

ANCIENT GREEK AND ROMAN PHILOSOPHY
A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Centuries BCE

THE POETS		
8th-7th	<p>Homer: <i>Iliad</i>; <i>Odyssey</i>.</p> <p>Hesiod: <i>Theogony</i>; <i>Works & Days</i>.</p> <p>Orpheus and the Orphic tradition</p>	<p>Oral poetry; Greek epic tradition reaching back to the Bronze Age.</p> <p>Human & natural events caused by gods, who are causes (<i>aitia</i>). Hesiod's <i>Theogony</i> relates the birth (<i>gonê</i>) of the gods (<i>theoi</i>).</p>
THE PRE-SOCRATICS		
6th Archaic	<p>The Physicists of Miletus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thales c. 620-c. 546 BCE • Anaximander c. 610-546 • Anaximenes c. ?615-528 	<p>What is the origin or basis (<i>archê</i>) of reality?</p> <p>→ Water. [T. also known for astronomical predictions, geometry]</p> <p>→ The boundless (<i>apeiron</i>).</p> <p>→ Air (changing state between fire, gas, liquid, or solid).</p>
6th-5th	<p>Pythagoras of Samos c. 570-490</p> <p>Heraclitus of Ephesus c. 535-c. 475</p>	<p>→ Universe is Number (<i>arithmos</i>); immortality of <i>psychê</i>; mystery tradition</p> <p>→ Formula (<i>logos</i>); relativity of appearances to the observer; flux of the apparent world, governed by a pattern</p>
	<p>Xenophanes of Colophon c. 570-c. 475</p>	<p>→ Monotheism; demythologization; all is One; two worlds</p>
	<p>Parmenides of Elea c. 510-after c. 450</p> <p>Zeno of Elea c. 490-c. 430</p>	<p>→ The Eleatic challenge: All is one; Two worlds (Way of Truth of Opinion)</p> <p>→ Motion is unreal (Zeno's paradoxes). Disciple of Parmenides.</p>
5th Classical	<p>Empedocles of Acragas c. 495-435</p> <p>Anaxagoras of Clazomenae c. 500-428</p>	<p>→ Four elements combine and separate according to forces (Love, Strife)</p> <p>→ Immortality of <i>psychê</i>; mystery tradition</p> <p>→ Motive Mind (<i>nous</i>); elementary seeds. Lived in Athens; friend of Pericles</p>
	<p>The Athenian Atomists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leucippus earlier 5th century • Democritus c. 460-370 	<p>Atoms and void as solution to the Eleatic challenge</p> <p>→ Pupil of Zeno of Elea?</p> <p>→ Pupil of Leucippus</p>

THE SOPHISTS

5th-4th	The Sophists in Athens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protagoras • Gorgias • Prodicus 	Professional teachers of knowledge or wisdom (<i>sophia</i>), especially the art of <i>persuasion through speech</i> , essential in a direct democracy on the model of ancient Athens. Sometimes perceived as teachers of persuasive <i>lying</i> . Portrayed in Plato's Socratic dialogues.
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SOCRATES AND HIS FOLLOWERS

5th-4th	Socrates Plato and the Old Academy Other "Socratics"	Socratic emphasis on ethics, self-knowledge and universal definition . Introduce the concept of the "philosopher" (lover [<i>philos</i>] of wisdom [<i>sophia</i>]), neither a Milesian natural scientist nor a sophist.
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THE HELLENISTIC SCHOOLS

Mediterranean diffusion following Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE)

4th-1st	Platonists and Sceptics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Platonic Academy • The New Academy 	Plato portrays Socrates in his dialogues, develops metaphysics and maths. → Classic ("old") Academics, from 347 BCE, emphasise Plato's metaphysics. → "New" Academics, from 266 BCE, emphasize "Socratic" skepticism.
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Aristotle and the Lyceum	Plato's most influential pupil. Applies Academic dialectic to create formal logic (term logic), biology. Develops four causes and hylomorphism , analysis of natural beings into matter and form. Taught Alexander the Great.
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Zeno of Citium and the Stoics	Inspired by Socrates. The English term "Stoicism" refers to their discipline of <i>apatheia</i> (to be unaffected by alien passions). They follow Heraclitus in identifying a ruling <i>logos</i> (reason-principle), and deny a rigorous distinction between soul and body. Politically, the world is a cosmopolis, which trumps boundaries of nation, race, creed, and gender. The Stoics develop formal logic in a new direction (propositional logic). Epictetus' <i>Discourses</i> and <i>Handbook</i> are great surviving works of later Roman Stoicism.
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Epicurus and the Epicureans	The Good is enjoyment (<i>hêdonê</i>), grounded in tranquillity; but it is hard to obtain, requiring discipline and schooling. The world is atomic (following Presocratic atomic theory), but the relationships of atoms are governed by the "swerve". Death is non-existence, and therefore not to be feared.
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ROMAN EMPIRE

1st-2nd	<p>Middle Platonists Middle Aristotelians (Peripatetics) Stoics Epicureans Spiritual traditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian (e.g. Origen) • Jewish (e.g. Philo of Alexandria) • Hermetic, Gnostic (e.g. Valentinus) 	<p>An array of intellectual schools flourished in the late Roman Republic and the early Roman Empire, including Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics, Epicureans, and influential religious traditions that drew philosophical vocabulary and ideas from the contemporary philosophical environment. The great Roman republican orator Cicero (106-43 BCE) drew on Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy; Seneca (3 BCE-65 CE), the tutor of the emperor Nero, was a Stoic; Thrasyllus, the court philosopher of the emperor Tiberius (42 BCE-37 CE) published the most influential ancient edition of Plato; and the emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE) wrote one of the great surviving works of ancient Stoicism.</p>
3rd-6th	<p>Neoplatonism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plotinus (204/5-270 CE) • Porphyry (234?-305? CE) • Iamblichus (250-325 CE) • Syrianus (4th-5th century CE) • Proclus (410/2-485 CE) • Simplicius (c. 490-560 CE) 	<p>The major philosophical traditions of the Roman empire began to merge, in the third century, into the single tradition that contemporary scholars refer to as “Neoplatonism” – which drew elements from Aristotle, Stoic authors, contemporary religious traditions, and even Epicureanism, into a single Platonic rubric (representing, from a certain perspective, a reunification into the diverse Academy that flourished during Plato’s lifetime).</p> <p>Neoplatonic authors, beginning with Plotinus, developed a sophisticated and systematic metaphysics, self-consciously drawing together elements from the entire philosophical heritage – the Homeric mythic tradition, the Parmenidean doctrine of unity, the Heraclitan <i>logos</i>, Platonic metaphysics, mathematics and astronomy, Aristotelian logic and hylemorphism, Stoic ethics, the mystery traditions – to produce a single coherent world-view.</p>