

**I. Aristotle: Life and Influence**

**a. Lived from 384 – 322 BCE.**

- b. Born in Stagira, a Greek community in Thrace (north of Greece), located in the province of Macedonia.
- c. His father was a physician.

**d. Studying at Plato's Academy**

- i. Went to study at Plato's Academy at the age of 17 or 18.
- ii. He earned a reputation for being one of the finest students at the Academy.
- iii. After Plato died, the trustees of the Academy chose a native to take over the Academy because they saw Aristotle as a "foreigner".

**e. Marriages**

- i. First married to Pythias, who died while giving birth to their daughter.
- ii. Second marriage: He was then married to Herpyllis, who gave birth to their son, Nicomachus.

**f. Relationship with King Phillip and Alexander the Great**

- i. "In 343 B.C.E., King Phillip of Macedon invited Aristotle to train his thirteen-year-old son Alexander", who is later known as Alexander the Great.
  - ii. In 334 BCE, Aristotle founded his own school, the Lyceum. "The Lyceum's students tended to be from the middle class, whereas the students at Plato's Academy were more aristocratic.
  - iii. "Alexander the Great died in 323 BCE... With Alexander dead, Athens openly expressed its hostility and resentment toward all things Macedonian. Because of his long and favored place under the protection of both Philip and Alexander, Aristotle found himself in an uncomfortable position. He left Athens and the Lyceum the next year after being legally charged with not respecting the gods of the state – one of the same charges leveled at Socrates" (Soccio, 160).
- g. Like Plato, Aristotle maintained that the good is objective. But unlike Plato who viewed that the good was transcendent, Aristotle maintained that good and evil is relative to the organism.
  - h. "[M]ost of the surviving works are either lecture notes or systematic treatises not designed for a broad public," which makes them a challenging read and difficult to understand (W, 11).

- i. Aristotle wrote on a multitude of subjects including logic, moral philosophy, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. Best known for his *Metaphysics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and regarded as being the founder of logic.

## **Aristotle, Politics, Table of Contents**

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## I. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I: The Household, the State

### A. Chapter 1

1. Every state is a community, and every community aims at some good.

### B. Chapter 2: Natural Origins, the City

1. Natural union of male and female so that the race can continue

2. Natural union of ruler and subject

3. The household

- a. This arises from male-female and master-slave relationship

- b. The purpose is to fulfill the needs of daily life

4. The village

- a. This arises from the union of several families.

- b. The function is to provide more than daily needs.

5. The state

- a. This arises from the union of several villages.

- b. The function is to provide a complete and self-sufficient life.

- c. The city is most complete

“And therefore, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the state, for it is the end of them, and the nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse, or a family. Besides, the final cause and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficing is the end and the best” (1252b30-1253a1)

6. We are political animals

- a. We are, by nature, political animals

- b. Unlike other animals, we have the power of speech.

“...the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and the inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust” (1253a14-15).

- c. We have a sense of what is good and evil, and what is just and unjust

7. The whole is prior to its parts
  - a. The state is prior to the family and to the individual.
  - b. When the individual is isolated, he/she is not self-sufficient.
  - c. “But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of the state” (1253a29-30).

**C. Chapter 3: Household Management**

- a. Three types of rule
  1. Mastery (mastery-slave rule)
  2. Marital
  3. Parental

**D. Chapter 4: Possession, the Slave**

- a. Property is part of the household
- b. No one can live well without necessities
- c. A slave is an instrument.
- d. The slave wholly belongs to the master.

**E. Chapter 5: Natural Slaves**

- a. What is better ought to rule over what is inferior.
- b. Men are superior then women.
- c. A natural slave does not have the full use of reason.
- d. Slaves are ruled by those who do.

“Whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend reason; they obey their passions. And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life” (1254b23-25).
- e. Some men are by nature free and others are by nature slaves.

