PLATO, THE PHILOSOPHER

Learning Objectives	Students will be introduced to the life and contributions of Plato, one of the most influential philosophers in Western history. They will familiarize with Plato's key ideas and concepts and they will be encouraged to enhance their critical thinking skills and reflect on Plato's philosophy.
Subjects	Philosophy,
Recommended Age (10-12 or 12-14)	12-14
Number of students involved	20 students
Duration	90 minutes
Skills Developed	Creativity, Critical Thinking, Research, Team Cooperation
Material Needed	Whiteboard or blackboard, Markers or chalk, Paper and pencils for students, Laptop/internet
Inclusion Best Practices	This is a lesson plan that is mainly focused on group discussion, which enables the participation of all students. You should ensure that all students feel safe and are encouraged to participate. Depending on the class dynamics and time available, you may need to adjust the lesson plan to suit the needs and engagement level of the students. Some suggestions for adaptations include: • Organize a class debate on the relevance of Plato's ideas in today's society. • Assign a writing task for students to analyse and critique one of Plato's dialogues.

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	• Create a classroom activity where students design their own allegory to explore a philosophical concept.

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Instructions for implementing the lesson plan

This lesson plan will introduce students to the philosophy of Plato. You should discuss the importance of philosophy and how it encourages crtitical thinking.

Step 1: As a short introduction to the aims of the lesson plan(5 minutes)

Welcome the students and explain the purpose of the lesson, which is to learn about the philosopher Plato and his philosophical ideas. Through this lesson plan, students will develop an understanding of the importance of philosophy and how it encourages critical thinking.

To help students familiarise with Plato and his philosophy, you can show this video: https://youtu.be/8wAbweYp8S4v. This video is available only in English.
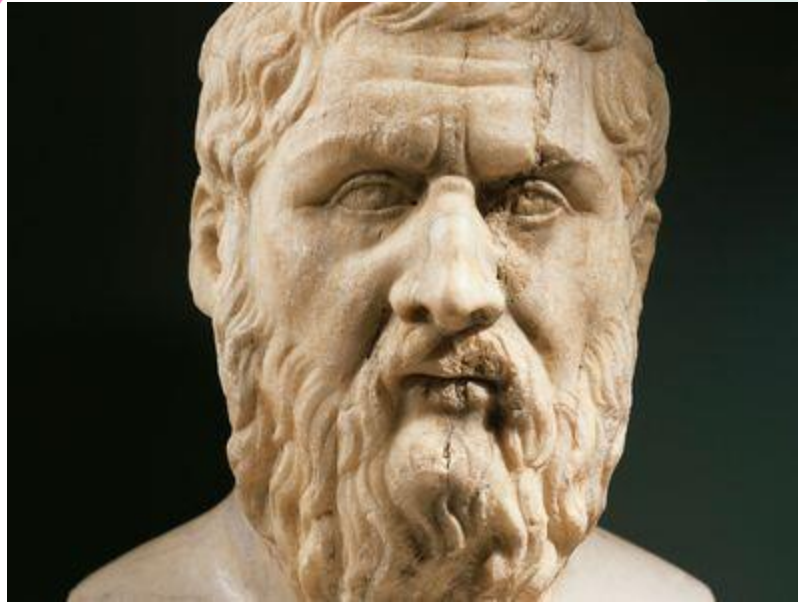
Step 2: Who Was Plato? (10 minutes)

At this stage, you should provide a more in-depth overview of Plato's life, including his birth in Athens, his association with Socrates, and his establishment of the Plato Academy.

To help students familiarise with Plato's life, you can show them the Little Philosophers e-book on Plato. Link to the e-book: https://littlephilosophers.eu/r2-e-books-and-augmented-reality-books/.

It is also important to highlight Plato's role as a writer and philosopher, emphasizing his dialogues as a significant contribution to Western philosophy.

If available, show a picture of Plato and the Plato Academy to your students to help them visualise the topic of this lesson plan and offer more engaging content to attract the students' interest.

