





The Development of Democracy in Ancient Greece

Definition	form of government in which ruling power is in the hands of one person	form of government in which ruling power is in the hands of a few leaders	form of government in which ruling power is in the hands of a person who has seized control	form of government in which ruling power is in the hands of the people
Etymology	monos (single) and arkhein (rule)	oligos (few) and arkhein (rule)	tyrannos (usurper with supreme power)	demos (people) and kratos (power)
Visual				



How was this form of government practiced in ancient Greece?

Mycenaeans paid taxes to their kings, obeyed their laws, and depended on them for protection. Most Mycenaean kings inherited their power.

Political decisions were made by aristocrats and selected members of the middle class. Ordinary citizens had little say in how the city-state was run.

With support from the middle class, tyrants seized power to reform laws, help the poor, and cancel debts.

Athens was the birthplace of democracy. All male citizens could participate in the Athenian government. The Assembly made laws, and its decisions, or *decrees*, were enforced by the Council of 500.

Why did this form of government decline in ancient Greece?

Many Mycenaean kings lost power when they fought with rival monarchs over land and raw materials. Dorians also destroyed many Mycenaean kingdoms.

Some oligarchs ruled harshly and their subjects rebelled. Other oligarchs lost the faith of their supporters because they could not solve key problems such as food shortages.

Some tyrants became harsh and greedy and were overthrown.