**F. Chapter 6: Legal Slaves**

- a. There is also slavery by convention.
- b. Legal slavery is often the result of military conquest.
- c. This is unjust to the slave and the owner because these slaves are not slaves by nature.

**G. Chapter 7: Mastery Rule vs. Political Rule**

- a. Political rule is over those who are free and equal.
- b. Mastery rule is over those who are not free and are not equal.

**H. Chapter 8: Art of Household Management vs. the Art of Getting Wealth**

- a. Businesses supply and household consume.

**I. Chapter 9: The Art of Wealth Getting v. the Art of Exchange**

- a. The art of exchange naturally arises from having too little or too much of a certain product.
- b. The purpose of commerce using the art of exchange to make a profit on what is being exchanged.
- c. Commerce arose from the creation of money.
- d. Money is a convention. It has no natural worth.

**J. Chapter 11: Useful Parts of Wealth Getting**

- a. Live-stock
- b. Farming
- c. Commerce
- d. Occupations that are truly arts

“Those occupations are most truly arts in which the least element of chance; they are the meanest in which the body is most maltreated, the most servile in which there is the greatest use of the body, and the most illiberal in which there is the least need of excellence” (1258a37-39).

**K. Chapter 12: Marital Rule**

- a. Wife is ruled in a political fashion.
- b. Children are ruled in a kingly fashion.

**L. Chapter 13: The Excellence of Women, Children, and Slaves**

- a. The excellences in the natural ruler and the natural slave.
- b. Slaves do not have a deliberative faculty.
  - i. The excellence of a slave is relative to a master.
- c. Women have a deliberative faculty but lacks authority – the ability to rule.
- d. Children have a deliberative faculty but it is immature.
  - i. The excellence of a child is relative to the “perfect man and his teacher.”
- e. The courage of a man is in commanding; in a women, obeying.

## **II. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II**

### **A. Chapter 1**

### **B. Chapter 2: Criticism of Plato's Communism**

1. A city is a plurality, not a unity.
  - a. It is made up of different types of people.
2. Each class/element is dependent upon the other.
3. Each citizen is free and has a share in ruling.

### **C. Chapter 3: Criticism of Collective Property**

1. Unity does not promote harmony.
2. We value personal property over communal property.

“For that which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Everyone thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when he is himself concerned as an individual. For besides other considerations, everybody is more inclined to neglect something which he expects another to fulfill; as in families many attendants are often less useful than a few” (1261b33-39)

### **D. Chapter 4: Assault and Homicide, Family Ties**

1. Assault and homicide among strangers is higher.
2. Love is diluted.

### **E. Chapter 5: We Should Have Private Property**

1. Property should be differential otherwise those who labor more and get little will complain.
2. Property should be held in common to a certain degree, but should be private in general.

“Property should be a in a certain sense common, but as a general rule, private; for, when everyone has a distinct interest, men will not complain of one another, and they will make more progress, because everyone will be attending his own business” (1263a26-29).

3. Some things will be shared with friends.
4. Private property brings us greater pleasure.
5. When a woman belongs to one man, it will promote temperance.

6. Private property will also promote liberality (kindness; charity).
7. Quarrel comes from wickedness and not the result of having private property.

**F. Chapter 9: Criticism of Sparta**

1. Laxness of laws
2. Lacedaemonian (Spartan) women live extravagantly
3. Women own a lot of property, and is therefore in the hands of the few (2/5 of the country is held by women)
4. Poor people enter civic service. Many take bribes.
5. Council of elders are not held accountable for their actions. Many take bribes.
6. Judges have life terms
7. They focus on the excellence of the soldier only
8. Revenues of the state is ill managed
  - i. There is no money in the treasury
  - ii. They are unwilling to pay tax

### **III. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III**

#### **A. Chapter I: The Citizen**

1. The state is made up of a body of citizens to fulfill the purposes of life.
2. A citizen a person that shares in the administrations of justice and hold offices in a democracy.

