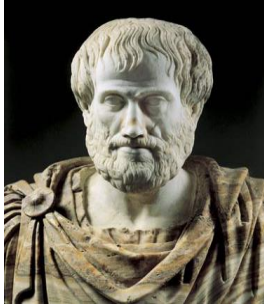




Philosophy in KS2



Aristotle: 384BC –322BC

Aristotle was born in Stagira in what is now Macedonia. He taught many people throughout his life – famously Alexander the Great – who was a conqueror.

Aristotle himself was taught by Plato, who was taught by Socrates. Plato had set up a very successful school called The Academy where he taught philosophy. It is believed that Aristotle hoped that he would inherit the Academy once Plato died. This didn't happen and it was given to Speusippus – Plato's nephew. At the time Athens was full of anti-Macedonian feeling due to the recent assassination of Phillip II of Macedon – the father of Alexander the Great. It is unclear whether Aristotle, being Macedonian, left Athens because of this or because he was overlooked for the leadership of the Academy.

Moving out of Athens and away from the city that was full of Plato's followers Aristotle stuck out on his own. Feeling a bit sick of Philosophy he invented to biology! Studying animals, dissecting them and seeing how they work he began to categorize them carefully. As far as experts are aware, he was the first person to start doing this.

Whilst doing this his focus began to shift away from the heavenly ideals of Plato and towards the more worldly questions that had consumed philosophers in the past. He looked carefully at the world, thought about how to live a good life, discussed politics and poetry and worked on logic. Logic, a way of working out the truth of things and the sense of an argument is now central to philosophy, maths and science. **It would be fair to say that if Plato changed the way we see the heavens then Aristotle changed the way we see the world.**

His book on literature titled *The Poetics* is still used today to teach Hollywood writers about how to structure a film. His work on Tragedy in particular is central to the study of books and stories and has been translated into hundreds of languages.

Aristotle's work, much of which was lost or destroyed, did manage to survive in the Middle East and many Islamic scholars translated his work during *The Translation Movement*. From the Middle East these works found their way back to Europe eventually shaping how Western Philosophers think. Quite a journey!

Discussion Points:

- Why do you think Aristotle's work was so different to Plato's?
- How would you have felt, not being given the leadership of Plato's Academy?

The Great Philosophers Fact Sheets