

21st Century Skills

The logo for 'networks' features the word in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'o' is replaced by a stylized globe icon with several lines radiating from it, suggesting a network or digital connectivity.

Greek Civilization

Lesson 2 *The Greek Mind*

Communication: Writing in Expository Style

Learning the Skill

When you write something, the purpose for your writing determines the kind of writing you do. A made-up story to entertain readers is creative writing. A newspaper editorial to convince readers of an opinion is persuasive writing. A personal essay on memories of the past or hopes for the future is expressive writing. Expository writing provides information. For example, a magazine article reporting on different kinds of mountain bikes is a form of expository writing.

In expository writing, you inform or explain to the reader by presenting information in a logical order. You provide facts, background knowledge, or data about a topic to make the topic clear and understandable to your readers. Travel essays, cookbooks, letters, catalogs, book reviews, research reports, and how-to articles are some of the kinds of expository writing you have probably read. In general, most of your textbooks are examples of expository writing. For example, science, history, health, and math are all subjects that are best presented in a logical order. Thus, writers use expository writing for these textbooks.

To write an expository paragraph, you choose a topic or subject, form a main idea, and include details that support your idea. Supporting details include the facts, data, or background knowledge—or some combination of these—that you present to your readers.

Practicing the Skill Read this list of facts and answer the questions that follow.

Aristotle's Ideas About Government

1. The well-ordered constitution results from the proper ordering of three factors: the deliberative (legislative) body, the magistracies (executive), and the judiciary (judicial).

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2. Government should have a monarch to represent the extremely wealthy (a monarchy), a council to represent the moderately wealthy (an oligarchy), and an assembly to represent free men without considerable wealth (a democracy).
3. Government should not be able to pass a law or take other action without approval by all three bodies.
4. Every citizen has a claim to a share of power, regardless of income or wealth (not including women, enslaved people, and foreigners).
5. The purpose of government is to promote the good life, and the "best persons," those with virtue, should rule.

The Founders of the United States of America

1. The Founders were those men involved in writing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Most of them had a classical education, meaning they were fluent in Greek and Latin and studied the classical philosophers such as Aristotle.
2. The United States government has three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.
3. The form of government originally proposed by the Constitutional Convention provided that
 - a. the House of Representatives was to be elected by the free men in the states, including men who owned a moderate amount of property and men who owned little property.
 - b. members of the Senate were to be selected by the legislatures of the states, made up of men of wealth.
4. The Constitution requires that both the Congress and the president approve bills for them to become law, thus instituting a system of checks and balances.
5. The Constitution gave all free male citizens the right to vote and established a representative form of democracy.
6. The Declaration of Independence states that all men are entitled to the "pursuit of happiness," and one of the main purposes of the government as described in the first paragraph of the Constitution is to promote the general welfare.

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Greek Civilization

1. How is the purpose of government as described by Aristotle like or unlike that described by the Founders of the United States?

2. What were the rights of enslaved people and women in Aristotle’s ideal state? In the U.S. Constitution?

Applying the Skill

Aristotle was one of the philosophers whose ideas greatly influenced the Founders of the United States. Using most of the facts above, write a short expository essay of two or more paragraphs explaining how Aristotle’s ideas were used in creating the original government of the United States. The topic of your essay will be “Aristotle’s Influence on the Founders of the United States.” Make sure each paragraph has a main idea and supporting details.