



# Aristotle

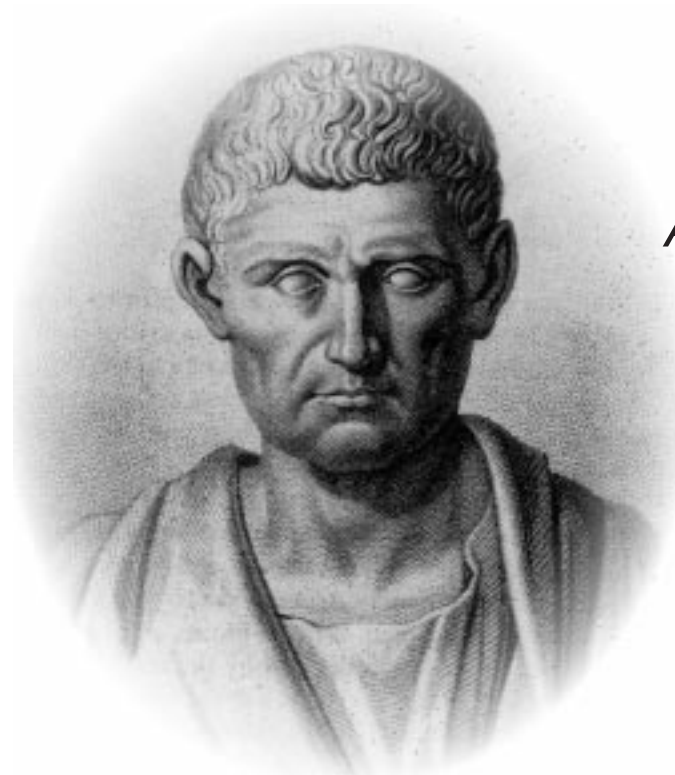
## 384 - 322 B.C.

Aristotle was a Greek philosopher and scientist. He was a famous investigator and scholar. Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. at Stagira, a small town in Chaldice, Northern Greece. His father was court physician to Amyntas II, King of Macedon and Aristotle was introduced to Greek medicine and biology at an early age.

At the age of 17, Aristotle was sent to the Academy at Athens, where for twenty years he was a pupil of Plato, then head of the Academy. Aristotle was interested in the whole range of the Academy's activities.

After Plato's death, in 347 B.C., as he was not appointed head of the Academy, probably because of the rise of anti-Macedonian mood of the city, Aristotle left Athens. He went to Assus in Asia Minor at the invitation of Hermeias, the ruler of Atarneus. He spent three years there pursuing the problem of practical politics and also biological investigation. Aristotle was close to his patron, Hermeias, and married his niece, Pythias. She bore Aristotle a daughter, whom he called by her mother's name. Pythias did not live long and after her death, Aristotle had another companion, Herpyllis, and they had a son.

In late 343 B.C. or early 342 B.C. he was asked by Philip II of Macedon to become tutor to his thirteen-year-old son, the future conqueror Alexander the Great. Alexander succeeded his father in 340 B.C. and Aristotle probably spent the next five years in Stagira. In 335 B.C. he returned to Athens and founded his own school, Lyceum, where he could teach on his own account and coordinate the work of a number of philosophers and scientists. Under Aristotle, a wide program of research was initiated in many different fields of knowledge. But when, in 323 B.C., news of Alexander's death reached Athens, this sparked off an anti-Macedonian revolution and a charge of impiety was trumped up against Aristotle. He withdrew to Chalcis. There he died from a stomach illness at the age of 62.



*Aristotle was  
tutor to the  
future  
Alexander  
the Great*



We have little reliable information about Aristotle's private life. We know that he was a man of means and that he cared for his wife and two children. He promised freedom to several of his slaves, on his death. According to a few sources he was not very handsome, but refined, particularly in his dress.

The range of his interests was very wide, covering metaphysics; logic; ethics; biology; psychology; physics; cosmology; zoology; literary theory and politics. According to his theory of nature, the individual substances interact in various ways to produce objects different in such properties as substance; quantity; quality; time; position and condition of action. Aristotle developed a hierarchy of existences that begin with the four primary elements: **earth, water, fire and air**, which then make up more complex substances. Aristotle paid particular attention to the question of elemental changes, whereby one element can become another.

Aristotle's original written works were lost, but his unpublished manuscripts were collected and preserved. His texts were written in dialogue or other literary forms.

Many philosophical movements were based on his ideas.

Earth  
Water  
Fire  
Air

*Aristotle's four  
primary elements*