**Philosophers**

**Additional Reading: Overview of Plato’s The Republic**

Book 1:

Socrates converses with Cephalus about old age, the benefits of wealth, and introduces the topic of justice. It is not simply a matter of being truthful and returning what one owes. Discussion between Socrates and Polemarchus was about justice, it is proposed, is a matter of giving what is appropriate to friends, giving good, to enemies, and the bad. But in what context? And won’t the just person also be best at injustice? Besides who are our friends and enemies? And is it just to treat even an enemy badly? Thrasymachus speaks up. His definition: justice is what is good for the stronger. But does this mean: whatever the stronger thinks is good? Clarification is volunteered by Polemarchus and Cleitophon. Thrasymachus objects: whepherds do not aim at what is good for their sheep. Socrates distinguishes the shepherd’s concern for his sheep from his concern to earn a living. He suggests that the best rulers are reluctant to rule. He offers three arguments in favor of the just life over the unjust life. The just man is wise and good, the unjust man ignorant and bad. Injustice produces internal disharmony and prevents effective action.   
The just person lives a happier life than the unjust person. But it remains to be discovered what justice is.

**Terms:** Philosophers

Socrates

Plato

Aristotle

Logic

Rhetoric

**Questions:**

1. Why would philosophers start questioning traditional beliefs at this particular time in Athens history?
2. What are the similarities and differences between these three philosophers?
3. Which one do you agree with the most? Why?
4. How does Aristotle describe constitutional government?
5. What do you think Aristotle means when he states that man is by nature a political animal?