One example could be:

source: 'Plato', Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Plato.

source: 'Plato's Academy', Athensguide.com, https://www.athensguide.com/plato-academy/index.htm.

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Step 3: Plato's Key Ideas (15 minutes)

After the introductory steps, you should introduce Plato's philosophical concept, the concept of forms and ideas. You should explain to your students how Plato perceived the physical world, as a shadow or a reflection of the true reality, which exists in the world of forms.

Some of the ideas that Plato discussed include justice, beauty, and equality. You can start a group discussion with your students and ask them to share their understanding of these concepts. Some questions that could help the process of group discussion include:

➢ What is the meaning of justice? Can you give an example of an injustice which you have observed? How did you deal with this?
➢ Do you think equality is important? How can we all contribute towards a more equal society?
➢ Imagine that a new student joins our class, who does not speak our own language. Can you think of alternative means of communication? What about using music and dance, or images and drawings to communicate?

Step 4: The Allegory of the Cave (10 minutes)

To help students understand the concept of reality as this was explained by Plato, you should introduce them to Plato's Allegory of the Cave. As an introduction, you can show your students this video: https://youtu.be/xOULKUK07kU. This video is available only in English.

Here is another video that can serve as an introduction to the Allegory of the Cave: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RWOpQXTltA. This video is in English, but there are embedded subtitles on YouTube in different languages.

After showing the videos to your students you can encourage them to think about situations in their own lives where they may be metaphorically "chained" in a cave, unaware of a greater reality.One example could be discussing about visiting new countries. Is it possible for a person to really know a place they have never visited?

Step 4: Students' own reality (25 minutes)

This is an interactive activity that will help your students understand the different levels of knowledge and reality in a more practical way.

You can ask your students to make drawing about different objects. For example, a flower, a boat, an airplane. Students will think that they know how these objects look, but in the end, they will notice that each one of them has made a different drawing. In

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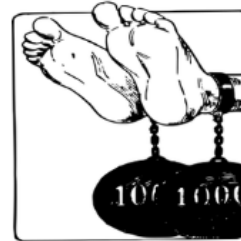Erasmus+ Programme
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addition, you can show them some pictures of different flowers, boats and airplanes and explain to them that their drawing are not wrong but their personal experiences and the things they have seen in their life influence their perception of reality.
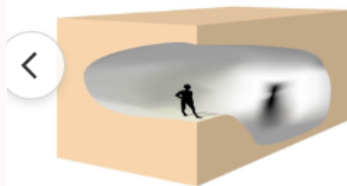
Conceptual Map of Plato's Cave

The cave is the material world of the senses.

The chains represents human limitations.

Inside the cave, people only know the shadows as real.

The sun represents truth

The unchained man represents the philosopher, like Socrates.

Step 5: Reflecting on Plato's Ideas (5 minutes)

At the end of the lesson plan, you should ask your students to take a few minutes to write down their reflections on Plato's ideas, specifically focusing on the concepts of forms and the allegory of the cave. Then, invite some volunteers to share their thoughts or insights with the rest of the class. Use these as an initiative to recap the main points covered in this lesson plan and answer any remaining questions.

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It would be interesting to create an educational Kahoot!, as a short quiz to test the knowledge your students gained through this lesson plan in an informal and engaging way. Link to Kahoot!: https://kahoot.com/.

References:

'Plato', Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Plato.

'Plato's Academy', Athensguide.com, https://www.athensguide.com/plato-academy/index.htm.

Little Philosophers, EU project, https://littlephilosophers.eu/?lang=el.

Youtube, Plato's Allegory of the Cave — A Storyteller's Guide to Using Allegory, StudioBinder, https://youtu.be/xOULKUK07kU?si=YnzElnR33bsrFCBF.

Youtube, Plato's Allegory of the Cave - Alex Gendler, Ted-ED, https://youtu.be/1RWOpQXTltA?si=cha9-S22s6GoYMEH.

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