

1. John Stuart Mill was a student of Athenian democracy and studied Greek history throughout his life. More than the Romans, the Greeks influenced Mill's beliefs on individualism, freedom, and public discourse. In particular, Mill admired Pericles, the charismatic Athenian statesman who led Athens in its war against Sparta. Pericles was known for his ability to incite the emotions of his fellow Athenians with appeals to their common ancestry and reminders of their shared interest in the success of the Athenian democracy. In his famous funeral oration marking the one-year anniversary of the beginning of what became known as the Peloponnesian War, Pericles delivered a speech in Athens to honor the dead and to issue a rallying cry to his fellow Athenians. Pericles urged the Athenians to defeat the Spartans by relying on the unique characteristics of what made the Athenians unique and superior to their fellow Greeks. The Athenians went on to battle the Spartans in a long, drawn out war in which each side made mistakes and the role of chance factored in many surprising defeats for the Athenians, who ultimately surrendered to the Spartans in 404 BCE. Nevertheless, Athens has been venerated as a model of good government and political participation. At the same time, students of history have praised the importance of individual freedom. Do you agree with Mill's privileging of individual freedom over Rousseau's reliance on the common will as the best way to achieve human happiness. In your answer, please include references to Mill and/or Rousseau.
2. John Stuart Mill has been criticized for his role as a leading administrator in the British East India Company. Critics complain that his promotion of individual freedom while earning a generous income as the correspondence secretary for the British East India Company, a position that has been described as akin to being the Secretary of State, undermines his argument because of his compromised position as a direct beneficiary of the British Empire. Do you agree with the critics? Or, do you think that a writer should be evaluated not on the circumstances of his life, (however compromised in terms of personal relationships and financial arrangements), but on the persuasiveness of his or her writing?