

**Aristotle**

**Biography Summary:** Aristotle was a famous Greek philosopher who is said to have written about his theories and opinions in 150 philosophical treatises. Although only fragments of his work and lecture notes survived, we can establish that Aristotle had been able to make significant contributions towards many different subjects including physics and zoology, anatomy, embryology, geology, geography, astronomy, meteorology, literature and poetry.

**Aristotle Fact File Biography:** Lifespan: 384 BC – 322 BC.

Full Name: Aristotle was also known as 'the master of them that know' and 'the Philosopher'

Date of Birth:He was born in 384 BC

Place of Birth: Aristotle was born in Stagira, Chalcidice, Greece

Family background: His father was a doctor called Nicomachus

Education: Aristotle was educated at Plato's Academy Aristotle died in 322 BC

**Aristotle Fact 1:** Aristotle was born in 384 BC in Stagira, Chalcidice, Greece. His name means 'the best purpose'.

**Aristotle Fact 2:** He was a Greek philosopher and scientist who offered many profound views and theories. Aristotle is said to have written about many of his theories in 150 philosophical treatises, 30 of which survived.

**Aristotle Fact 3:** His father was a doctor called Nicomachus, he was King Amyntas of Macedon's personal physician and friend. We know little about Aristotle's childhood.

**Aristotle Fact 4:** Aristotle moved to Athens when he was approximately 18 years old to study at Plato's Academy. He was educated at the academy for twenty years. The institution was founded by Plato, a mathematician and philosopher in Classical Greece, it is also known as the Platonic Academy.

**Aristotle Fact 5:** Aristotle left Athens around 348 BC and traveled with another philosopher called Xenocrates to Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). He was accompanied by Theophrastus to the Greek island of Lesbos where they studied zoology and botany.

**Aristotle Fact 6:** Aristotle married a Greek biologist known as Pythias the Elder, she was the adoptive daughter of Hermias of Atarneus. They had a daughter together whom they named Pythias.

**Aristotle Fact 7:** From 343 BC, he taught Alexander III of Macedon, known famously as Alexander the Great. Alexander's father, Philip II of Macedon, requested Aristotle to become his son's tutor. Aristotle became the head of the royal academy of Macedon, an ancient kingdom of Classical Greece. He also taught two other future kings called Ptomlemy and Cassander.

**Aristotle Fact 8:** In 335 BC, he returned to Athens to establish his own school known as the Lyceum. He taught at the school for twelve years.

**Aristotle Fact 9:** Whilst Aristotle was teaching at the Lyceum School, his wife Pythias died. After her death, he began a relationship with Herpyllis of Stagira. They had a son together whom they named after Aristotle's father, Nicomachus.

**Aristotle Fact 10:** During his time at the Lyceum School in Athens, Aristotle studied many different subjects including physics and zoology, anatomy, embryology, geology, geography, astronomy, meteorology, literature, poetry. He contributed greatly towards many of these subjects, offering his theories and opinions on aesthetics, metaphysics, politics, ethics, economics, government, psychology, rhetoric and theology. He wrote numerous philosophical treatises, some of which survived. Some of his works are believed to be lecture notes for his students.

**Aristotle Fact 11:** The most significant and important philosophical treatises written by Aristotle include Physics, Metaphysics, Politics, De Anima: On the Soul, Nicomachean Ethics and Poetics

**Aristotle Fact 12:** Following the death of Alexander the Great, Aristotle was denounced by Eurymedon the Hierophant, the representative of Demetra of Eleusis, for not honoring the gods. As a result, Aristotle fled to Chalcis on the island of Euboea, Greece in 322 BC to avoid being sentenced to death.  
  
**Aristotle Fact 13:** It wasn't until the Middle Ages that scholars rediscovered and became interested in his work and findings. He became known as 'The Master of Them that Know' and ‘The Philosopher'.  
  
**Aristotle Fact 14:** He believed that the universe was eternal, that there was neither a beginning nor an end. He accepted that things can change; however, he fundamentally believed that the overall conditions would always remain the same.  
  
**Aristotle Fact 15:** He studied zoology very closely and through careful observation, he was able to produce his findings. His work in zoology contained some errors, however, much of what he reported was incredibly accurate.

**Aristotle Fact 16:** His careful study of animals enabled him to classify them into different groups and species. Although, much more developed today, he was able to split the animals into two major groups: animals with red blood and animals without red blood. His findings correspond closely with the distinctions later recognized between vertebrates and invertebrate animals.

**Aristotle Fact 17:** The following quote by Aristotle offers his opinion and theory on the Earth and the changes which he observed and predicted:

'The same parts of the earth are not always moist or dry, but they change according as rivers come into existence and dry up. And so the relation of land to sea changes too and a place does not always remain land or sea throughout all time, but where there was dry land there comes to be sea, and where there is now sea, there one day comes to be dry land. But we must suppose these changes to follow some order and cycle. The principle and cause of these changes is that the interior of the earth grows and decays, like the bodies of plants and animals...  
  
But the whole vital process of the earth takes place so gradually and in periods of time which are so immense compared with the length of our life, that these changes are not observed, and before their course can be recorded from beginning to end whole nations perish and are destroyed.'

**Aristotle Fact 18:** He studied the science of the Earth and the weather, and wrote about his findings in a Meteorology treatise. He managed to work out the hydrologic cycle. The following quote by Aristotle describes his findings on the hydrologic cycle: 'Now the sun, moving as it does, sets up processes of change and becoming and decay, and by its agency the finest and sweetest water is every day carried up and is dissolved into vapour and rises to the upper region, where it is condensed again by the cold and so returns to the earth.'

**Aristotle Fact 19:** In his works on Meteorology, he talks about comets and meteors, and different types of weather, describing rainbows, thunder, lightning and winds. He discusses earthquakes which he believed were a result of underground winds.   
  
**Aristotle Fact 20:** He died in Euboea in 322 BC, the same year that he'd arrived on the island. His death was a result of natural causes. The chief executor of his will was one of his students called Antipater. In his will, Aristotle requested that he be laid to rest next to his wife.  
  
**Influence & Legacy of Aristotle:** Aristotle was an important philosopher who came from Greece. He offered his views and findings in various philosophical treatises. Aristotle made huge contributions towards a variety of subjects including physics and zoology, anatomy, embryology, geology, geography, astronomy, meteorology, literature and poetry. He based many of his findings on his own experiences and close observations.