



# SOCRATES

## BIOGRAPHY

Socrates was a philosopher who lived in Athens, Greece, from 469 to 399 BCE. He is one of the most famous and influential thinkers in Western philosophy, and his ideas have shaped the way people think about ethics, politics, and knowledge.

Socrates was born in Athens to a stonemason father and a midwife mother. As a young man, he served in the Athenian army during the Peloponnesian War, but he did not participate in any major battles. Instead, he spent his time in philosophical discussions with fellow soldiers and other Athenians.

After the war, Socrates became a well-known figure in Athens for his unconventional ideas and his method of questioning people's beliefs. He believed that true knowledge could only be obtained by questioning and examining one's own beliefs and assumptions. He would often engage in dialogues with other Athenians, asking them questions about their beliefs and challenging them to defend their ideas.

Socrates did not write down his ideas, so much of what we know about him comes from the writings of his followers, especially the philosopher Plato. According to Plato, Socrates believed that virtue, or moral excellence, was the most important thing in life. He also believed in the concept of a "divine voice" or "inner voice" that guided him in his philosophical pursuits.

Socrates' ideas were not always popular with the Athenian authorities. In 399 BCE, he was accused of corrupting the youth of Athens and impiety or disrespecting the gods. He was put on trial and sentenced to death by drinking hemlock, a poisonous substance. Despite the opportunity to escape, Socrates chose to accept his sentence and die for his beliefs.

Socrates' death made him a martyr for philosophy and a symbol of intellectual freedom. His ideas and his method of questioning have continued to influence philosophers and thinkers throughout history, from Aristotle to Nietzsche to contemporary thinkers.

### Vocabulary:

**Philosopher:** a person who studies and thinks about the nature of the world and life

**Ethics:** the study of moral principles and values

**Unconventional:** not following traditional or usual ways of doing things

**Dialogues:** conversations between two or more people

**Virtue:** moral excellence or goodness

**Impiety:** lack of respect for the gods or religious beliefs

**Martyr:** a person who dies for their beliefs or principles

**Intellectual:** relating to the ability to think and reason



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## QUESTIONS

### Comprehension Questions:

When and where was Socrates born?

What was Socrates' profession?

What did Socrates believe about knowledge?

Why was Socrates sentenced to death?

What did Socrates' philosophy emphasize?

### Discussion Questions:

What do you think are some of the most important ideas in Socrates' philosophy?

Do you agree with Socrates that "an unexamined life is not worth living"? Why or why not?

What do you think are some of the benefits and drawbacks of asking questions like Socrates did?

Do you think Socrates was right to refuse to flee Athens and accept his death sentence? Why or why not?

How do you think Socrates' ideas have influenced Western philosophy and culture?



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## TEACHER'S NOTES



### **Teacher's notes**

Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Students will improve their English conversation skills while learning about the life and philosophies of Socrates.

### **Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Greet the students and ask them how their day has been.

Ask the students if they know anything about Socrates or philosophy in general.

Write the word "philosophy" on the board and ask the students what they think it means.

Introduction to Socrates (10 minutes)

### **Distribute the Socrates biography handout to the students.**

Instruct the students to read the handout silently and underline any words or phrases they don't understand.

After 5 minutes, ask the students if they have any questions about the handout.

Provide any necessary explanations or definitions of difficult words or phrases.

Comprehension questions (15 minutes)

### **Distribute the comprehension and discussion questions handout to the students.**

Instruct the students to read the questions and answer them individually.

After 10 minutes, ask the students to pair up and compare their answers with their partner.

As a class, go through the questions one by one and ask students to share their answers.

Discussion questions (25 minutes)

### **Discussion Questions**

Instruct the students to read the questions and think about their answers.

Divide the class into small groups (3-4 students per group) and ask them to discuss the questions together.

After 15 minutes, bring the class back together and ask each group to share their answers to one or two of the questions.

### **Wrap-up (5 minutes)**

Thank the students for their participation and ask if they have any final questions or comments.

Summarize the main points of the lesson and encourage the students to continue learning about Socrates and philosophy in their own time.