

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Title: Identify how structures of gender and power affects the agency of historical persons</b>   |  |
| <b>2. Knowledge and didactic objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify how structure of gender, power affects the agency of historical persons and vice versa.</li> </ul>   | <b>3. Timing</b><br><i>Approximately 80 min session.</i> |
| <b>4. Grouping of students</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Couples</li> <li>Large group</li> </ol>   |  |
| <b>5. Historical thinking skills</b><br>Structure and agency  |  |
| <b>6. Development or sequence of the activity</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students should have general knowledge of ancient societies, especially the living conditions for women and men in Greek society, before doing this activity.</li> <li>The teacher briefly tells biographies of Sappho, Aspasia and Aristotle</li> <li>The teacher explains the second order concepts of <i>agency</i> and <i>structure</i></li> <li>The students work in pairs with either one or all three biographies. They read the texts and work with work sheet 1-3. The main purpose is to contextualize Sappho, Aspasia and Aristotle.</li> <li>The students then compare their findings with another group.</li> <li>The teacher summarizes the students' findings, and comments them in the large group of students. This can be done as a comparison of structure and agency for the three different persons. What similarities and differences can be noticed?</li> </ol> |  |
| <b>7. Assessment techniques and instruments</b><br><i>How? When? and what to evaluate?</i>  |  |



What to assess:

- The student's ability to contextualize Sappho, Aspasia and Aristotle.
- The student's ability to differ between structure and agency in a historical context and to identify some similarities and differences.

When to assess:

- While the students working in pairs with the assignments.
- During the joint discussion at the end.

How to assess:

Formative, namely, to provide feedback while the students are working with the assignments.

**8. Complementary resources** (web links, bibliography for students, visits to heritage elements, press news, videos, documentaries, etc..).

Work sheet 1-3

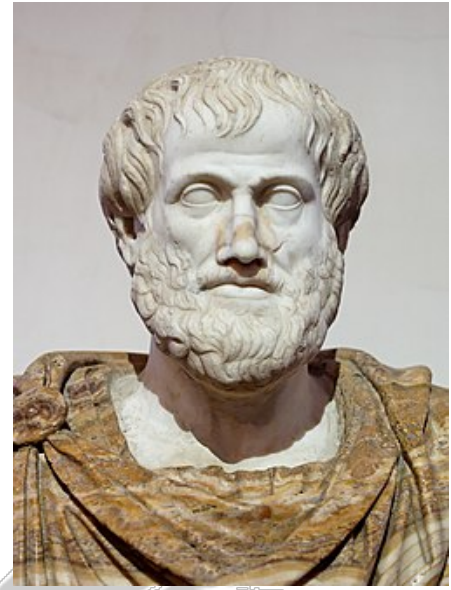
Biographies of Sappho, Aspasia, Aristotle

## 9. Annexes

The web resources from the History Lab project about *Women and the change for gender equality* in Europe, "Ancient societies".

## Biography of Aristotle

**Aristotle**, (born 384 BCE, Stagira in the north of Greece —died 322 BCE, Chalcis). He was an ancient Greek philosopher and scientist whose thought determined the course of Western intellectual history for two millennia. Aristotle had a privileged childhood amongst the nobility of Macedonia. He was the son of the court physician to Amyntas III, who was the grandfather of [Alexander the Great](#). In 367, 18 years of age, he became a student at the Academy of [Plato](#) in Athens; he remained there for 20 years. Plato, who had been the student of Socrates - the founder of the Academy – considered Aristotle to be one of his most skilled students, and he called him “the reason”. After Plato’s death in 348/347, he returned to Macedonia, where he became tutor to the young Alexander (later known as Alexander the Great). In 335 he founded his own school in Athens, the Lyceum. His intellectual range was vast, covering most of the sciences and many of the arts.



