

# The Prince Is Shocked to Learn

# 1

## Main Goal

Students can analyze historical situations in which free and independent thought changed the course of history.

*Affective: Foster students’ open-mindedness toward nonconformity.  
[Please see page 11’s explanatory note regarding this affective goal.]*

## Story Matrix Reference

PERIOD IN HISTORY	THEME
Ancient Times	Independent Thinking in Religion
For kernel of story, see Story Matrix in this manual on page 66.	

## Story Lesson Context

Knowledge and Cultural Understanding		Skills Attainment and Social Participation	
X	<i>Historical Literacy</i>	X	<i>Basic Study Skills</i>
	<i>Ethical Literacy</i>	X	<i>Critical Thinking Skills</i>
X	<i>Cultural Literacy</i>		<i>Participation Skills</i>
	<i>Geographic Literacy</i>	Democratic Understanding and Civic Values	
	<i>Economic Literacy</i>	X	<i>National Identity</i>
	<i>Sociopolitical Literacy</i>		<i>Constitutional Heritage</i>
			<i>Civic Values, Rights, and Responsibilities</i>

## Reading Profile

FLESCH-KINCAID GRADE LEVEL	5.0	FLESCH READING EASE IN %	76.9
TOTAL WORDS	629	WORDS PER SENTENCE	9.9

## THE PRINCE IS SHOCKED TO LEARN

The time is 2,500 years ago, and the place is India. At that time in central India there lived a king who owned a marvelous castle. Outside the castle was a town. The people in the town were very, very poor. But, inside the castle, the king and his family lived in splendor. The king was rich, very rich. And he had many servants.



The king's family followed the Hindu religion. Most people living in the castle followed the Hindu religion. So did the people who lived in the town.

In the Hindu way of life, the people held to a caste system. They believed that people were born into a certain class or caste. They believed people lived their lives within that caste. The king and his family were in the warrior caste. In those days the other castes were priest caste, farmer/merchant caste, laborer caste, and the "outcasts."

The king had a son, the prince. The prince was a spoiled child. The boy wore the finest silk clothes. He ate excellent foods. He had lots of amusements. He had plenty of other children to play with. His father provided him the very best teachers. In fact, the king permitted his son *almost* everything he wanted.

There was only one thing the king would not give the prince. The boy grew to want this one thing most. The prince was never allowed to leave the castle.

The king said to his son, "You can never go beyond the walls of our castle." So, although the prince lived in luxury, in a way he was a prisoner. He was a captive in a magnificent prison.

The actual name of the prince was Siddhartha Gautama. Today we know him by another name, Buddha. You may wonder how Siddhartha got his new name.

Until age twenty-nine, the prince lived in his luxurious castle-prison. But one day he secretly left the castle. He went out into the nearby town. There he was amazed to

find crippled old men and women. He saw people without enough to eat. There were sick and dying people.

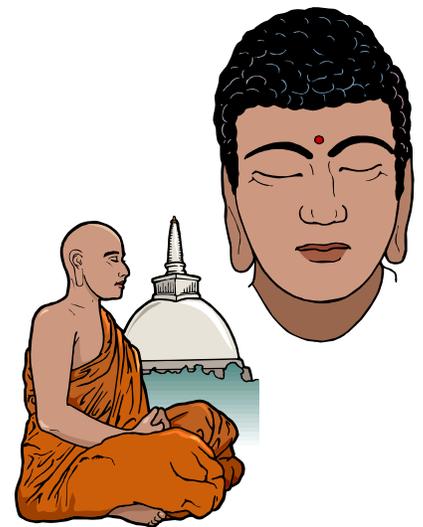
Siddhartha was shocked. His father had never let him see anyone in such conditions before. He had led a protected life. He had been shielded from reality.

The prince was stunned by what he saw! He was so dismayed that he abandoned the world he had known. He left the castle to become a wandering person. Siddhartha traveled for six years in search of a solution to the problems of death and human suffering.

Finally, at age 35, Siddhartha reached another turning point in his life. After much spiritual searching and self-discipline, he began to think anew about life and living. While resting and meditating under a fig tree, Siddhartha came to a fresh understanding. He reached *enlightenment*, or wisdom.

