

### Activity 1:

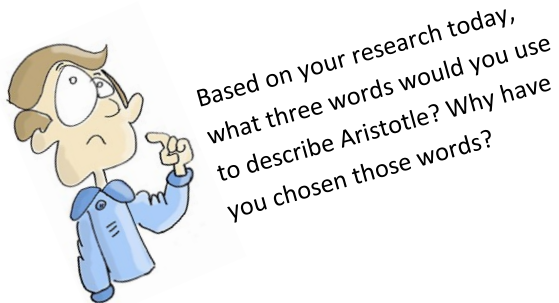
Look at this painting of Aristotle (in blue) at the lyceum . Use Resource 1 to write:

- What you can see?
- What you can infer about Aristotle?
- Questions you would like to ask about Aristotle?



### Activity 2:

Use the information sheet to discover more about who Aristotle was. You can use the information sheet to develop your own fact file, poster or comic strip depicting the main events of his life.



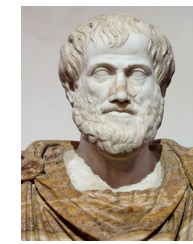
*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." — Aristotle*



### Activity 3:

Watch the first 3 minutes of the video about Aristotle and using the information answer the questions—  
What makes people happy? What makes your life happy?

**Did you know?**  
Aristotle also defined what he called the "golden mean." Living a moral life, Aristotle believed, was the ultimate goal. Doing so means approaching every ethical dilemma by finding a mean between living to excess and living deficiently, taking into account an individual's needs and circumstances.



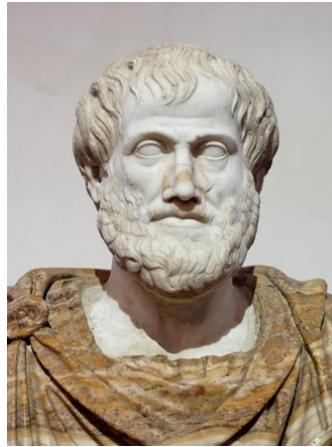
**Did you know?  
9 facts about  
Aristotle!**

- Aristotle is regarded by many as the most intelligent man to ever walk on this planet.
- He was born in 384 BCE in ancient Macedonia which is now northern Greece.
- He belonged to a noble family and his father was a doctor - the personal physician to King Amyntas of Macedon.
- Aristotle married Pythias. She bore him a daughter, whom they also named Pythias.
- He had a son named Nicomachus who died in a battle while still a lad. The Nicomachen Ethics, a compilation of Aristotle's lecture notes, was probably dedicated and named after him.
- He was a student of Plato in the "Academy". And like his teacher, his main source of income is also teaching. He founded his own school known as the "Lyceum".
- He went back and lived in Macedonia for 10 years from 345 BCE to 335 BCE where he worked as tutor to Alexander the Great.
- Alexander and Aristotle were good friends. Alexander would collect specimens from the lands he conquered for Aristotle.
- Aristotle was forced to close his school in Athens and died a year after (322 BCE) Alexander's death. He was 62 years of age.





Plato and Aristotle walking and disputing. Detail from Raphael's *The School of Athens* (1509-1511)



Roman copy in marble of a Greek bronze bust of Aristotle by Lysippos, c. 330 BC

### Aristotle: A Little Background

Aristotle (c. 384 B.C. to 322 B.C.) was an Ancient Greek philosopher and scientist who is still considered one of the greatest thinkers in politics, psychology and ethics. When Aristotle turned 17, he enrolled in Plato's Academy. In 338, he began tutoring Alexander the Great. In 335, Aristotle founded his own school, the Lyceum, in Athens, where he spent most of the rest of his life studying, teaching and writing. Some of his most notable works include *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *Metaphysics*, *Poetics* and *Prior Analytics*. The medieval outlook is sometimes considered to be the "Aristotelian worldview" and St. Thomas Aquinas simply refers to Aristotle as "The Philosopher" as though there were no other.

Aristotle was the first to classify areas of human knowledge into distinct disciplines such as mathematics, biology, and ethics. Some of these classifications are still used today, such as the species-genus system taught in biology classes. He was the first to devise a formal system for reasoning, whereby the validity of an argument is determined by its structure rather than its content. Consider the following syllogism: All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal. Here we can see that as long as the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true, no matter what we substitute for "men" or "is mortal." Aristotle's brand of logic dominated this area of thought until the rise of modern symbolic logic in the late 19th Century.

Aristotle was the founder of the Lyceum, the first scientific institute, based in Athens, Greece. Along with his teacher Plato, he was one of the strongest supporters of a liberal arts education, which stresses the education of the whole person, including one's moral character, rather than merely learning a set of skills. According to Aristotle, this view of education is necessary if we are to produce a society of happy as well as productive individuals.

### Philosophy

Aristotle's work on philosophy influenced ideas from late antiquity all the way through the Renaissance. One of the main focuses of Aristotle's philosophy was his systematic concept of logic. Aristotle's objective was to come up with a universal process of reasoning that would allow man to learn every conceivable thing about reality. The initial process involved describing objects based on their characteristics, states of being and actions. In his philosophical treatises, Aristotle also discussed how man might next obtain information about objects through deduction and inference. To Aristotle, a deduction was a reasonable argument in which "when certain things are laid down, something else follows out of necessity in virtue of their being so." His theory of deduction is the basis of what philosophers now call a syllogism, a logical argument where the conclusion is inferred from two or more other premises of a certain form.

### The golden mean:

Aristotle also defined what he called the "golden mean." Living a moral life, Aristotle believed, was the ultimate goal. Doing so means approaching every ethical dilemma by finding a mean between living to excess and living deficiently, taking into account an individual's needs and circumstances.

### Legacy

In the century following Aristotle's death, his works fell out of use, but they were revived during the first century. Over time, they came to lay the foundation of more than seven centuries of philosophy. Aristotle's influence on Western thought in the humanities and social sciences is largely considered unparalleled, with the exception of his teacher Plato's contributions, and Plato's teacher Socrates before him. The two-millennia-strong academic practice of interpreting and debating Aristotle's philosophical works continues to endure.

