Do we have the best regime? Or better put, what is the best regime? - In his work "Politics," Aristotle answers the question of what is the best or most just regime by investigating numerous regimes and looking at what particularly claims to bring them about and what tends to lead to their downfall. His answer is complicated, but it is rooted in his analysis of the different forms of government and their respective virtues and vices. In this essay, I will explore Aristotle's answer to this question by discussing the regimes he identifies as correct and just, how he defines them, what makes them correct and just, the superiority of aristocracy and kingship, the alternative case he makes for polity, and his distinction between the best regime simply and the best practicable regime. The greatest focus or objective, however, continues to be virtue because Aristotle's analysis is consistent with his work in The Ethics. Unfortunately, there has never been a government with such a singular focus; instead, it has been thwarted by factional conflicts within the city's population and the resulting divergent perceptions of justice and inequality. Therefore, Aristotle's response has two parts: his immediate response points to those regimes that prioritize virtue; at a more practical level, however, he identifies the best regime as one that recognizes other focuses, such as on wealth and freedom, in addition to the greatest focus on virtue. Although Aristotle acknowledges that this latter system is rare, it is still does serve as an inspiration. Aristotle identifies three main types of regimes: monarchy, aristocracy, and constitutional government. These regimes can either be correct or perverted, depending on their implementation. A correct regime is one that serves the common good and promotes the flourishing of its citizens. A perverted regime, on the other hand, is one that serves the interests of a particular class or individual and oppresses the rest of the citizens. Aristotle defines monarchy as the rule of one individual who possesses virtues such as wisdom, justice, and courage. If the monarch lacks these virtues, the regime becomes tyrannical, and the common good is no longer served. Similarly, aristocracy is defined as the rule of a few virtuous individuals who possess the same virtues as the monarch. If these few individuals become corrupt, the regime becomes an oligarchy, which serves the interests of the few at the expense of the many.

Aristotle argues that the best regime is one that is based on the rule of the virtuous. He contends that aristocracy and kingship are superior to democracy because they are more likely to produce virtuous rulers who serve the common good. In aristocracy, the rule of the few virtuous individuals is better than the rule of the many because it is more likely to promote the common good. Similarly, in kingship, the rule of one virtuous individual is better than the rule of the many. However, Aristotle also recognizes the potential dangers of aristocracy and kingship. He acknowledges that these regimes can become corrupt, and their rulers can become tyrannical. Therefore, he argues for a third regime called polity. Polity is a constitutional government that combines elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. It is based on the rule of the virtuous many, and it is more likely to promote the common good than pure democracy or pure aristocracy. Aristotle distinguishes between the best regime simply and the best practicable regime. The best regime simply is the ideal regime that would exist if all conditions were perfect, and all citizens were virtuous. The best practicable regime, on the other hand, is the regime that is most feasible given the actual conditions of the society. Aristotle argues that the best regime simply is aristocracy because it is based on the rule of the virtuous few. However, the best practicable regime is polity because it is more feasible in most societies. Aristotle's answer to the question of what is the best or most just regime reveals his judgment on the limits and possibilities of actual political life. Aristotle expands on this idea of polity as a mixture when he names the "three entities disputing over equality in the regime, freedom, prosperity, and virtue," and says that polity is a "mixture of the two - of the well off and the poor.” But what qualifies a polity as the "best regime"? Parallel to his work in The Ethics, Aristotle would undoubtedly respond that just as virtue is itself a mean - as well as the highest aim - polity, as a mixture and essentially a mean between the dividing claims of the oligarchs and the democrats, also follows this pattern and is therefore choice-worthy. Therefore, in many ways, the benefits of polity can be seen in the benefits of the middle ground that Aristotle names because, "if it was correctly said in the [discourses of] ethics that the happy life is one in accordance with virtue and unimpeded, and that virtue is a mean, then the middling sort of life is best - the mean that can be obtained by each sort of individual". As Aristotle explains how a polity is created, this trait of polity is particularly evident. According to Aristotle, "there are three defining principles of this combination or mixture," namely, taking "elements of the laws of each" government, calculating the "mean between the assessments," and combining elements of democratic and oligarchy-based law. Since "the mean too is of this sort: each of the extremes is revealed in (the mixture)," which is defined as a middle ground between oligarchy and democracy, each of these three mixture types makes polity more evident. However, he recognizes that there is no perfect regime that can guarantee the common good and the flourishing of all citizens. However, he argues that some regimes are better than others, and that the best regime is one that is based on the rule of the virtuous. Aristotle recognizes that the ideal regimen for one city might not be the ideal for all others in light of this propensity for factional strife as well as other differences, such as population and climate, that set each city apart from the others. Aristotle observes that this leads to a variety of regimes, adding that "the varieties of the regimes - how many there are and in how many forms they are combined - should not be overlooked".

In conclusion, Aristotle's answer to the question of what is the best or most just regime is complicated but grounded in his analysis of the different forms of government and their respective virtues and vices. It becomes clearer, though, that the almost solemn pursuit of virtue found in ideal kingships and aristocracies is conspicuously missing from this definition of polity as the most practical regime. This is undeniable since virtue does not play the same part in a polity as it does in the other two correct regimes as the defining characteristic. The competing claims of inequality made by the wealthy, the powerful, the good, and the many, to name a few, are what primarily prevent cities from establishing the best and most appropriate regimes, and in a sense, this is reality. But in a certain sense, this is the case: what primarily prevents cities from achieving the best and most appropriate regimes are the conflicting claims of inequality made by the wealthy, the poor, the virtuous, and the numerous, to name a few. A polity, however, is by no means devoid of virtue; in fact, it could be argued that virtue and polity are both described as means, and as such, take on virtuous qualities. Aristotle would also undoubtedly wish for the citizens of such a polity to take part in both political activities and the development of their own virtue, which is undoubtedly possible in a polity where leisure time is accessible.