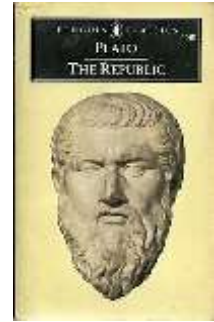


Plato's Republic

Socrates is one of the earliest and most influential philosophers you will study. Socrates believed that people needed to be trained to think philosophically and challenge superficial assumptions, if they were to form sound judgements. After Socrates' execution in 399BCE, **Plato** began to write, as a way of keeping the memory of him alive. Socrates lives on as a character in Plato's most famous work 'The Republic' where he, along with other characters such as Thrasymachus and Glaucon become involved in a dialogue about issues such as justice.



Task: Whilst listening to the podcast about Plato's Republic, answer the following questions...

Discussion with James Warren

1. What was the political situation Plato was writing the Republic? Who were considered citizens?
2. What was Athenian democracy like? *What were citizens expected to do?*
3. How does James Warren describe Socrates?
4. Why was Socrates put to death in 399BCE?

Discussion with Angela Hobbs (from 4:42)

5. What does Thrasymachus say to Socrates about justice and injustice in Plato's Republic?
6. What does Socrates think of Thrasymachus' view of the good life?

Discussion with MM McCabe (from 8:55)

7. Melvyn Bragg asks if Plato's Republic focuses on justice with regards to the individual or with regards to the state. What does MM McCabe conclude?
8. What does McCabe say a good (and therefore just) state is according to Plato?

Open Discussion (from 13:28)

9. What is Plato's story of the ring? *What does the ring do? What does the shepherd do with the ring?*

10. Plato argues that if humans had said ring (also known as the *Ring of Gyges*) they would carry out bad deeds. Why?
11. An ideal state is one that is ruled by philosophers. How does Plato justify this?
12. If someone knows what is good, what does Plato say they be motivated to do as a result?
13. What is Plato's parable (normally referred to as allegory) of the cave? *Plato's allegory of the cave is also mentioned in your reading material for task one.*
14. What does Socrates in the Republic say the prisoners in the cave symbolise?
15. What does Warren say the prisoners fail to recognise?
16. If we cannot be a philosopher, what does Warren say is the next best thing?
17. What does Socrates say about art?
18. What is Plato's distinction between knowledge and belief?
19. What is Plato's legacy according to McCabe?

Oligarchy: *a small group of people having control of a country or organization.*

Democracy: *a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.*

Equilibrium: *a state in which opposing forces or influences are balanced.*

Philosopher: *a person engaged or learned in philosophy, especially as an academic discipline. In Plato's time, a philosopher spent many years learning and as a result, is someone who has strong ethical knowledge. They are moral experts.*

Totalitarian: *relating to a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state*