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# GUIDE TO THOUGHTFUL DECISION MAKING

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## WELCOME TO “FORESIGHT” HISTORY!

The problems in the *Decision Making in World History* series will challenge you to make choices about events in world history before you know what actually happened during those events. This is learning history in a foresighted way—first you decide, then you find out what really happened—rather than a hindsight way, where you just find out what happened. You will get at least two benefits from this method of learning history: First, you will improve your decision-making skills. Someday, when you avoid buying a “lemon” of a used car that would have wasted thousands of dollars in repairs, you can thank your history teacher for helping you build your decision-making skills. Second, it’s fun to learn history as though it’s a cliff-hanger mystery, where you’re eager to find out if your decision worked or ended in disaster. But don’t forget to concentrate on the actual historical decision that was made and how it turned out. You can learn a lot about your own decision making through these problems, but you’re in class mainly to learn history and to understand what really happened, not what could have happened.

## WHAT IS DECISION MAKING?

You’ve learned about problem solving in other courses such as math and science, and you’ve encountered problem solving when you’ve tried to build something or fix something. Decision making resembles problem solving in some ways (for example, it involves defining a problem and thinking of alternatives), but it’s different from problem solving in that there is no one right answer. The lessons in this book involve “messy” problems; even long after the event, people often disagree about what the best decision was or should have been.

## DECISION MAKING AS EXPERIENCE

Experience teaches you how to make good decisions. Every decision that you make, whether good or bad, better equips you to make good decisions in the future—if you pay attention to how your decision brought about positive or negative consequences. For example, you would probably feel safer being treated by a doctor with a lot of experience than by a brand-new doctor. The historical problems your teacher gives you will provide you with experience in making decisions in general and will help you become a better decision maker in your role as a citizen. You won’t just learn about history; you will experience it. After some of these lessons, you will feel that you made good decisions; for others, you may feel that you’ve made errors in judgment. As you go along, try to reflect on your experiences as well as on your thinking about decision making.

# P-A-G-E ANALYSIS FOR DECISION MAKING

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## DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS

### ■ P = PROBLEM

- Identify any **underlying problem**: What's really going on here?
- Consider **other points of view**: How do others see this situation?
- What are my **assumptions? emotions?**

### ■ A = ASK FOR INFORMATION (ABOUT)

- **Historical context**: What is the history and context of this issue?
- **Reliability of sources**: Does my information come from experts on this topic? Do the sources have a reason to lie? Is the information supported by evidence?
- **Historical analogies**: What has been done in the past about situations like this? In what ways do these other situations differ from this situation?

### ■ G = GOALS

- What are my main **goals**? Are they **realistic**?
- What are my **options** to achieve my goals? Are they **ethical**?

### ■ E = EFFECTS

- **Predict unintended consequences**. What are some long-term effects?
- **Play out the options**. What could go wrong?

# LESSON 2:

## REFORMS IN SPARTA AND ATHENS

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### VOCABULARY

- Alliance—a formal agreement between nations to cooperate militarily
- Helot—a captive owned by the Spartan government, like a slave
- Patriotism—love of country or city-state
- Barrack—a building for housing soldiers
- Spartan—simple and plain (from the word for a citizen of Sparta)
- Slave—a person who was owned by or forced to work free of charge for someone else
- Jury—people who decide guilt or innocence in a legal case
- Democracy—rule by the citizens
- Metics—foreign residents
- Tyranny—a form of government in which absolute power is vested in a single ruler

# PROPOSED REFORMS FOR SPARTA

## Reform Proposals—Sparta



You are a leader in Sparta in 669 BCE. You just suffered a defeat in a war against Argos, another Greek city. However, your biggest problem is a revolt by the Messenians against Sparta. The situation is truly desperate. The Messenians greatly outnumber the Spartans, by as much as ten to one, and they are threatening to taking over the city and the whole area.

### ■ Sparta's Messenian Colony

The background to the situation is important. A few years ago, Sparta took over Messenia and forced the people there to give one-half of their harvest of crops to Sparta. It made some Spartans rich, but it is extremely difficult to control all these people. Messenia is a long distance away from Sparta and it is on the other side of a mountain range. The Messenians were waiting for the right moment to revolt, when Sparta was especially weak. This moment arrived when Argos defeated Sparta. There has to be a change, or Sparta will be taken over and cease to exist.

### ■ Decision

Here are some suggestions for action to be taken. Which ones will you choose? You can choose as many as you would like. Just be careful that you don't pick options that contradict each other.

- A. Make an economic deal with the Messenians. Tell them that they don't have to pay half their harvest. They don't have to pay anything. They keep their land and keep the money they make from selling their crops.
- B. Make a political deal with the Messenians. Tell them that they can be citizens of Sparta on an equal footing with the other Spartans. They will help to govern the city.
- C. Make an alliance with another city to help defeat the Messenians. Tell the leaders of the other city that they can have half the Messenians' land in exchange for helping defeat the Messenians.
- D. Tell the Spartans that they have to give up their individual goals and unite as one people to defeat the Messenians. Obedience and duty to the government are the only way to defeat the revolt.
- E. Tell the Spartans that they will get the land of the Messenians to control as individuals if Sparta defeats the Messenians. Spartans will own the land, but the Messenians will work the land. Without having to work the land, Spartans will have time to devote to becoming great warriors.

# POEM BY SOLON

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In this excerpts, Solon talks about some of his reforms as explained in Handout 4.

I restored to Athens, their god-built home,  
many who were sold abroad, sometimes  
by crooked judgments, or voluntarily fled  
a crushing burden of debt and wandered  
so far they lost their Athenian accents.  
Others I freed from the shame of slavery  
in the heart of Athens, where once they trembled  
at a master's whim. And though I gained  
my ends by force, I melded Power  
with Justice and did what I promised to do.  
The laws I wrote were the same for lowborn  
and noble; both were straightened by Justice.

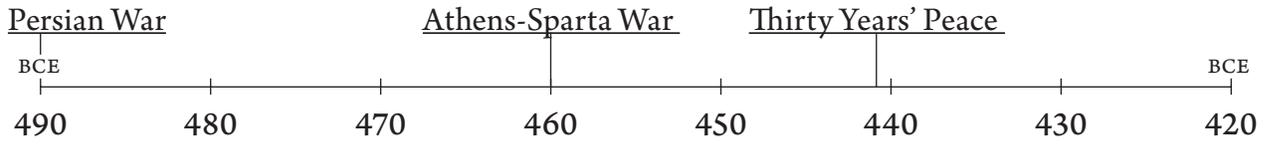
Source: David Mulroy, trans., *Early Greek Lyric Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 66–67.

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to the author, Solon, what were the problems that he corrected?
2. What did Solon do to correct the problems?
3. How reliable is Solon as a source?

# ATHENS IN 433 BCE

(Complex)



## Background Information

The year is 433 BCE and as a citizen of Athens, you have several decisions to make. In 433 BCE, there is great suspicion between Sparta and Athens, the leaders of the two great Greek alliances (see Map C).

