other things: Our constitution does not copy the laws of other states: Our laws provide equal justice for all. Success in public life depends on ability and merit, not on social origin and class. I doubt that the rest of the world can produce a type of man that is as versatile, resourceful, and self-reliant as the Athenian. And that this is not just ceremonious bragging, but a plain fact, is proven by the power of the state based on such traits. For Athens alone among all cities is found, when tested, to be greater than her reputation. The war lasted from to Its basic cause was the imperial arrogance with which Athens treated not only her own allies, but also other Greek city states that were not under Athenian control. Some of her allies wanted to

secede from the alliance, for example, because they did not wish to pay for the splendor of the domineering city with their annual contributions for defense. Athens prevented such secessions by military force and economic sanctions, thus reducing many member states to virtual colonies. Athens also added further "allies" to her empire, whether these newcomers assented to such incorporation into the empire or not. In time more and more independent cities became afraid that they, too, would eventually be conquered and annexed. As a precaution they formed their own federation, and they made Sparta with its feared army their military leader. For a time the explicitly anti-democratic city of Sparta became thus, paradoxically, the widely acknowledged champion of Greek liberty. Many Greeks had no desire to engage in a major war. Even in Athens many were weary of such a prospect. Peace negotiations with Sparta took place. But Pericles, bent on making Athens the uncontested leader of the Greek world, repeatedly provoked hostilities and armed conflict. He was not only a competent administrator and general, but also a wily manipulator of public opinion; he knew how to nurture among ordinary citizens the kind of patriotism that assumed that everything Athenian was always better than anything else. A majority of Athenian voters was willing to follow Pericles wherever his ambition would lead them. The empire, after all, provided them with large amounts of tribute money, colonies, land for settlements in overseas regions, and with the emotional satisfaction of dominating the lives of other people. Given their powerful navy and their abundant resources, Athenians had plausible reasons for thinking that they could subdue Sparta and her allies in a short time, and thus crown their past achievements by making themselves the manifest hegemon of Hellas. The war proved to be a disaster not only for Athens, but for most Greeks. It lasted much longer than anyone expected. It decimated the population, caused vicious civil strife, wiped out whole cities, ruined much industry and commerce, brutalized Greek life, and in the long run subjected most of Greece to the power of foreign empires and rulers. The enterprise that Pericles conceived as the ultimate consummation of Athenian and Greek glory turned out to be a protracted exercise in self-destruction. Politically Greece never fully recovered from the events between and . The only Athenian achievement that survived the war intact was Greek intellectual culture. Together with Greek as the international language of educated people it established itself as a dominant life-shaping force in the Mediterranean world for centuries to come. The brilliant achievements of Athenian and Greek culture did little to check the brutalities of armed conflict. Numerous atrocities were committed during the Peloponnesian War. One incident became especially notorious: The incident became well known because the Athenian general and historian Thucydides reported it in his history of the war "in conjunction with the sort of arrogant thinking that Athenian diplomats displayed when they tried to talk the citizens of Melos into an uncontested surrender. Mention of the incident is helpful, as it shows how dark the shadow was that the war cast on the city that had produced the cultural splendor of the "Golden Age. In that year, before also assaulting the much more powerful city of Syracuse in Sicily, Athens demanded that the small island become part of her empire and war effort. The Melians pleaded to be left alone; they had no desire to fight on either side. The Athenians threatened to attack them unless the Melians agreed to their demand. During a last parley the Athenian ambassadors offered the following piece of cynical reasoning: And we ask you on your part not to imagine that you will move us by saying that you, though once a colony of Sparta, have not joined Sparta in the war, or that you have never done us any harm. Instead we suggest that you should try to get what it is actually possible for you to get, taking into consideration what we both really think. For you know just as well as we do that, when these matters are discussed by practical people, the standard of justice depends on the power to coerce, and that the strong do what they have the power to do, and the weak accept what they are forced to accept. The Athenian Assembly then voted to put all Melian men, down to the age of fourteen, to death, and to sell the women and children into slavery to offset the cost of the military operation. After the mass execution the territory of the island was annexed and handed over to Athenian settlers. It was in response to the Melos incident that Euripides wrote the anti-war play *The Women of Troy*, a highly emotional pageant of misery that shows captured women as they are carted off, together with other war booty, as chattel or sex slaves. Euripides, although an ardent patriot at the beginning of the war, eventually became so disgusted with Athens that toward the end of his life he exiled himself from his native city. This, then, the splendor of the "Golden Age" as well as the brutality of the Peloponnesian War, was the social and cultural context within which Socrates lived his life. As will be

