

Aristotle Quote Analysis

Name: _____ Period: _____

Directions: The following quotes are from Aristotle's *Politics*. Respond to the questions. Discuss the quotes in groups. Agree or disagree with Aristotle.

1. *“EVERY STATE is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.”*

How does Aristotle feel about the “state” (government of a society)?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.

2. *“The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state.”*

Why does Aristotle believe the state is created by nature?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.

3. *“The term ‘constitution’ signifies the same thing as the term ‘civic body’. The civic body in every city is the sovereign; and the sovereign must necessarily be either One, or Few, or Many. On this basis we may say that when the One, or the Few, or the Many rule with a view to the common interest, the constitutions under which they do so must necessarily be right constitutions. On the other hand, the*

constitutions directed to the personal interest of the One, or the Few Or the Masses, must necessarily be perversions”.

What makes a constitution a ‘right’ constitution?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.

4. *“Where the middle class outweighs in number both the other classes, or even one of them, it is possible for a constitution to be permanent. There is no risk, in such a case, of the rich uniting with the poor to oppose the middle class: neither will one ever be willing to be subject to the other; and if they try to find a constitution which is more in their common interest than this, they will fail to find one.”*

Why does a good government require a middle class?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.

5. *“Whenever a majority takes everything and divides among its members the possession of a minority, that majority is obviously ruining the city. But goodness does not ruin whatever possesses it, nor can justice be such as to ruin a city. It is therefore clear that a law of this kind cannot possibly be just.”*

Why is a majority that takes away from a minority bad?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.

6. *“...the goodness of the city is not the work of fortune; it requires knowledge and purpose. A city is good in virtue of the goodness of the citizens who have a share in its constitution....Even if it is possible for all to be good [collectively], without*

each being good individually, the latter is preferable, for if each individual is good it will follow that all [collectively] are good.”

How does a city become good?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.

7. *“Animate beings other than men live mostly by natural impulse, though some are also guided to a slight extent by habit. Man lives by reason too; and he is unique in having this. It follows that these [three powers of man] must be **tuned to agree**: men are often led by reason not to follow habit and natural impulse, once they have been persuaded that some other course is better.”*

Why does Aristotle believe it is necessary to “tune” human nature, habits, and reason?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.

8. *“The legislation of the true statesman must be framed with a view to all of these factors: it must cover the different parts of the soul and their different activities and should be directed more to the higher than the lower, and rather to ends than means. The same goes for the different parts or ways of life and for the choice of different activities. It is true that one must be able to engage in work and in war; but one must be even more able to lead a life of leisure and peace. It is true, again, that one must be able to do necessary or useful acts; but one must be even more able to do deeds of value. These are the general aims which ought to be followed in the education of childhood and of the stages of life which still require education.”*

What are the goals of education according to Aristotle?

Explain why you agree or disagree with Aristotle.