His new insights spurred Siddhartha to continue his travels up and down the Ganges River. This time, however, he lived by his new wisdom.

For the next 45 years, the former prince told other people about four noble truths. Many people listened. He taught of an eight-part noble path to *nirvana* (lack of sorrow): Siddhartha came to be called the Buddha (Enlightened One). He gained many devout followers. From these “Buddhists” a new religion grew.



The religion that Siddhartha founded is now one of the largest of the world’s religions—Buddhism. But as a youth, he had lived and thought differently. He had followed the customs of one more of the great religions—Hinduism.

The Hindu way of life had been tradition for the young Siddhartha. But what the prince learned at age 29 caused him to take a new and different path. He broke with the religion of his father, his family, his friends, and his people.

## Some Questions to Consider

1. What did Siddhartha learn that caused him to discard his whole way of life?
2. Suppose you were a castle dweller and knew Siddhartha growing up.
  - a) What would you think about his rejecting his former lifestyle?
  - b) Would you approve of Siddhartha's new path?
  - c) Do you think it would matter whether you were in servant caste or in warrior caste?
3. After his enlightenment, Siddhartha (Buddha) began pronouncing four noble truths, rather than believing in the Hindu caste system.
  - a) How might his new wisdom change his way of living?
  - b) Do you think he was really able to leave his Hindu background completely behind?
4. Siddhartha's father wanted Siddhartha to keep the customary religion (Hinduism). Is that something unusual? Or is it typical for parents to encourage religious conformity in their children?
5. If Siddhartha had always obeyed and never left the castle, do you think he would ever have changed?



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## You can learn more about these topics!

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### *Hinduism*

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Hinduism is a very old religion. It had already existed a thousand years before the people in this story were born! Over time it had blended the thinking of many different peoples. Hindu believers worship multiple gods. *Reincarnation* is one Hindu belief. It is the idea that, after a person's death, that person is reborn into a new body to live another life.

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*Try to find out:*

- *What are some Hindu gods?*
  - *What does reincarnation involve?*
  - *What other ideas are important to Hindu people?*
  - *If you have no Hindu friends to ask, how might you get acquainted with some Hindus?*
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### *Buddhism*

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Buddhism teaches the practice of meditation. It also instructs the observance of four truths: 1) just *being* involves heartache; 2) the cause of suffering is desire for pleasure and power and possessions; 3) there is a stop to suffering (nirvana); 4) there is a path leading to the end of suffering. Buddha recommended that people take the "middle way." He taught eight avenues to nirvana: right views, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

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*Try to find out:*

- *What are some other teachings of Buddha?*
- *Is nirvana the same thing as happiness?*
- *If you have no Buddhist friends to ask these questions, how could you acquire some?*

**The Greek Gods  
Meet Their Match**

**2**

**Main Goal**

Students can analyze historical situations in which free and independent thought changed the course of history and resulted in social progress.

*Affective: Nurture students’ appreciation that a different drummer’s actions or views may in the long run be of benefit.*

**Story Matrix Reference**

PERIOD IN HISTORY	THEME
Ancient Times	Independent Thinking in Natural Science
For kernel of story, see Story Matrix in this manual on page 66.	

**Story Lesson Context**

Knowledge and Cultural Understanding		Skills Attainment and Social Participation	
X	<i>Historical Literacy</i>	X	<i>Basic Study Skills</i>
	<i>Ethical Literacy</i>	X	<i>Critical Thinking Skills</i>
X	<i>Cultural Literacy</i>		<i>Participation Skills</i>
	<i>Geographic Literacy</i>	Democratic Understanding and Civic Values	
	<i>Economic Literacy</i>	X	<i>National Identity</i>
	<i>Sociopolitical Literacy</i>		<i>Constitutional Heritage</i>
			<i>Civic Values, Rights, and Responsibilities</i>

**Reading Profile**

FLESCH-KINCAID GRADE LEVEL	6.9	FLESCH READING EASE IN %	62.5
TOTAL WORDS	782	WORDS PER SENTENCE	9.8

## THE GREEK GODS MEET THEIR MATCH

In ancient Greece, the people believed in numerous gods. There was Zeus, Hera, Athena and Apollo and many, many more. The people thought that their gods had supernatural powers. They believed their gods could influence human activity.

