

## Famous Ancient Greeks and Their Quotes

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**Aeschylus** wrote approximately 80 plays with only six surviving to this day. He is the first to place two actors speaking dialog to each other, therefore relying less on the chorus.

- God loves to help those who work to help themselves.
- The words of truth are simple.
- He is determined not to seem, but to be, the best.

**Aesop** is said to have been a slave who showed a great talent as a storyteller. His short stories or fables often used animals to teach moral lessons.

- No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. We should look at a person's mind, not his appearance.
- There's a time for work and a time for play.
- Be content with your lot.

**Anacreon** was a lyric poet who wrote simple, short poems mostly about wine, love, and song.

- I sing beautiful songs and I know how to speak beautiful words.

**Apollonius Rhodius** became a librarian at the famed library in Alexandria, Egypt. He wrote the epic poem, *Argonautica*, to tell the tale of Jason's chase for the golden fleece with the Argonauts later in his life.

- Life is short to the fortunate, long to the unfortunate.

**Aristophanes** wrote comic plays, 11 of which survive. All of his comedies had political themes. He was known to have had a quick wit and wrote bold fantasies. Plays he wrote had titles like, *Wasps*, *Clouds*, *Peace*, *Frogs*, and *Birds*.

- We're keen to let the judges know  
Just what they'll get if we come in first!
- You have all the traits of a popular politician: a horrible voice, bad upbringing, and a vulgar manner.

**Aristotle** is known as the father of logic. A philosopher, he was a student of Plato's and a tutor to Alexander the Great, established the Lyceum, a college level school in Athens. He wrote hundreds of works on a wide variety of subjects. Some of these were biology, history, physics, literature, ethics, logic, political theory, and rhetoric. He believed that what we perceive with our senses is the "real thing."

- Education is the best provision for old age.
- Art completes what nature leaves unfinished.
- By an uneducated man, we mean someone who completely lacks chorus training; the educated man is fully chorus trained.

**Epicurus** philosophized about how best to live one's life. He established a school of philosophy and developed beliefs about pleasure and pain.

- One is never too young or too old to seek wisdom.

**Euripides** was a prolific playwright of 92 plays. Seventeen of his tragedies and one satyr play survive. He addressed the position of women in Greek society in his most famous works are *Media*, *Trojan Women*, and *Electra*. He liked to shock his audiences. He made his characters act and feel like real people by bringing tragedy into everyday life. His plays won many contests.

- Dance mother!  
Move those old legs this way and that!!
- Only a quiet conscience is able to endure the joys and sorrows of a person's life.
- Whoever neglects learning when he is young, loses the past and is dead for the future.
- In a conflict, never judge until you hear both sides.

**Hesiod**, an early Greek poet, was known as the poet of peace. He wrote about every day life and the influences of the gods on it, in *Works and Days*. His work, *Theogony (Birth of the Gods)*, describes the way the world began and chronicles the gods lives and loves.

- One day the Muses taught me glorious song...  
They plucked and gave to me a laurel rod,  
A sturdy shoot, a truly wondrous thing,  
And into me they breathed a voice divine  
To celebrate the future and the past.  
My orders were to celebrate the gods who live  
Eternally, but most of all to sing  
Of them themselves, the Muses, first and last.

**Homer** is best remembered for the epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. These poems tell the story of the Trojan War (*The Iliad*) and the ten year journey back to Greece (*The Odyssey*). Characters are historic and fictional.

- Bards are honored and revered throughout the world, because the Muse has taught them songs and loves the race of bards.
- Tell me, O Muse, of that man, so in need of help, who wandered far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred city of Troy.
- The herald came near, bringing with him the excellent singer  
Whom the Muse had loved greatly...  
She had deprived him of his sight, but she gave him the sweet singing art...  
The herald hung the clear lyre on a peg placed over  
His head, and showed him how to reach up with his hands and take it down.

**Pericles of Athens** was a statesman who promoted culture and learning to make Athens the intellectual and cultural capital of ancient Greece. He was the first to pay government workers and established many democratic reforms.

- Time is the wisest of all counselors.
- Outstanding individuals have the whole world as their memorial.
- Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now.

**Pindar**, a lyric poet, wrote hymns, choral songs, maiden songs, funeral songs, victory songs, and dance songs. He was a poet for hire, whose work focused on praising his benefactor or an event he was hired to commemorate. The events he wrote for were the four major athletic events of ancient Greece, including the Olympics.

- For those who are honorable, time is the best of champions.
- Come, sweet hope,  
Who guides our wandering purpose,  
Treads at our side, and gladdens our hearts!
- Unsung, the noblest deed will die.

**M. Plato** followed the teachings of Socrates and taught Aristotle. He wrote dialogs in which two or more characters discussed their ideas about human nature and government. He used questions to guide one deeper into more serious and abstract thought. His school in Athens was called the Academy.

- The direction in which education starts an individual determines his future life.

**Pyrrhus** was a ruler and general who wrote *Memoir*, about war that was much praised by ancient leaders.

- It is impossible for anyone to avoid his fate.

**Pythagoras** is remembered as a mathematician, philosopher, and teacher. He assigned numbers to concepts. He searched for harmony in the universe and invested his life investigating and proving his theories.

- The highest of duties is honor to self.

**Sappho** had the honor of being called the “Tenth Muse.” She is considered to be the best female poet of classical antiquity. She wrote lyric poetry that was personal and written to be sung by one person, herself, to her audience. She created a school for girls to be taught poetry, music, singing, and dancing.

- My fair comrades mine to you  
My thought is ever true.
- The stars around the lovely moon hide their shining forms when the full moon lights up the earth.
- I have a child, so fair  
As golden flowers is she,  
My Cleis, all my care,  
I'd give her not away  
For Lydia's wide sway  
Nor lands men long to see.

**Socrates** left no writings or recordings of his beliefs, yet his philosophies still impact Western thought. His students included Plato, Aristophanes, Xenophon, and Aristotle (who did feel his ideas worth recording). Plato's dialogs, with Socrates a main character, give us a good, if biased account of Socrates' philosophies. He debated morality and how individuals should conduct their lives.

- Knowledge is the only good and ignorance the only evil.

**Sophocles**, an actor, playwright, and politician who won prizes for 70 of his 123 tragedies. He is a master writer of tragedies and considered the best Greek tragedian. Seven plays survive, including *Ajax*, *Antigone*, and *Oedipus Tyrannus (Oedipus the King)*. He used stage scenery to establish place and introduced three characters in scenes. He was able to keep the action flowing smoothly, made characters believable, and held a sense of suspense throughout the plays. He also was appointed the governor of Athens.

- We know the world is a wonderful place  
And the finest of all is the human race.
- Wisdom outweighs any wealth.
- When fighting for something that is right, even weakness triumphs.

**Thales of Miletus** founded the study of philosophy and mathematics. He developed the first principles of geometry.

- Time is the wisest of things because it finds out everything.

**Xenophon** led 10,000 Greek soldiers of fortune out of Persia and returned with them to Greece. He wrote an historical account of it. He was a student of Socrates and wrote a series of histories about Greece.

- The most pleasing sound is the one that praises you.