

## An Open Letter from the Young Women of Sparta

To: The Young Women of Athens  
From: The Young Women of Sparta

"It has come to our attention that the young women of Athens, being curious about our way of life, find things in it to look down upon. We offer you this account of ourselves so that you can better understand our ways.

First, as young women we proudly see that our primary role is to become proper wives and mothers for our Spartan heroes. For this our up-bringing has prepared us well. We learned early to always place the needs of Sparta before our own.

1. When we were first born, the elders of each of the tribes within Sparta determined if we were healthy and vigorous enough to be raised. When we were growing our parents did not pamper us. Our nurses did not allow us to whine, be fussy with food, or develop a fear of the dark.
2. For our education we were given some schooling, but we spent most of our days training our bodies. We ran freely out of doors and learned sports such as hunting, horseback riding, wrestling, gymnastics, dart throwing, and ball tossing. Those skilled in these sports brought honor to their families. In those years, we bathed often, ate heartily, and developed healthy bodies.
3. When we were old enough to leave our childhood, we passed from the protection of Artemis to the protection of Sparta's honored goddess Helen. We left the city for a place where we were instructed by our much loved women leaders. We took part in special ceremonies, ran races and made offerings to Helen.
4. We have heard that others joke about us because we compete openly in athletics, wearing little or no clothes as we do so. They say that the young women of Sparta can never be virtuous because we go out in public with young men wearing our chitons unsewn and open at the side. Maybe people are jealous of our beautiful bodies and looks. We hear that we are admired throughout the world.
5. We enjoy dancing and singing, but drawing and poetry have little place in our lives. We know little of the arts of making cloth and have trouble understanding women who seek praise for their work in weaving.
6. Most of us will marry at age 19 or 20 to men of our own age. We will leave the care of our father's household for that of our husband's family only when we have given birth to our first child. At first we will see little of our husbands because they will continue to live in their barracks with the other soldiers until they are thirty years old.
7. As married women we will appear much less in public and will no longer train our bodies with such vigor. We will have other duties. Many of us will own land that needs tending, and we will be expected to hold Sparta together when our troops are away. Above all, with pride we expect to bear and raise strong children to defend our city and our lands. May we have strong, courageous sons and daughters who are willing to die for Sparta!"



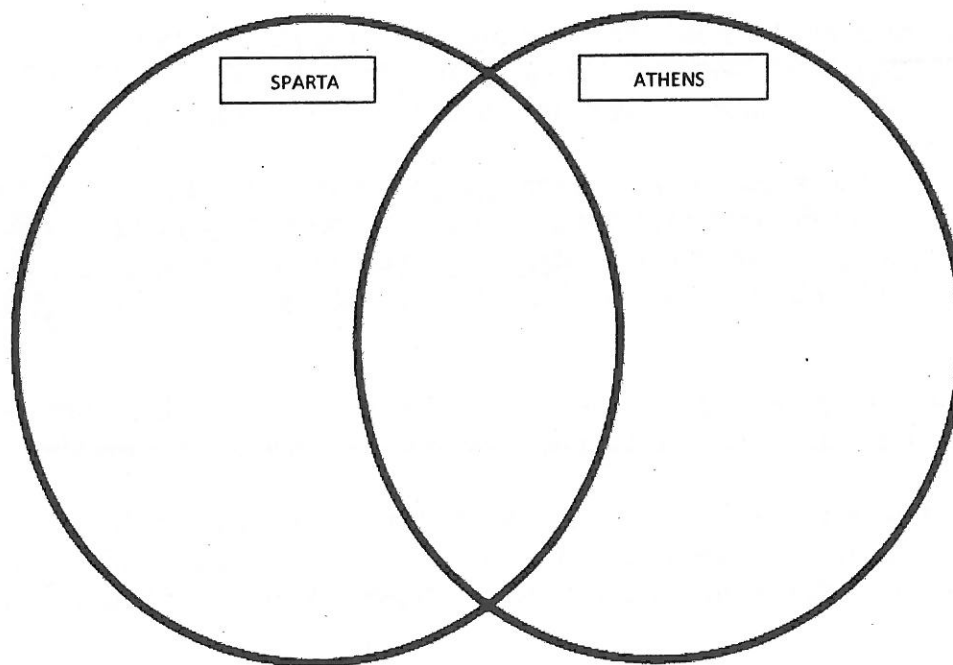
Read the fictional letter on the front and answer the following questions:

Synonym/Definition	Underlined Word
Most important	
Clothing; tunic	
Army living quarters	
Description	
Made up; untrue	
Honorable; moral	
To spoil or treat as a baby	
Strong or hearty	

What is the difference between an "open letter" and a "personal letter?"

Why did the young Sparta women feel they needed to write a letter to the young Athenian women?

Complete the Venn Diagram to compare the lives of women in Athens and Sparta



Place the following items in one set of the Venn Diagram. Write the numbers, not the phrases.

1. wrote the letter
2. read the letter
3. didn't have the same rights men had
4. school was mostly academic subjects
5. school was mostly physical training
6. were very proud of their weaving skills
7. were very proud of their fitness
8. lived in Ancient times
9. liked to dance and sing
10. enjoyed drawing and poetry

If you were a young woman in Ancient Greece, would you have preferred to live in Athens or Sparta? Explain your choice

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