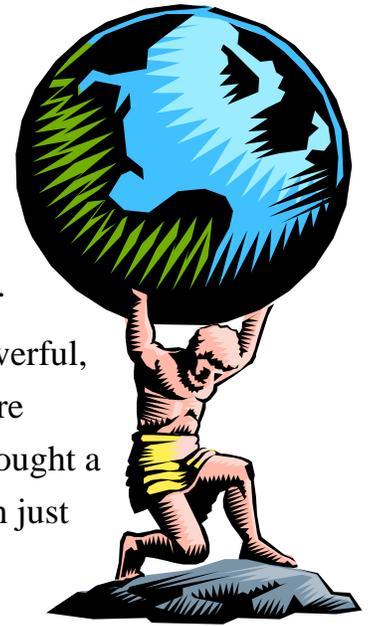
The gods of the ancient Greek religion were not totally powerful, however. As most ancient Greeks saw things, actions of gods were limited somewhat by the relentless force of fate. But then they thought a god, Moira, ruled “Fate” itself. So, gods seemed to be involved in just about everything.

The people trusted their gods to look out for them. They thought the gods played an important role as “guardians of the city-states” of Greece. People also thought their gods could provide information. Through *divination* rites, a person could learn about his or her future on earth. (This is much like fortune telling.)

All in all, in ancient Greece over two thousand years ago, superstition reigned. Greece was a place where beliefs in the supernatural overshadowed concerns of daily life. But in the sixth century BCE, some people began to see things differently. They were the first *philosophers* (as we call them today). These philosophers had an inquiring mind-set.

Looking back from modern times, we have a name for many of these philosophers. Historians dub them the “Wise Men” of ancient Greece. Some of these fellows sought their answers in a new way. These philosophers did not answer questions about events in terms of the gods. They used *rational* inquiry instead. And how did they expect other people to find meaning in events? They felt people could use their own *intellect* to explain events. Two such “wise guys” were Thales of Miletus and Aristotle of Athens.

Thales (b. 625? BCE) was just about the first “intellectualist” in the region. He came from the Greek city-state, Miletus. He was an astronomer and mathematician. Thales was curious about his world. And, he interpreted it differently from his fellow Greeks. If there were a bad storm, for example, his neighbors would think a god had caused it. Thales didn’t think so. He used his intellect. He tried to investigate and conclude for himself. Many of Thales’ efforts proved unsuccessful. And, over time, most of his conclusions have been



replaced. But, he took a great first step toward science. Thales searched for natural explanations. He didn't blame the gods.

Some distance away from Miletus was Athens, Greece. Athens was a much more important place in those days. From our modern perspective, this city-state was a very significant. It was the center of the ancient Greek civilization. Athens was the birthplace of another wise Greek guy—Aristotle. Aristotle's thinking also challenged the gods.

Aristotle had good fortune. He was born at a place and time well suited to his inquiring mind. A former ruler of Greece, Solon, had established a democracy of its freemen. And by 500 BCE, democratic Greece had become a strong country. When Aristotle was born (about 380 BCE), Athens was very powerful. It was entering into what we sometimes call the Golden Age of Greek history. During this time, the people continued to believe in their gods. But in that culture, philosophy *too* could flourish.

There were some great citizens of Greece during the Golden Age. Among the greatest were Socrates, Sophocles, Plato, and Alexander the Great.

Aristotle studied under Plato. Then, in 335 BCE he opened his own school in Athens. As a teacher, he tutored Alexander the Great. (Alexander later conquered most of the known world at that time.) As a reflective thinker, Aristotle wrote works on many things, including science and philosophy.

Many of Aristotle's ideas were unlike those accepted in his day. He taught, for example, that to arrive at a sensible answer to a question, you must use *observation* followed by *logic*. This teaching was certainly different from what the prevailing Greek religion advised. The religion instructed adherents to consult with the priests. To arrive at a sensible answer to a question, a believer would go and ask the priests. The priests then communicated with the appropriate god(s). Sometimes the gods gave a favorable response. But not always. Often the reward the Greeks expected from their gods just did not happen.