#### **B. Chapter IV: The Excellence of a Good Person vs. the Excellence of a Good Citizen**

1. Excellent citizen knows how to rule and how to obey
  - a. "It has been said that he who never learned to obey cannot be a good commander" (1277b12-13)
2. Excellent person knows how to rule

#### IV. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV: Constitutional Forms

##### A. Chapter 1: Best Political System

1. The best political system is one that works in reality.

“For the best is often unattainable, and therefore the true legislator and statesman ought to be acquainted, not only with that which is best in the abstract, but also with that which is best relatively to circumstances” (1288b24-27).

##### B. Chapter 2: Constitutional Forms

1. The Ideal State

- a. Aristocracy is the ideal constitution
- b. The best practical constitution is a polity (mixed government with a strong middle class).
- c. Society must be morally habituated.

	<b>One</b>	<b>Few</b>	<b>Many</b>
<b>For the Common Good</b>	Monarchy (Honor)	Aristocracy (Virtue)	Polity (Mixed)
<b>For Selfish Interest</b>	Tyranny (Pleasure)	Oligarchy (Wealth)	Democracy (Equality)
<b>Power:</b>	Leadership	Economic	People

##### C. Chapter 4: Democracy and Oligarchy

1. Democracy: the free rules
2. Oligarchy: the wealthy rules
3. The state consist of many elements (classes of people)
  - a. Farmers
  - b. Artisans
  - c. Traders
  - d. Laborers
  - e. Soldiers
4. Higher and lower elements are to be equally considered

**D. Chapter 11: Merits of the Middle-class**

1. Each state has three elements (three classes)

- a. Wealthy class
- b. Middle class
- c. Poor class

2. Moderation and the mean are best

- a. People more likely to follow principle
- b. There will be fewer factions

“It is admitted that moderation and the mean are best, and therefore it will clearly be best to possess the gifts of fortune in moderation; for in that condition of life men are most ready to follow rational principle. But he who greatly excels in beauty, strength, birth, or wealth, or on the other hand who is very poor, or very weak, or of very low status, finds it difficult to follow rational principle” (1295b3-9).

3. Problems of the wealthy class

- a. Lacks obedience
- b. Rule despotically

“Again, those who have too much of the goods of fortune, strength, wealth, friends, and the like, are neither willing nor able to submit to authority. The evil begins at home; for when they are boys, by reason of the luxury in which they are brought up, they never learn, even at school, the habit of obedience” (1295b14-17).

4. Problems of the poor class

- a. Too degraded
- b. Does not know how to command
- c. They must be ruled like slaves

**E. Chapter 12: Quality and Quantity of a State**

1. Quality
  - a. Freedom
  - b. Health
  - c. Education
  - d. Good birth
2. Quantity
  - a. Population
3. Legislature should include someone from the middle class
4. There will be a stable government if the middle class exceeds one or both of the others.
5. The middle class is the arbiter
6. The best political system is one that contains a variety of elements from each system.

## V. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V: Stability, Tyranny

### A. Chapter 8: Stability

- a. Consolidation of power should be prevented
- b. Too much prosperity in any part of the state is also not good.
  - i. Remedy
    1. Give political power to the opposite elements, i.e., the rich and the poor.
    2. Combine the rich and the poor class.
    3. Increase the middle class
- c. Magistrates should not be able to make money
  - i. Reason
    1. The poor will not want to be a magistrate since there is nothing to gain.
    2. The rich will not want money from the public treasury will take this position to prevent being governed by the poor class.
- d. Treatment of the rich in democracies
  - i. Property and income should be protected
  - ii. Assign equal representation in civil service
- e. Treatment of the rich in oligarchies
  - i. Recruit poor people into office
  - ii. Make sure the wealthy class do not insult the poor class
  - iii. On inheritance
    1. Estates will be passed by inheritance and not by gift
    2. Each person is limited to one inheritance
    3. This will equalize property and allow more of the poor to become wealthy
  - iv. Assign equal representation in civil service