Aristotle worked in physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, and botany; in psychology, political theory, and ethics; in logic and metaphysics; and in history, literary theory, and rhetoric. He invented the study of formal logic, devising for it a finished system, known as [syllogistic](#), that was considered the sum of the discipline until the 19th century. It was his strong belief that a scientist should know how to reason and investigate. Logic thinking should go before belief in chance and fate. His work in zoology, both observational and theoretical, also was not surpassed until the 19th century. His ethical and political theory, especially his conception of the ethical virtues and of human flourishing (“happiness”), continue to exert influence in philosophical debate. At times his peace of mind and work was interrupted and disturbed by political conflicts. After the death of Alexander the Great, he was politically unpleasant in Athens and was accused of impiety. It is said that he choose to flee Athens to Chalcis on the island Evvia, where he died approximately 62 years of age.

**Picture:** [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristoteles#/media/Fil:Aristotle\\_Altemps\\_Inv8575.jpg](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristoteles#/media/Fil:Aristotle_Altemps_Inv8575.jpg)

**The text above is a revised version of:** <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Aristotle>

## The legacy of Aristotle

Since the Renaissance it has been traditional to regard the Academy and the Lyceum as two opposite poles of philosophy. Plato is idealistic, utopian, otherworldly; Aristotle is realistic,



utilitarian, commonsensical. In fact, however, the doctrines that Plato and Aristotle share are more important than those that divide them.

By any reckoning, Aristotle's intellectual achievement is stupendous. He was the first genuine scientist in history. He was the first author whose surviving works contain detailed and extensive observations of natural phenomena, and he was the first philosopher to achieve a sound grasp of the relationship between observation and theory in scientific method. He identified the various scientific disciplines and explored their relationships to each other. He was the first professor to organize his lectures into courses and to assign them a place in a syllabus. His Lyceum was the first research institute in which a number of scholars and investigators joined in collaborative inquiry and documentation. Finally, and not least important, he was the first person in history to build up a research library, a systematic collection of works to be used by his colleagues and to be handed on to posterity.

Millennia later, Plato and Aristotle still have a strong claim to being the greatest philosophers who have ever lived. But if their contribution to philosophy is equal, it was Aristotle who made the greater contribution to the intellectual patrimony of the world. Not only every philosopher but also every scientist is in his debt. He deserves the title Dante gave him: "the master of those who know."

The text above is a revised version of: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aristotle/Political-theory#ref254727>

You can read more about Aristotle here: <https://www.worldhistory.org/aristotle/>

Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsdgFJBXb2w&t=722s>





## Biography of Aspasia

First, watch this **video**: <https://www.worldhistory.org/video/2534/aspasia-of-miletus/>

Then, read the text below.

### Facts and legends

Aspasia, (5th century BC), was the mistress of the Athenian statesman Pericles and a vivid figure in Athenian society. Although Aspasia came from the Greek Anatolian city of Miletus and was not a citizen of Athens, she lived with Pericles from about 445 until his death in 429. Because a law sponsored by Pericles in 451 required that for a person to be a citizen both parents must be citizens, their son, also named Pericles, was long excluded from civic participation. He was eventually made a citizen by special enactment and later became a general.

Aspasia was continually exposed for public attacks—particularly from the comedic stage—criticizing her private life and public influence. She was irresponsibly accused of urging Pericles to crush the island of Samos, Miletus' old rival, and to provoke war with Sparta. Shortly before the Peloponnesian War she was declared innocent of a charge of godlessness.

The text above is a revised version of:

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aspasia>

### Aspasia's implication on Pericles' politics

Throughout the Peloponnesian War, Pericles was engaged in various cultural initiatives in Athens which brought him into regular contact with the leading intellectuals of the city. Among these was Aspasia. In 445 BCE, he divorced his wife and began (or continued) a romantic relationship with Aspasia. Aspasia's talent as a writer, and close association with Pericles, encouraged his enemies to claim she was the author of his greatest speeches.

The text above is a revised version of:

<https://www.worldhistory.org/pericles/>





## Biography of Sappho

### Facts and legends

Sappho, (born c. 610, Lesbos [Greece]—died c. 570 BCE), was a Greek lyric poet greatly admired in all ages for the beauty of her writing style. The poems were written to be accompanied by music. It is not known how her poems were published and circulated in her own lifetime and for the following three or four centuries. In the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, what survived of her work was collected and published in a standard edition of nine books of lyrical verse. These books disappeared before the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Legends about Sappho are widely spread, many having been repeated for centuries. She is said, for example to have leaped from the Leucadian rock to certain death in the sea because of her unrequited love of Phaon, a younger man and a sailor. She had at least two brothers, Larichus and Charaxus. A fragment of text from Sappho that is dedicated to Charaxus has survived. One of her poems mentions a daughter named Cleis or Claïs. The tradition that Sappho fled the island or was banished and went to Sicily may be true, but she lived most of her life in her hometown of Mytilene on Lesbos.