As time went on, the “guardians of the Greek city-states” continuously disappointed the citizens. People became dissatisfied with the deeds of Zeus and the other gods. There was increasing disillusionment. Civil strife followed the classical period. The city-states' gods were then “on trial.” But the citizens of Greece did not look to the philosophy of Thales and Aristotle for solutions. Instead, popular religion from the Greek countryside arose. It accentuated the promise of afterlife. It emphasized elaborate rites offered by cults.

## Some Questions to Consider

1. Pretend you are an ordinary Greek citizen in ancient Athens (2000 years ago):
  - a) Who do you think is guarding and protecting your city-state?
  - b) When you or one of your fellow citizens has some good fortune, who gets credit?
  - c) How will you assign blame for your bad luck?
2. Think about the ancient Athenian's religious beliefs. How much effect do you think these beliefs had on how the people interpreted everyday events?
3. Suppose the ancient Greeks' society is going along well. What do you suppose the citizens would think about the gods? What would they think of the gods when things were going badly?
4. How well did citizens of Ancient Greece *understand* natural events such as weather? How do you think their knowledge compares with how much we have today?
5. How much *control* over natural events did a typical Athenian citizen have? How do you think it compares with how much control you have today?
6. What traits did Thales and Aristotle have in common?
7. How were these two philosophers *different* from most fellow citizens?
8. When citizens of ancient Greece had questions, where were they supposed to look for their answers?
9. What did Thales do to try to find answers to his questions? Where did Aristotle look for answers to his questions?

## Quotations from Aristotle

- *What the statesman is most anxious to produce is a certain moral character in his fellow citizens, namely a disposition to virtue and the performance of virtuous actions.*
- *The moral virtues, then, are produced in us neither by nature nor against nature. Nature, indeed, prepares in us the ground for their reception, but their complete formation is the product of habit.*
- *All men by nature desire knowledge.*



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## You can learn more about these topics!

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### *The religion of the ancient Greeks*

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The people had many gods. The Greeks believed that lots had been cast by these gods to divide the universe. When lots were cast, the god Poseidon received the sea. The god, Hades, drew the underworld. The heavens and the earth went to Zeus. Because humans dwelled on earth, Zeus was a very important god to the Greek people.

Ruling from his court on Mt. Olympus, Zeus was the symbol of power, rule, and law. He was worshipped in connection with almost every aspect of human life. He was the rewarder of good, and the punisher of evil. Zeus was god of weather (his most famous weapon was the thunderbolt) and of fertility. An amorous god, Zeus loved goddesses, nymphs, and mortals. He fathered many children.

- *Have you heard of Apollo? Venus? Hercules? What other gods did the Greeks have?*
  - *Do you know any interesting stories about the mischief of the ancient Greek gods?*
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### *The philosophy of Thales*

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Thales recognized humans as part of a *natural* world. And he tried to understand the rules behind the nature of the world. For example, he is known to have rubbed a piece of amber with a cloth and observed it attracting bits of feathers. He used geometry to predict an eclipse of the sun. The approach of Thales and several other early philosophers from Miletus has come to be viewed as *materialistic*. These men looked to material (matter) and not to myth for their explanations.

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### *The philosophy of Aristotle*

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Aristotle believed the highest good for the individual is obtained through the function of the human brain and *rationality*. He attempted to develop a science, limited by the scientific materials then available. He concerned himself chiefly with the anatomical structures of animals, their reproduction, and their evolution. He founded the study of comparative anatomy in an effort to categorize animal life into biological groups.

After the decline of Greece and then Rome, Aristotle's work was lost. But, many centuries later, it was reintroduced to the West through the work of Arab and Jewish scholars. It became the basis of medieval study. Many of Aristotle's ideas are still alive today. His work laid the groundwork for our present scientific understanding of our world. We learned that much really can be explained through observation and the use of the human brain. Our reliance on the actions of gods is less than in ancient days.

