Name: _____

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ANCIENT GREECE
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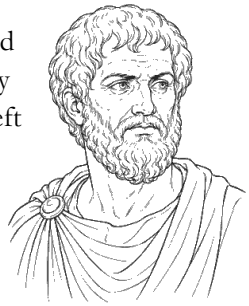
Aristotle

While many people believed that storms, earthquakes, and good harvests reflected the moods of the gods, Aristotle sought natural explanations. He watched birds, studied plants, examined animals, and looked for patterns in nature. Many of his conclusions were wrong, but he argued that nature could be understood through careful observation and logical reasoning rather than myth. That groundbreaking idea helped lay the foundation for scientific thinking and earned him the title "Father of Natural History."

Plato's Student

Aristotle was born in Macedonia, a mountainous kingdom north of the Greek peninsula that many southern Greeks viewed as less sophisticated. But as the son of the king's physician, he grew up in an educated household where reading, medicine, and careful observation were valued. At seventeen, he traveled 200 miles south to Athens to study at Plato's Academy.

Aristotle quickly impressed Plato, who is said to have called him "the mind of the Academy." The young Macedonian remained there for nearly twenty years, first as a student and later as a researcher and lecturer. Shortly after Plato died in 347 BCE, Aristotle left Athens. Over the next few years, he continued his scientific studies by carefully observing marine animals. Those investigations became the earliest systematic work in biology.



Organizing the Natural World

Aristotle didn't just observe nature — he worked to organize it. He grouped animals by shared traits such as movement, habitat, and blood composition. He noticed that dolphins, unlike fish, breathed air and nursed their young, so he classified them with land animals rather than sea creatures — a distinction not fully accepted for nearly two thousand years. His system wasn't always right; he believed some creatures could arise spontaneously from mud or decay. But the method — group, compare, test against evidence — became the basic approach of biology.

Young Alexander

In 343 BCE, King Philip II of Macedon asked Aristotle to return home and tutor his thirteen-year-old son, Alexander. For the next three years, Aristotle educated the future king while encouraging him to observe the natural world. Years later, as he conquered a vast empire, Alexander sent unusual plants and animals back to his former teacher to study and classify.

The Lyceum

After Alexander secured Macedonian control over Greece, Aristotle could safely return to Athens despite local anti-Macedonian sentiment. In 335 BCE, he founded his own school, the Lyceum.

The Lyceum began much like Plato's Academy, but it quickly evolved into one of history's first research centers. Aristotle and his staff collected books, examined animals, compared governments, and organized knowledge into fields of study. Students came from across the Greek world to learn from Aristotle, and the Lyceum soon earned a reputation as one of the ancient world's greatest centers of learning.

Alexander died suddenly in 323 BCE, and anti-Macedonian sentiment swept through Athens. Fearing he would suffer the same fate as Socrates, Aristotle fled to the island of Euboea, where he died the following year at sixty-two.

Legacy

Aristotle wrote nearly 170 books on subjects ranging from biology and astronomy to ethics, politics, logic, and rhetoric. Only forty-seven survive today, but they reveal the remarkable breadth of his intellectual reach. No scholar of the ancient world attempted to explain more of the natural world and human society than Aristotle.

For nearly two thousand years, educated people across Europe and the Middle East treated Aristotle's writings as the final authority on science and philosophy. Even after the telescope, microscope, and careful experiments proved many of his conclusions wrong, scholars continued to admire the way he

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Date: _____

gathered evidence, organized knowledge, and searched for logical explanations. His influence shaped education, science, and philosophy longer than that of almost any other thinker in history.

Fill in the Blanks

Aristotle sought e__p__a__a__i__ns for storms, earthquakes, and harvests that others attributed to the g_____, earning him the title "F__t__er of N__t__r__l History." Born in M__c__d__n__a, son of the king's p__y__i__i__n, he traveled to A__h__ns at age s__v__n__e__n to study at Plato's A__a__e__y, remaining nearly t__e__ty years. Shortly after Plato died in 347 BCE, Aristotle left Athens and studied marine animals, organizing nature by s__a__ed traits. In 343 BCE, King P__i__ip of M__c__d__n asked Aristotle to t__t__r his t__i__t__en-year-old son, A__e__a__d__r, who later sent his former teacher unusual p__a__ts and a__i__a__s from his c__n__u__r__d empire. In 335 BCE, Aristotle founded the L__c__um, one of history's first r__s__a__ch centers. Aristotle left A__h__ns after A__e__a__d__r's death in 323 BCE and died the following year.

Answer in Complete Sentence

*1. Why did many people in Athens consider Aristotle to be an outsider?

2. How did Aristotle organize plants and animals?

3. What made the Lyceum different from Plato's Academy?

4. Why did Aristotle leave Athens after Alexander died?

*5. Why is Aristotle still revered despite is many mistakes?

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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