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Case Number: 2017-39487

Question: **What is the role of a citizen in a democracy?**

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Information Sources:

Pericles' Funeral Oration

Fragment of a Ballot - Ostracism of Themistocles

Vase Amphora - Soldier with a Shield

Video Excerpt - Revenge of the Sith

“For the administration is in the hands of the many and not the few.” -Pericles' *Funeral Oration*

The role of a citizen in a democracy is to defend democracy and freedom, and participate in writing laws that affect not just the particular citizen, but *all* of the democracy.

In ancient Athens, the origin of democracy, only free male adults born in Athens were allowed to participate. But there were about 410,000 people that were not able to participate. Citizens able to participate gave speeches and voted on things using the acropolis using pottery fragments or pebbles. Voting is one of the roles of a citizen. That hasn't changed. Every four years, US citizens vote for president.

The leader of Sparta, another city-state, once said, “Better to be carried home dead on your shield, than to abandon it in battle.” This exemplifies another role a citizen has, which is to protect the country. This also has not changed. In the US, all men ages 18-25 must register for the selective service, a drafting program.

Lastly, another role of a citizen is to remain interested and involved in politics. The Greeks called people who were not involved in politics *idiōtēs*, the root for the word *idiot*.

A citizen has many roles, like defending democracy and freedom, and participating in writing laws.