# 3

## ***The Man of Many Questions***

### **Main Goal**

Students can analyze historical situations in which free and independent thought changed the course of history and resulted in social progress.

*Affective: Cultivate in students a sense that those who think “too differently” may be vulnerable and in need of legal protection.*

### **Story Matrix Reference**

PERIOD IN HISTORY	THEME
Ancient Times	Independent Thinking in Politics
For kernel of story, see Story Matrix in this manual on page 66.	

### **Story Lesson Context**

Knowledge and Cultural Understanding		Skills Attainment and Social Participation	
X	<i>Historical Literacy</i>	X	<i>Basic Study Skills</i>
X	<i>Ethical Literacy</i>	X	<i>Critical Thinking Skills</i>
X	<i>Cultural Literacy</i>		<i>Participation Skills</i>
	<i>Geographic Literacy</i>	Democratic Understanding and Civic Values	
	<i>Economic Literacy</i>	X	<i>National Identity</i>
	<i>Sociopolitical Literacy</i>		<i>Constitutional Heritage</i>
		X	<i>Civic Values, Rights, and Responsibilities</i>

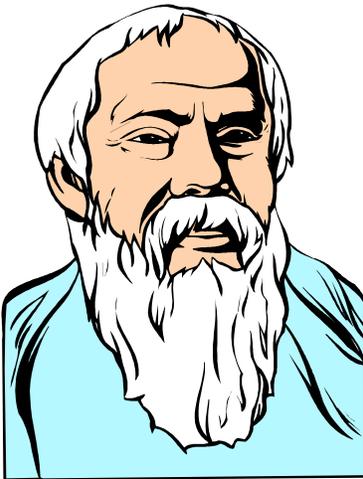
### **Reading Profile**

FLESCH-KINCAID GRADE LEVEL	5.5	FLESCH READING EASE IN %	71.3
TOTAL WORDS	649	WORDS PER SENTENCE	9

## THE MAN OF MANY QUESTIONS

The scene is ancient Athens (Greece). It is over 2,000 years ago. An important trial is going on. The trial is so important that we still remember it, even today. The person on trial is named Socrates, and he will be convicted and sentenced to death.

Socrates is regarded as one of the wisest people ever to have lived. What had Socrates done that was so bad?



Socrates was a teacher and philosopher. With his pupils, Socrates is thought to have been very effective. He had a different way of teaching. Socrates drew forth knowledge from his students. We now call his method “Socratic dialogue.” He pursued a series of questions. He would query his pupils. He would have them examine the implications of their answers. He would keep on asking one question after another, inspiring them to think more carefully and deeply about their own ideas.

Too bad that Socrates did not limit his questioning to his pupils! Socrates was continually provoking people to ask questions. He wanted them to ask questions about their government. He roused them to ask questions about their religion, too.

Greece at this time had a democratic form of government, in some ways like ours. There were schools and scholars. And, it was a time of peace. The religion of Greece had numerous gods and goddesses. Included were Zeus, Hades, Poseidon, Hera, Apollo, and Venus. There were many others. In those “golden times,” the people were feeling good about their government. They liked their society. In their view, all was right with the gods. The gods were smiling on Athens. And yet, here was Socrates always asking questions! To some people, his constant questioning was a nuisance.

Socrates was described as having neglected his own personal affairs. Instead of doing what was expected of him, he spent his time teaching. He discussed virtue (goodness). He discussed justice (fair play). And he discussed piety (dedication). He

discussed and discussed, wherever his fellow citizens got together. His inquiries could be stimulating and informative. They could also be annoying.

His criticism of political and religious institutions began to make Socrates many enemies. He was teaching people to ask hard questions. He wanted them to question politicians about the way they ruled. Why, he was even teaching people to question whether their religious beliefs were true! All in all, this man was causing a lot of problems to some citizens in Athens, Greece.

Soon, these people were fed up. Charges were brought against Socrates. He was accused of corrupting the morals of Athenian youth. He was arrested and charged for religious heresies (nonconformity). A court convicted him. But the fate of Socrates was not yet sealed.



