I can explain the importance of the Greek philosophers; Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.
THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

What are some things we as humans don’t understand about the universe?

What are some things that have been discovered by humans about the universe?

In the search to find answers, the Greeks developed philosophy, or the study of basic truths and ideas about the universe.

Greek philosophers had two basic ideas about the universe. First, they assumed that the universe is put together in an orderly way. They believed that laws of nature control the universe. Second, the philosophers assumed that people could understand these laws. The philosophers used these two ideas when they sought the truth.
Over a period of time, Greece had many famous philosophers. One of them was Socrates. He encouraged his young students to examine their beliefs by asking them a series of questions. This question and answer style of teaching is called the Socratic Method.

**Socratic Method Example**

- **Q:** So you think that the gods know everything?
- **A:** Yes, because they are gods.
- **Q:** Do some gods disagree with others?
- **A:** Yes, of course they do. They are always fighting.
- **Q:** So gods disagree about what is true and right?
- **A:** I suppose they must do.
- **Q:** So some gods can be wrong sometimes?
- **A:** I suppose that is true.
- **THEREFORE** the gods cannot know everything!

**If a tree falls in the forest, and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?**
Socrates was outspoken about his dislike for democracy. He felt that allowing citizens to vote without being properly educated was greatly irresponsible. His argument went as follows: “If you were to board a ship for you to sail across the sea, who would you want at command, any random person, or someone with years of seagoing experience.” What point is Socrates trying to make with this argument?

Socrates students liked his teaching methods. His enemies however accused him of causing young people to rebel. They brought him to trial. Socrates told the court that he was teaching young people to think about their values and actions. The jury did not agree with his actions and sentences him to death. Socrates died by drinking a poison called hemlock. He was executed in 399 B.C.E.

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

1) What main reasons did people of Athens have to sentence Socrates to death?
2) What main reasons would people have to support Socrates as an important teacher in Athens?
One of Socrates’ best students was Plato. He was born around 428 B.C. Plato wrote about an ideal government in a book titled *The Republic*. He did not describe a democracy. Instead, he believed that a philosopher-king should rule. This king would be wise, calm, and reasonable (like a Philosopher).

**NOTEBOOK RESPONSE #1:** How would a philosopher king rule a society?

**NOTEBOOK RESPONSE #2:** After reading the section from Plato’s “Republic,” how would a philosopher king rule a society according to Plato?

**ALLEGROY OF THE CAVE OBSERVATIONS**

**NOTEBOOK RESPONSE #3:** What is reality?

- The shadows were reality, because the shadows were the only thing the prisoners knew of.
- It was difficult for the free prisoner to adjust to the outside world, just as it is difficult for any person to adjust when thrust into a new environment.
- Through experience, the free prisoner realizes true reality and realizes his entire life has been a lie.
- When trying to explain the reality to the other prisoners, they do not understand.

**NOTEBOOK RESPONSE #4:** How does the Allegory of the Cave help us understand reality?
Aristotle was Plato’s brightest student and is widely considered by historians to be one of the smartest people to have ever lived. Aristotle invented a method of debating that followed rules of logic. Later, the rules of logic were applied to studies in science in a practice commonly known as the Scientific Method.

Aristotle opened his own school in Athens called the Lyceum. In addition to his great philosophical work, Aristotle also spent three years tutoring Alexander the Great.

**INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ARISTOTLE**

- He invented new ways of studying that included looking for clues and proofs.
- He is known as the father of biology, being the first person to classify things as either plants or humans.
- He discovered the concept of infinity.