### Sappho and her female community

Sappho's work contains only a few apparent references to the political disturbances of the time. Her themes are personal - primarily concerned with her *thiasos*, namely a term to describe a female community, with a religious and educational background, that met under her leadership. Sappho herself attacks in her poems other *thiasoi* directed by other women. The goal of the Sapphic *thiasos* is the education of young women, especially for marriage. Aphrodite is the group's divinity and inspiration. Sappho is the servant of the goddess and her intermediary with the girls.

In the *thiasos* the girls were educated and initiated into grace and elegance for seduction and love. Singing, dancing, and poetry played a central role in this educational process and other cultural occasions. There were also other female communities, with the same goal. In Sappho's poetry love is passion, an inescapable power that moves at the will of the goddess but shared by the community of the *thiasos*.

The text above is a revised version of:



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<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sappho-Greek-poet>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sappho>

[https://www.worldhistory.org/Sappho\\_of\\_Lesbos/](https://www.worldhistory.org/Sappho_of_Lesbos/)

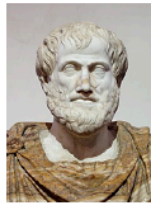
## Legacy

As we noticed above Sappho wrote lyrics with love themes, which by many has been interpreted as lesbian love. The Greek island, Lesbos, where she lived most of her life, has given name to the term *lesbian*. Since homosexuality has been considered a sin and a crime during different historical periods, the legacy and the use of Sappho as a historical person has shifted over time. She was admired by several ancient poets and writers, like Plato, but for example in the Middle Ages, Sappho was unpopular and condemned. In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, she became a role model for many young women who condemned prejudices and promoted courage.

### Contextualizing Aristotle

Read the biography of Aristotle. Discuss the context and impact of Aristotle with a classmate using the headings in the boxes below. Fill in the boxes with key-words that summarize your conclusions.

|           |   |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| AGENCY    | What different titles/roles did Aristotle have? | What did he write/work with? Important ideas? | What impact did he have in his time/contemporary impact?                      |
|           |   |   |   |
| STRUCTURE | Where was Aristotle located?                    | Time period?                                  | Aristotle lived for a long time in Athens. What was typical for that society? |
|           |   |   |   |
|           |   |   | How do we think of Aristotle today (legacy)?                                  |
|           |   |   |   |






### Contextualizing Aspasia

Read the biography of Aspasia and watch the short film, linked in the biography. Discuss the context and impact of Aspasia with a classmate using the headings in the boxes below. Fill in the boxes with key-words that summarize your conclusions.

|        |  |             |                                       |
|--------|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| AGENCY | What different roles did Aspasia have? | Production? | What impact did she have in her time? |
|        |  |             |                                       |

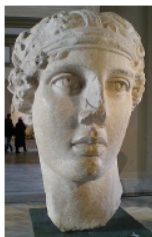


|           |          |             |  |                               |
|-----------|----------|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| STRUCTURE | Location | Time period | How was Aspasia's life affected by the society she lived in? | How do we view Aspasia today? |
|           |          |             |  |                               |

### Contextualizing Sappho

Read the biography of Sappho. Discuss the context and impact of Sappho with a classmate using the headings in the boxes below. Fill in the boxes with key-words that summarize your conclusions.

|        |                                       |                     |                                       |
|--------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| AGENCY | What different roles did Sappho have? | What did she write? | What impact did she have in her time? |
|        |                                       |                     |                                       |



|           |          |             |  |                              |
|-----------|----------|-------------|--|------------------------------|
| STRUCTURE | Location | Time period | In which society/context did Sappho live her life? | How do we view Sappho today? |
|           |          |             |  |                              |



## Disclaimer

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