Compare Greek city states

Athens and Sparta were probably the two most famous and powerful city states in Ancient Greece. However, they were both very different.
Location

Athens was very close to the sea. As a result, they had a strong naval fleet and became traders. They also shared their culture with others and learned about other cultures.

Spartans lived on a plain between the mountains called the Peloponnesus. This suited them fine as the mountains provided excellent protection from enemies!
Sparta liked to have strong leaders. It had two kings which was useful – it meant one could rule if the other was away fighting! They would pass their crowns to their sons.

Athens had a new way of ruling called “democracy”. What does this word mean today?

However, only citizens could be part of this, and that excluded women, slaves and foreigners!

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City life

Athens had a yearly festival for drama, athletics and religion. The city taxes paid for some of this, but the rest was funded by rich citizens. They loved music and beauty, and women would wear beautiful jewellery and makeup.

Spartans had a hard life with few luxuries. Sickly babies were killed, and the rest were trained as warriors from a young age. Women would be trained in fighting and would help with things like running farms and looking after slaves.
Education

Athenian boys would receive a good education in reading and writing at school. They were encouraged to be creative and great thinkers. Girls would stay at home and might have a tutor if they were rich enough. They weren’t even allowed outside unless they were with a man!

Spartans didn’t believe in school – it got in the way of being a good soldier! Boys would train from the age of 7 and had to join the Spartan army. Girls also took part in the training so that they’d have strong babies!
Warfare

Athenian men aged between 20-50 could be called up for military service. Athens had a strong naval force and were masters of the sea.

Spartans were land-locked so had a very strong land army. Spartan mothers told their sons before they left for battle “Come back with your shield, or on it”. Only a coward would drop his shield and run away.