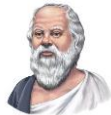


# ANCIENT PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES



## SOCRATES 469-399 B.C.



Socrates was one of the earliest philosophical thinkers. He is often referred to as the Father of Philosophy. While Socrates did not actually write down his philosophical musings it is crucial to understand who he was and his influence on later thinkers like Plato who he taught.

Socrates wanted a critical way of uncovering the truth. A way of differentiating between **knowledge** and **opinion**. His method is now referred to as 'The Socratic Method' which is asking questions in order to challenge an individual to question their assumptions and clarify ideas.

Socrates' incessant questioning angered members of society in Athens and led to his imprisonment and death. Socrates' death is described at the end of Plato's book *Phaedo*, although Plato was not himself present at the execution.

He was sentenced to drink poison. *Phaedo* states, after drinking the poison, he was instructed to walk around until his legs felt numb. After he lay down, the man who administered the poison pinched his foot; Socrates could no longer feel his legs. The numbness slowly crept up his body until it reached his heart.



## PLATO'S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE



Plato wrote the Allegory of the Cave in order to demonstrate his ideas around truth and knowledge. The image below depicts the allegory. In the allegory three prisoners have been chained since birth, only able to see shadows of objects held in front of a fire. They assume that these shadows are real and they have true knowledge. Plato uses this to show that what we see in the material world are merely shadows of true concepts, forms, which are located in the world of forms.



## PROBLEMS WITH PLATO

- We can still gain valuable true knowledge from the physical world.
- There is no scientific evidence to support The World of Forms - we cannot access the forms to test them.
- The theory of Forms becomes infeasible when pushed to extremes - is there a form for everything?
- Forms can stop being universal when pushed to extremes. Is there a form for every person every second?



## PLATO'S WORLD OF FORMS

427 - 347 BC



Plato sought to find true, unchanging knowledge. However the problem was our world is constantly changing and we rely on our senses to understand what is going on. Plato was therefore sure that the real world is outside the one we live in. There is another reality or 'world' where there is certain knowledge. In this world everything stays the same. In this world you can find the perfect form of everything. **This is the WORLD OF FORMS.**

The only way to obtain knowledge of the forms is through reason. Therefore the Philosopher is able to gain access to the truth through thought and reasoning.

However everyone is able to recognise the Forms as there was a time when our soul resided in the World of Forms. For that reason you can look at a flower, and understand that this form participates in the form of BEAUTY.

In the world of Forms there is The perfect idea of everything (A form).

- Justice
- Love
- Beauty
- A dog
- A pencil

The World of Forms



The Material World

- In the material world everything is subject to change. There are imperfect changing concepts. For example,
- Justice in the court
  - Love between two people
  - Beauty of a shell
  - A brown dog
  - A red pencil

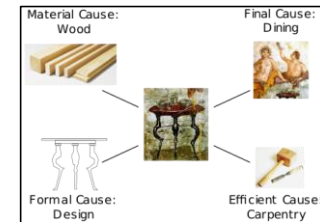
## ARISTOTLE'S FOUR CAUSES



Aristotle studied at Plato's Academy. Aristotle disagreed with Plato's dualism. He disagreed that there was another world. Aristotle believed that the **physical world** is the key to unlocking knowledge. We need to gain our knowledge of the world through observation of the world.

Aristotle posited that things only have meaning when they relate to something, through causation. He used the term *aition* to articulate this.

He created 4 different types of cause. These act as a way to gain knowledge or access the truth about something.



## ARISTOTLE'S UNMOVED MOVER



If one asks what the final cause for the universe is, one is presented with a challenging question. Aristotle rectifies this through the unmoved mover. Aristotle believes that the universe displays evidence of being in a constant causal chain. This cannot go on forever, there must be a starting point, the first mover or prime mover. In order to truly be the first mover, Aristotle believes that the universe was caused through attraction. The prime mover attracted matter towards it, trying to emulate its goodness.

What is the Prime Mover like?

