[Template:For](/wiki/Template:For" \o "Template:For) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Pp-vandalism](/wiki/Template:Pp-vandalism) [Template:Infobox philosopher](/wiki/Template:Infobox_philosopher) **Plato** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en);[Template:Ref label](/wiki/Template:Ref_label)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek_language): [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)[Template:Ref label](/wiki/Template:Ref_label) *Plátōn*, [Template:IPA-el](/wiki/Template:IPA-el) in [Classical Attic](/wiki/Attic_Greek); 428/427 or 424/423[Template:Ref label](/wiki/Template:Ref_label) – 348/347 BC) was a [philosopher](/wiki/Philosopher) in [Classical Greece](/wiki/Classical_Greece) and the founder of the [Academy](/wiki/Platonic_Academy) in [Athens](/wiki/Ancient_Athens), the first institution of higher learning in the [Western world](/wiki/Western_world). He is widely considered the most pivotal figure in the development of philosophy, especially the [Western tradition](/wiki/Western_philosophy).[[1]](#cite_note-1) Unlike nearly all of his [philosophical contemporaries](/wiki/Ancient_Greek_philosophy), Plato's entire [*œuvre*](/wiki/Work_of_art) is believed to have survived intact for over 2,400 years.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Along with his teacher, [Socrates](/wiki/Socrates), and his most famous student, [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle), Plato laid the very foundations of [Western philosophy](/wiki/Western_philosophy) and [science](/wiki/Science).[[3]](#cite_note-3) [Alfred North Whitehead](/wiki/Alfred_North_Whitehead) once noted: "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In addition to being a foundational figure for Western science, philosophy, and mathematics, Plato has also often been cited as one of the founders of [Western religion](/wiki/Western_religion) and [spirituality](/wiki/Spirituality),[[4]](#cite_note-4) particularly [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity), which [Friedrich Nietzsche](/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche), amongst other scholars, called "Platonism for the people."[[5]](#cite_note-5) Plato's influence on [Christian thought](/wiki/Christian_thought) is often thought to be mediated by his major influence on [Saint Augustine of Hippo](/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo), one of the most important [philosophers](/wiki/Christian_philosophy) and [theologians](/wiki/Theologians) in the [history of Christianity](/wiki/History_of_Christianity).

Plato was the innovator of the [dialogue](/wiki/Dialogue) and [dialectic](/wiki/Dialectic) forms in philosophy, which originate with him. Plato appears to have been the founder of Western [political philosophy](/wiki/Political_philosophy), with his [*Republic*](/wiki/Plato's_Republic), and [*Laws*](/wiki/Plato's_Laws) among other dialogues, providing some of the earliest extant treatments of political questions from a philosophical perspective. Plato's own most decisive philosophical influences are usually thought to have been Socrates, [Parmenides](/wiki/Parmenides), [Heraclitus](/wiki/Heraclitus) and [Pythagoras](/wiki/Pythagoras), although few of his predecessors' works remain extant and much of what we know about these figures today derives from Plato himself.[[6]](#cite_note-6)