seen, Socrates did not identify with the culture of his day. To understand Socrates the philosopher is to understand how much he stood against the very essence of the culture of his age. Socrates was a deliberate outsider among his fellow-Athenians and fellow-Greeks, an intellectual stranger, and his critical distance to the culture and society that surrounded him is a significant part of what defines him as a philosopher. This should become clear by taking a closer look at some of the outstanding traits of his life and thought. Unlike many of his well-to-do and aristocratic friends and disciples, Socrates was of middle-class origin. His father was a stonecutter or sculptor, and his mother a midwife. He may have inherited a modest estate, which allowed him to pursue his true calling--philosophical inquiry. By dedicating his life to the intensive pursuit of wisdom, however, he eventually neglected the economic side of his life to such a degree that he became rather poor. That fact did not bother him personally, but it may have made life less than comfortable for his wife Xanthippe, who had to run their household and raise their three sons. Then as later, people differed with regard to the amount of material goods that are necessary for a good life. Xanthippe may have had her own ideas about the matter, and there may have been marital tensions because of that. Men who want to become expert horsemen will not acquire the most docile horses, but the spirited ones. They believe that if they can handle these they will be able to handle any horse. I take a similar approach. I want to be able to deal with all human beings. I have Xanthippe to deal with. Getting along with her insures me that I will get along with the rest of humankind. Although he never aspired to any elevated rank, he seems to have distinguished himself through courage and endurance under adverse conditions. In he held a minor office in the democratic administration of the city when it was his allotted turn. Otherwise Socrates deliberately stayed out of the politics of the city, the area in which most ambitious Athenians tried to distinguish themselves. The contribution that he wished to make to the life of Athens was of a different kind. The fame or notoriety that he enjoyed among his fellow-citizens was based entirely on his philosophical work. What, then, was this work? Considering that Socrates never wrote any books, what exactly did he do? He regularly went either to the agora, or to one of the gymnasiums outside the city walls, to meet his friends and to discuss certain fundamental questions with them. Often bystanders and chance visitors became involved in the discussions as well.

Chapter 8 : Community Education Fee-Based Classes

A sophist (Greek: ἱσοφιστής, sophistes) was a specific kind of teacher in ancient Greece, in the fifth and fourth centuries www.nxgvision.com sophists specialized in using the tools of philosophy and rhetoric, though other sophists taught subjects such as music, athletics, and mathematics.

For example, a charioteer, a sculptor or a warrior could be described as sophoi in their occupations. Gradually, however, the word also came to denote general wisdom and especially wisdom about human affairs for example, in politics, ethics, or household management. This was the meaning ascribed to the Greek Seven Sages of 7th and 6th century BC like Solon and Thales , and it was the meaning that appeared in the histories of Herodotus. Richard Martin refers to the seven sages as "performers of political poetry". The word "sophist" could also be combined with other Greek words to form compounds. In 5th century BCE[edit] In the second half of the 5th century BCE, particularly at Athens , "sophist" came to denote a class of mostly itinerant intellectuals who taught courses in various subjects, speculated about the nature of language and culture and employed rhetoric to achieve their purposes, generally to persuade or convince others: It was good employment for those who were good at debate, which was the specialty of the first Sophists; they received the fame and fortune they were seeking. Protagoras is generally regarded as the first of these professional sophists. A few sophists claimed that they could find the answers to all questions. Most of these sophists are known today primarily through the writings of their opponents specifically Plato and Aristotle , which makes it difficult to assemble an unbiased view of their practices and beliefs. In some cases, such as Gorgias , there are original rhetorical works that are extant, allowing the author to be judged on his own terms. In most cases, however, knowledge about what individual sophists wrote or said comes from fragmentary quotations that lack context. Sophists could be described both as teachers and philosophers, having traveled about in Greece teaching their students various life skills, particularly rhetoric and public speaking. There were numerous differences among Sophist teachings, and they lectured on subjects that were as diverse as semantics and rhetoric , to ontology , epistemology. Before the fifth century B. He taught his students the necessary skills and knowledge for a successful life, particularly in politics, rather than philosophy. He trained his pupils to argue from both points of view because he believed that truth could not be limited to just one side of the argument. Protagoras wrote about a variety of subjects and some fragments of his work survived. Gorgias authored a lost work known as *On the Non-Existent* , which centers on the argument that nothing exists. In it, he attempts to persuade his readers that thought and existence are different. Plato studied philosophy under the guidance of Socrates. Due to his opposition, he is largely responsible for the modern view of the sophist as a stingy instructor who deceives. He depicts Socrates as refuting some sophists in several Dialogues. Another contemporary, the comic playwright Aristophanes , criticizes the sophists as hairsplitting wordsmiths. Aristophanes made no distinction between sophists and philosophers as Socrates did, and believed both would argue any position for the right fee. In the comedic play *The Clouds* by Aristophanes, Strepsiades seeks the help of Socrates a parody of the actual philosopher in an effort to avoid paying his debts. In most cases, however, knowledge of sophist thought comes from fragmentary quotations that lack context. Many of these quotations come from Aristotle , who seems to have held the sophists in slight regard. Due to the importance of such skills in the litigious social life of Athens, practitioners often commanded very high fees. The attacks of some of their followers against Socrates prompted a vigorous condemnation from his followers, including Plato and Xenophon , as there was a popular view of Socrates as a sophist. For example, the comic playwright Aristophanes criticizes the sophists as hairsplitting wordsmiths, and makes Socrates their representative. In comparison, Socrates accepted no fee, instead professed a self-effacing posture, which he exemplified by Socratic questioning i. His attitude towards the Sophists was by no means oppositional; in one dialogue Socrates even stated that the Sophists were better educators than he was, [10] which he validated by sending one of his students to study under a sophist. Plato described Sophists as paid hunters after the young and wealthy, as merchants of knowledge, as athletes in a contest of words, and purgers of souls. Plato sought to separate the Sophist from the Philosopher. Where a Sophist was a person who makes his living through