**B. Chapter 9: Qualifications of Office, On Democracy**

- a. Three qualifications
  - i. Loyalty to the constitution
  - ii. Having the greatest administrative capacity
  - iii. Excellence and justice appropriate to the constitution
  
- b. On Democracy
  - i. Two principle characteristics
    - 1. Freedom
      - a. Doing what one likes
  
    - 2. Equality
      - a. People think that what is just is equal
      - b. The supremacy of the general will

### C. Chapter 11: Preservation of Tyrannies

- a. To preserve a tyranny
  - i. "...the tyrant should lop off those who are too high; he must put to death men of spirit; he must not allow common meals, clubs, education, and the like; he must be upon his guard against anything which is likely to inspire either courage or confidence among his subjects; he must prohibit schools or other meetings for discussion, and he must take every means to prevent people from knowing one another (for acquaintance begets mutual confidence)" (1313a40-1313b8).
  - ii. Make people appear in public and live at his gates
  - iii. They will be humble if kept under
  - iv. Know what people are doing and saying by employing spies
    1. This will prevent people from speaking their minds
  - v. Promote quarrel among the citizens
  - vi. Impoverish his subjects
    1. Will keep them hard at work
    2. Will prevent them from conspiring
  - vii. Multiply taxes
  - viii. Be fond of war
    1. To keep subjects busy
    2. To justify a need of leadership
  - ix. Other traits of a tyrant
    1. Distrust his friends because they want him overthrown
    2. Dislike every one who as dignity or independence because he wants to keep all the glory to himself
    3. Likes foreigners more than own citizens
      - a. Citizens are enemies
      - b. Foreigners pose no harm

- b. Pretend to act like a king
  - i. Proper spending
  - ii. Proper accounting procedures of the public treasury
  - iii. Collect taxes to fulfill states purposes
  - iv. Appear dignified
    - 1. Maintain the character of a great soldier
  - v. Be moderate when in comes to the indulgence of pleasures
  - vi. Be religious and serve the gods
  - vii. Honor men of merit
  - viii. Abstain from outrage
  - ix. Make the poor and the rich class believe that they are preserved and prevented from each other's harm by his rule

**VI. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VI**

**A. Chapter 2: Basis of Democracy**

- a. Principle of liberty: “all to rule and be ruled in turn.”
- b. Justice
  - i. It is numerical equality
  - ii. It is majority rule
- c. The poor has more power than the rich
- d. Each should take turns ruling
- e. Elections into office should be made by lottery

## VII. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VII: Marriage and Child Rearing

### A. Chapter 13: Three things that makes men good and excellent

1. Nature
2. Habit
3. Reason

### B. Chapter 16: Marriage and Child Rearing

1. Couples should not marry too young
  - a. Children will lack respect for parents
  - b. It can be bad for procreation
  - c. "...in all other animals the offspring of the young are small and ill-developed..." (1335a11-13).
2. Men should marry at 37 and women at 18. These are the prime ages.
  - a. Men who are too old or too young will produce defective children
  - b. Children of the very old will produce weak children
  - c. People should procreate in the prime of their intelligence
  - d. The cut of age for men is around 50
3. How women should take care of themselves when pregnant
  - a. Exercise
  - b. Have nourishing diet
  - c. Should keep their minds quiet, "for the offspring derive their natures from their mothers as plants do from the earth" (1335b16-18).
4. Eugenics
  - a. Deformed children should not be allowed to live.
  - b. If the state does not allow this, the number of children a couple can have will be limited.
  - c. Abortion can be used to terminate life.

**VIII. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VIII: Education**

**A. Chapter 1**

1. Education should mold people to fit the corresponding constitution.

**B. Chapter 2**

1. The young should be taught useful things and at the same time that will not make mechanics out of them.
2. What is mechanical degrades the body and the mind

**C. Chapter 3**

1. Customary branches of education
  - a. Reading
  - b. Writing
  - c. Gymnastics
  - d. Music and art