



# Greek Philosophy - Simple Guides

*Sophia Macdonald*

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## **THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU**

- to appreciate the revolution in thinking brought about by the Ancient Greek philosophers, who sought to make sense of the world through analysis, reasoning and argument
- to recognize the key ideas of the most significant philosophers and their contribution to Western thought
- to learn about the philosophers' lives, and their impact on society
- to appreciate the value of questioning received wisdom and submitting it to rigorous analysis

To live in the modern world is to owe a debt of gratitude to the Ancient Greeks. Ancient Greece was one of the wellsprings of European civilization, and the Greeks were both the pioneers of rigorous analytical thought and the creators of prose and poetry that speak to us over the centuries.

Materialism and idealism form the two major strands of Greek philosophy: thinking about the universe, nature and matter; and thinking about humanity, politics, justice, good and evil, and our relationship with the divine. The Greeks were the first to distinguish between myth and philosophy, and to develop a scientific method of enquiry. In ancient Greece 'natural philosophers' studied mathematics, physics, logic, cosmology, medicine, Politics, ethics and aesthetics. Democracy, atoms, copycat killings — the Greeks had opinions on these and many more, and their conclusions have often proved prescient. Cynicism and Stoicism are Greek philosophical schools whose names have passed into common parlance.

This lucid introduction to Greek philosophy links important ideas to key personalities and places. It shows the development and movement of people and ideas around the Mediterranean world, from the time of the earliest pre Socratic philosophers, through Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and the Sophists to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Cynics and the Stoics. Written in a clear and engaging style, it is a fascinating account of the major source of Western culture and today's knowledge-based society.

## **ACCESS THE WORLD'S PHILOSOPHIES**

*Simple Guides: Philosophy* is a series of concise introductions to the major philosophies of the world. Written by experts in the field, these accessible guides offer a fascinating account of the rich variety of arguments ideas and systems of thought articulated by different cultures in the attempt to explore and define the nature of reality, and the meaning, purpose and proper conduct of life.

The *Simple Guides* will appeal to analytical thinkers and spiritual seekers alike. Taken together, they provide a basic introduction to the evolution of human thought, and a point of reference for further exploration and discovery. By offering essential insights into the world views of different societies, they also enable travellers to behave in a way that fosters mutual respect and understanding.

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