deception, a philosopher was a lover of wisdom who sought truth. To give the Philosophers greater credence, the Sophists had to receive a negative connotation. Protagoras was the first sophist, whose theory said "Man is the measure of all things", meaning Man decides for himself what he is going to believe. In this view, the sophist is not concerned with truth and justice, but instead seeks power. Some scholars, such as Ugo Zilioli [15] argue that the sophists held a relativistic view on cognition and knowledge. However, this may involve the Greek word "doxa", which means "culturally shared belief" rather than "individual opinion". Their philosophy contains criticism of religion, law, and ethics. Though many sophists were apparently as religious as their contemporaries, some held atheistic or agnostic views for example, Protagoras and Diagoras of Melos.

Democracy[edit] The first sophists prepared Athenian males for public life in the polis by teaching them how to debate through the art of rhetoric. The art of persuasion was the most important thing to have a successful life in the fifth century Athens social commonplace when rhetoric was in its most important stage. The societal roles the Sophists filled had important ramifications for the Athenian political system at large. The historical context provides evidence for their considerable influence, as Athens became more and more democratic during the period in which the Sophists were most active. Sophists contributed to the new democracy in part by espousing expertise in public deliberation, the foundation of decision-making, which allowed—and perhaps required—a tolerance of the beliefs of others. This liberal attitude would naturally have made its way into the Athenian assembly as Sophists began acquiring increasingly high-powered clients. In addition, Sophists had great impact on the early development of law, as the sophists were the first lawyers in the world. Their status as lawyers was a result of their highly developed skills in argument. The Sophists were notorious for their claims to teach virtue and excellence, and particularly for accepting fees for teaching. The influence of this stance on education in general, and medical education in particular, have been described by Seamus Mac Suibhne.

Influence on Roman education[edit] During the Second Sophistic, the Greek discipline of rhetoric had heavy influence on Roman education. During this time Latin rhetorical studies were banned for the precedent of Greek rhetorical studies. In addition, the Greek history was preferred for the education of the Roman elites above that of their native Roman history. Cicero, a prominent rhetorician during this period in Roman history, is one such example of the influence of the Second Sophistic on Roman Education. His early life coincided with the suppression of Latin rhetoric in Roman education under the edicts of Crassus and Domitius. Cicero was instructed in Greek rhetoric throughout his youth, as well as in other subjects of the Roman rubric under Archias. Cicero benefited in his early education from favorable ties to Crassus. Despite his oratorical skill, Cicero pressed for a more liberal education in Roman instruction which focused more in the broad sciences including Roman history. He entitled this set of sciences as *politior humanitas*.

2. Regardless of his efforts toward this end, Greek history was still preferred by the majority of aristocratic Romans during this time. A sophism is a specious argument for displaying ingenuity in reasoning or for deceiving someone.

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The sophists were the first professionals who claimed themselves as educators. Education means to mold the youth into a certain trait both in character and skills by giving special training. No civilization has ever neglected education, for the human beings want to transmit the value of the existing society to the next generation.