



Kentucky teacher **Jeff Gulle** reports how he uses reciprocal teaching in his history lesson.

Reciprocal Teaching

Jeff Gulle is a social studies/history teacher in Kentucky and one of his learning modules is on the ancient Greek city-state of Sparta. He uses Reciprocal Teaching to introduce the material. In the lesson, he gives the class a page of reading. They use this page for discussion and to complete the template for Reciprocal Teaching.

Mr. Gulle
Social Studies

Sparta

Sparta was an Ancient Greek city-state. Its cultural characteristics were quite different from those of every other contemporary society.

The Army: Sparta's Way of Life. The society of Sparta was based on the military. The goal of every Spartan male was to become the best soldier he could possibly be. All children, even girls, were given heavy physical training. Boys were taken from their families at age 7 and sent to army camps – whether they wanted to go or not. At the camps, the boys lived in large barracks, ate together, and spent most of each day in training.

From the ages of 20 to 30, Spartan men served as soldiers, protected the Spartan city-state, made war, and kept the slaves behaving. When a man reached age 30 (if he survived) he was considered a full citizen. He could then return home, marry, and start a family. He officially retired from the army at age 60.

Most of the actual work in Sparta, such as tending the farms, was done by slaves who were called **helots**. Having slaves in the city left the male citizens free to continue their training. Once a year, the Spartans killed any helot they thought might not be completely loyal to Sparta.

Spartan women had much freedom. They had many of the same rights as men, and they often participated in sports. This was much different from the situation in the Greek city-state of Athens, where

women were virtually owned by their husbands or fathers. In fact, it is said that women in Sparta were more free than any other women in Ancient Greece.

Government of Sparta. Sparta's government was somewhat different from the governments of other ancient civilizations. Unlike the Mesopotamian civilizations and Ancient Egypt, which were monarchies, Sparta was an **oligarchy**, a government run by a few elite citizens. This small group was called the **gerousia**, and was made up of 28 citizens over the age of 60. Sparta also had two kings, who were also members of the **gerousia**.

Sparta vs. Athens: The Peloponnesian War. The conflict for which Sparta is best-known was the **Peloponnesian War**. Although Spartan society was

entirely devoted to the military, this was not true of Athens. The Athenians did have a strong army and navy, but life there also included an appreciation of art, trade, philosophy, and education. The Spartans saw these things as wastes of time and effort. Athenian soldiers were well-trained –

but not nearly as much so as the Spartans. This difference in cultural values enabled Sparta to defeat Athens in the war.

Sparta had few, if any, architectural, literary, or artistic achievements. Today, the remains of the city lay in ruins.

A Man's Life In Sparta

Birth – Age 7: Spartan boys lived at home

Ages 7 – 20: Boys lived in camps and received intense physical training

Ages 20 – 30: Military service

Age 30: Men became full citizens. They could return home and marry. They remained members of the army until age 60.



Reciprocal Teaching (continued)

Step One—Organizing

For this activity, the students are seated in groups of four. Prior to the distribution of the reading passage, Jeff announces who in each group will be assigned as Predictor, Questioner, Clarifier, and Summarizer. There is a wide variety of ways in which this can be done. In this case, each of the desks in a group of four is labeled according to the four cardinal directions. The occupant of the “north” desk will be the Predictor; the student in the “east” desk will be the Questioner; and the “south” and “west” students will be the Clarifier and Summarizer, respectively. Jeff also announces that today the Predictor will serve as “captain,” empowered to make any decisions needed within the group should such a need arise. (This isn’t needed very often, but it’s better for the groups to be prepared than to risk a classroom disruption caused by confused students.)

Jeff distributes a set of the reading and the Reciprocal Reading Chart to each group. (See last page.)

Step Two—Reading and Recording

Jeff announces, “Read and record.” Each Predictor, Questioner, Clarifier, and Summarizer reads the first section (“The Army: Sparta’s Way of Life”) and then records their work on their individual copies of the Reciprocal Reading Chart. (Answers from Jeff Gulle’s class are shown on page 3 as an example of what students might write.)

This is what each role will be doing during the process.

- ♦ The **Predictor** will make some predictions pertaining to what the section is going to be about. They might think, for example, that Spartan society was based on the army. Then, while actually reading, the Predictor jots down what he or she thinks is going to happen next—perhaps that Sparta will engage and emerge victorious in a war.
- ♦ The **Questioner** might think about the toughness of Spartan society and make a connection to Babylon under King Hammurabi, nearly 2,000 years earlier. (Jeff frequently encourages his students to think globally and to connect current content with prior learning). The Questioner might wonder what Hammurabi might have thought of Spartan values. These and other questions will be recorded in the appropriate place on the chart.
- ♦ The **Clarifier** will look for and record points that are unclear or unaddressed, such as the attitudes of individual people. For example, Spartan boys were required to begin military training at age seven, but what if they didn’t want to?
- ♦ The **Summarizer** will be creating a succinct list of the main points of the subheading: Sparta’s society was based on the military; boys started training at age seven; slaves (who were known as *helots*) did most of the work; women had much freedom.

When students have finished their work for the first subheading, they will take turns to discuss their findings with the other members of the group who will have the opportunity to question, elaborate, and expand upon the material. The process is repeated with the next two subheadings.

While this is taking place, Jeff is circulating throughout the room. He visits each group—listening, guiding, assisting, and redirecting as needed.

Step Three—Class Discussion

The students now turn their attention to a whole-class discussion. Jeff randomly chooses one Predictor, one Questioner, one Clarifier, and one Summarizer (preferably, though not necessarily, from different groups)



Reciprocal Teaching (continued)

to share their efforts with the class. The floor is open to all members of the class to ask questions of the student(s) presenting.

- ♦ **Predictors** will share what their predictions had been and evaluate the extent to which they were accurate.
- ♦ **Questioners** will share what their questions had been and be given an opportunity to answer them personally. If they cannot, this will be opened to the class for discussion.
- ♦ **Clarifiers** will discuss what was unclear and similarly be given an opportunity to personally clear up any misconceptions. If they cannot, this too will be opened to the class or to Jeff as the teacher.
- ♦ **Summarizers** will provide a succinct point-by-point synopsis of the Sparta reading. With each point shared, Jeff will pose questions, further develop, or expand upon the content for the benefit of the class.

This activity can typically occupy an entire class period, but you can modify it to suit your situation. For formative assessment, Jeff uses an Exit Ticket slip in which students respond to this question: *How did elements of its culture prepare Sparta for victory over Athens in the Peloponnesian War?*

TITLE OF READING: Sparta

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Predict</h3> <p>Before You Read, look over the various features of the text. Based on these, what will this reading be about?</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Life in Sparta The army wars</p> <p>While You Are Reading, what will happen next? What do you think will result from the events, actions, trends, or themes that you are reading about?</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Sparta will win the Peloponnesian War</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Question</h3> <p>While You Are Reading, what questions come to mind? What do you need to have answered?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Your Question</th> <th style="width: 50%;">What Did You Find Out?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>What would Hammurabi think of Sparta?</td> <td>He would like it. Both were tough. Harsh laws.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Why is this important?</td> <td>Sparta's way of life affects how the Peloponnesian War turned out.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Your Question	What Did You Find Out?	What would Hammurabi think of Sparta?	He would like it. Both were tough. Harsh laws.	Why is this important?	Sparta's way of life affects how the Peloponnesian War turned out.
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TITLE OF READING: _____

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Question

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