

SPARTA, A WAY OF LIFE

In ancient Sparta, the purpose of education was to produce a well-drilled, well-disciplined marching army. Spartans believed in a life of discipline, self-denial, and simplicity. They were very loyal to the state of Sparta. Every Spartan, male or female, was required to have a perfect body. When babies were born in ancient Sparta, Spartan soldiers would come by the house and check the baby. If the baby did not appear healthy and strong, the infant was taken away, and left to die on a hillside, or taken away to be trained as a slave (a helot). Babies who passed this examination were assigned membership in a brotherhood or sisterhood, usually the same one to which their father or mother belonged.



Spartan Boys



Spartan boys were sent to military school at age 6 or 7. They lived, trained and slept in the barracks of their brotherhood. At school, they were taught survival skills and other skills necessary to be a great soldier. School courses were very hard and often painful. Although students were taught to read and write, those skills were not very important to the ancient Spartans. Only warfare mattered. The boys were not fed well, and were told that it was fine to steal food as long as they did not get caught stealing. If they were caught, they were beaten. They boys marched without shoes to make them strong. It was a brutal training period.

Spartan Girls

In Sparta, girls also went to school at age 6 or 7. They lived, slept and trained in their sisterhood's barracks. No one knows if their school was as cruel or as rugged as the boys' school, but the girls were taught wrestling, gymnastics and combat skills. Some historians believe the two schools were very similar, and that an attempt was made to train the girls as thoroughly as they trained the boys. In any case, the Spartans believed that strong young



women would produce strong babies.

At age 18, if a Spartan girl passed her skills and fitness test, she would be assigned a husband and allowed to return home. If she failed, she would lose her rights as a citizen, and became a perioikos, a member of the middle class. In most of the other Greek city-states, women were required to stay inside their homes most of their lives. In Sparta, citizen women were free to move around, and enjoyed a great deal of freedom, as their husbands did not live at home.

Bibliography

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Use the information you have been given to fill in this chart.

	SPARTA
DAILY LIFE FOR BOYS	
DAILY LIFE FOR GIRLS	
THE ARMY	
THE BUILDINGS	
THE SLAVES	
HOW THE CITY-STATE WAS RULED	

Use the information you have been given and what you know to complete this comparison:

A SPARTAN BOY IN ANCIENT GREECE



A BOY IN MODERN-DAY IN SPAIN



A SPARTAN GIRL IN ANCIENT GREECE



A GIRL IN MODERN-DAY SPAIN



