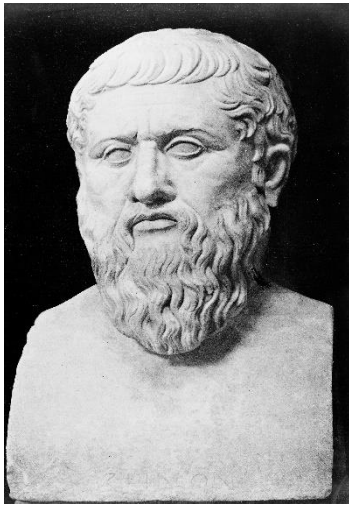




Philosophy in KS2



Plato: 428BC – 348BC

Plato was born into a very wealthy family; experts say that they may have been a little too ambitious and a little too obsessed with money and success. This drove Plato to become a philosopher as this life did not appeal to him.

He taught many people over the years, many of them very famous but none so famous, or important as Aristotle.

Once Socrates died Plato opened a school called 'The Academy' in Athens. Even after Plato's death the Academy stayed open for 900 years.

Due to the success of this school and simple chance the writings of Plato have almost totally survived. His writing is mainly 'dialogue'. This means that they read like plays with different speakers and because of this they were often performed in the houses of the rich and famous.

He is most famous for a book called *The Republic* which you may read when you're older if you study politics or philosophy. In it Plato discusses all the types of political system you can get. In the UK we live in a democracy, *demos* meaning people and *ocracy* meaning ruler, so the UK is ruled

over by the people. He talks about Tyrannies, autocracies, theocracies and so many more.

In *The Republic* he also came up with a very famous idea called *The Allegory of the Cave*. There is a wonderful animated version here:

<https://youtu.be/69F7GhASOdM>

For Plato the role of the Philosopher was to be the cleverest, constantly striving towards the perfect form of everything.... Justice, beauty, truth...The philosopher has more knowledge about these things and so should rule over society. This is an interesting idea and we should think about the fact that a philosopher says that philosophers should be in charge.

He thought that society should be divided up into parts, like a body and philosophers should be the head.

Plato also thought about the soul. He thought that the soul is the one perfect and eternal part of a person in an imperfect world. The body gets old, the eyes don't see as well, the ears mishear. This world and the bodies we have are imperfect and therefore not as important. This world is therefore simply a rubbish version of the perfect one that lives in what he called *The Realm of the Forms* which is sort of like heaven for ideas.

Discussion Points:

- Edith Hall (Classics Professor) believes that Plato was almost blind. Do you think this would affect his view of the world?
- The soul is what lives in each human – it comes from heaven and will return there. Where have you heard this before?