

# Government

Democratic government was a Greek idea. Democracy, or rule by the people, began in Athens. The practice of having citizens serve on juries also began in Greece.

Democratic government in the United States has roots in ancient Greece. There are a number of important differences, however, between American democracy and ancient Greek democracy. For example, in Athens, all citizens debated and voted on every issue. But in the United States, citizens elect representatives to speak for them and make laws. Another difference is that only native-born men could be citizens in Athens. But in the United States, all men and women born in this country are U.S. citizens, and people from other countries can become citizens, too.

Until, the basic principles [principle: a strong belief on the right way to act] of democracy were developed by the ancient Greeks. Athenians were proud that their government allowed citizens to control their own destiny. This idea remains the basis of democracy today.

# Theater

The word *theater* comes from a Greek word that means "a viewing place." Greek theaters were built as semicircles. The rows of seats rose steeply from the stage so that everyone in the audience could see and hear. These ideas are used in theaters built today.

The Greeks even invented special effects. For example, they used hoists to lift actors off the stage, so that they appeared to be flying. They also created scenery that revolved, or turned. Revolving the scenery let them quickly change where the action in a play was taking place. Perhaps the greatest Greek contributions to the theater are their stories and plays. Writers throughout the ages have been inspired by Greek myths and stories. Greek dramas are still performed all over the world.

