

Socratic Circle: Units 1—5

OUTER CIRCLE

1. Hammurabi said, “For any physician who heals someone’s eye, if the patient is an aristocrat then they must pay the physician 10 shekels of silver, but if the patient is a commoner then they must pay the physician 5 shekels of silver. For any physician who heals a broken bone, if the patient is an aristocrat then they must pay the physician 5 shekels of silver, but if the patient is a commoner then they must pay the physician 3 shekels of silver.”

Imagine that a rich person and a poor person both get the very same medical treatment from the very same medical doctor. According to Hammurabi, the rich person should pay more than the poor person for the same medical treatment. Do you agree with him? *Why* or why *not*? Explain.

Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion? If so, how so?

2. Periander of Corinth once lamented, “I would rather settle a dispute between two of my enemies than between two of my friends. On the one hand, if I settle a dispute between two of my friends, then I will turn one of my *friends* into my *enemy*. Yet on the other hand, if I settle a dispute between two of my enemies, then I will turn one of my *enemies* into my *friend*.”

Do you agree with Periander? *Why* or why *not*? Explain.

Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion? If so, how so?

3. When his son was murdered by a metalsmith, Pittacus pardoned his son's murderer. On why he had granted his son's murderer so much mercy, Pittacus remarked, "Mercy is better than revenge! I better forgive now than repent later!"

Do you agree with what Pittacus did? *Why* or why *not*? Explain.

Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion?
If so, how so?

4. Recall the story of the golden tripod (χρυσό τρίποδο). Speaking to the fishermen, the merchants said, “In exchange for the fish in your net, we will pay you in silver coins!” Responding to the offer, the fishermen said, “How many silver coins?” After a series of negotiations, the fishermen and the merchants finally agreed upon a price. Speaking to the merchants, the fishermen said, “In exchange for that many silver coins, you may have the entire catch, regardless of how many fish that we shall have netted!” Yet as soon as the catch finally had been reeled in to shore, everyone realized that no fish had been netted at all! Rather, the entire catch was a golden tripod!”

Between the merchants and the fishermen, who should've gotten to keep the golden tripod (and why)?

Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion? If so, how so?

5. Speaking to his Milesian countryman Alexidemus, Thales said, “Whenever someone voices disapproval of their place at the table, they are voicing disapproval of their neighbor rather than their host’s decision, and they make themselves disliked by their neighbor and their host!”

Do you agree with Thales? Why or why not? Explain.

Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion?
If so, how so?

6. Speaking to Periander's other guests, Chilon said, "For the wise person, the law has determined what the sufficient amount of property is." Yet in response to Chilon, Cleodorus asked, "For the wise person, if the law has determined what the sufficient amount of property is, then why do you seven wise men own an unequal amount of property?"

Keeping that in mind, are equality & fairness the same thing? Why or why not? Explain. (For example, is it ever *fair* to treat two different people *unequally*? As another example, is it ever fair for two different people to have unequal amounts of something that they both need?)

Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion? If so, how so?

7. Keeping that in mind, are equality & fairness the same thing?

(a) Why or why not? Explain. (For example, is it ever *fair* to treat two different people *unequally*? As another example, is it ever fair for two different people to have unequal amounts of something that they both need?)

(b) Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

(c) After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion? If so, how so?

8. When Jill was not looking, Jack took \$10 from Jill's wallet. Two days had passed, and Jill never realized that her wallet was missing \$10. Before taking the money, Jack always had intended to repay Jill two days later. Two days after taking the money, Jack snuck \$10 back into Jill's wallet when Jill wasn't looking.

Did Jack *borrow* \$10 from Jill? Or, did Jack *steal* \$10 from Jill? Explain.

Which of your classmates disagrees with you (and why)?

After discussing this, did you or any of your classmates change their opinion?
If so, how so?