In those days there were some ways of possibly getting out of a court sentence. Socrates had some options. He could have tried bribery, for example. Or he could have apologized. He could have promised to stop his questioning and teachings. He might have said “I was very wrong, and I promise I won’t do it again.” Or, he could have gone into exile (left Athens). Any of those methods might have saved Socrates. But he refused to use them. As before, he chose his own path.

Socrates resisted all efforts to save his life. Instead, he willingly drank a cup of poison (hemlock). He stated that he had never lied to the youth of Athens. He said he did not break any of the laws of Athens. Socrates said that he never kept his opinions to himself. He would not start now simply to save his life. One of the most famous pronouncements from Socrates is this: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Today we suppose that Socrates wanted very much to stay alive. But he wanted to continue examining life, too. His student Plato described the trial and death of Socrates. You can still read about the event.

## Some Questions to Consider

1. Suppose you are Socrates' pupil. One day he tells you: "The unexamined life is not worth living," What does he mean by this? What do you think he hopes you will do?
2. Socrates asked his pupils about being fair, about what is good, about right and wrong, and about rules. Suppose he asked you a question and you honestly answered. What happens next?
3. If Socrates did not break any laws or tell any lies, what did he do that was so wrong that he should be put to death?
4. Socrates criticized both political and religious institutions. The story does not say who brought the charges against Socrates. What are some possibilities you would suggest?
5. To some people, it looks like Socrates is simply a busybody or agitator of other people. Do you think it was his thinking and questioning alone that makes him such a nuisance? If not, then what was it?
6. Imagine this: One of your classmates, Lynn, is very smart. And on the playground and after school she asks many questions.

*Why do we have to stay in line to take a drink? How does the water fountain really work? Why do we get a penalty if we are late to class? Why is the sky blue? Why can't we pass notes in class if we are quiet about it? Why can't we wear any clothes we want?*

- a) Would Lynn's queries perhaps make you also think about such issues?
  - b) What effects might her continuous questioning have on you, or on other classmates?
  - c) Do you think the teachers and principal would view all the questions she has asked similarly? (Or would some questions bother them more than others?)
  - d) How do you think the adults would respond to a child who is continually asking such questions?
7. Think of people in the news or on TV or radio or in movies today.
    - a) Is there anyone who bothers people much as Socrates bothered many of his fellow citizens? Who?
    - b) What actions make the person(s) so bothersome?
    - c) Is there anyone who questions or criticizes much like Socrates?

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## You can learn more about these topics!

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### *Socratic Thought*

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Socrates (470?-399 B.C.E.) was learned in geometry and astronomy, but he focused on human problems. He not only questioned; he had some different ideas. He equated virtue with knowing one's true self. He held that no one knowingly does wrong. (He believed that goodness was based on wisdom, and wickedness was based on ignorance.) He looked upon the soul as the seat of both waking consciousness and moral character.

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### *Socratic Practice*

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Socrates felt it his duty to help Athenians become wiser. He devised a method of teaching to help them test their opinions about what is good and bad. He used it often. He asked questions that made his pupils examine their own beliefs. He taught them to go beyond opinion for essential meaning. He likened himself to a gadfly that went about Athens to sting people out of their ignorance. He wanted to awaken them to search for wisdom.

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### **Quotations from Socrates**

- *You must train the children to their studies in a playful manner, and without any air of constraint, with the further object of discerning more readily the natural bent of their respective characters.*
- *Reason transformed into prejudice is the worst form of prejudice, because reason is the only instrument for liberation from prejudice.*
- *These, then, will be some of the features of democracy . . . it will be, in all likelihood, an agreeable, lawless, parti-colored commonwealth, dealing with all alike on a footing of equality, whether they be really equal or not.*
- *Wars and revolutions and battles are due simply and solely to the body and its desires. All wars are undertaken for the acquisition of wealth; and the reason why we have to acquire wealth is the body, because we are slaves in its service.*
- *Well I am certainly wiser than this man. It is only too likely that neither of us has any knowledge to boast of; but he thinks that he knows something which he does not know, whereas I am quite conscious of my ignorance. At any rate it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent, that I do not think that I know what I do not know.*

