Meno

PLATO
c. 428–348 BC

Meno

Μένων

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited

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Meno · Plato (c. 428–348 BC)

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INTRODUCTION

"Can you tell me, Socrates: can excellence be taught?" With that question the young aristocrat Meno launches one of Plato's most famous short dialogues.

Socrates says he doesn't even know what excellence is, and within pages Meno is stuck, numbed, he says, as if by a stingray. That leads to "Meno's paradox": how can you look for something when you don't know what it is? Socrates answers with a demonstration. He questions an enslaved boy with no schooling until the boy works out a geometry problem himself, which suggests that learning is really recollection.

The dialogue ends with the difference between knowledge and true opinion, and a warning from Anytus, who would later help prosecute Socrates.

Meno

Athens, around 402 BC.
Socrates and Meno ask what excellence is and whether it can be taught.

GREEK

70a **MENO** ἔχεις μοι εἰπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἆρα διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετή; ἢ οὐ διδακτὸν ἀλλ' ἀσκητόν; ἢ οὔτε ἀσκητὸν οὔτε μαθητόν, ἀλλὰ φύσει παραγίγνεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἢ ἄλλῳ τινὶ τρόπῳ;

SOCRATES ὦ Μένων, πρὸ τοῦ μὲν Θετταλοὶ εὐδόκιμοι ἦσαν ἐν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν καὶ ἐθαυμάζοντο ἐφ' ἱππικῇ τε καὶ πλούτῳ, [70b] νῦν δέ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, καὶ ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ, καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα οἱ τοῦ σοῦ ἑταίρου Ἀριστίππου πολῖται Λαρισαῖοι. τούτου δὲ ὑμῖν αἴτιός ἐστι Γοργίας· ἀφικόμενος γὰρ εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐραστὰς ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ εἴληφεν Ἀλευαδῶν τε τοὺς πρώτους, ὧν ὁ σὸς ἐραστής ἐστιν Ἀρίστιππος, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Θετταλῶν. καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔθος ὑμᾶς εἴθικεν, ἀφόβως τε καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἀποκρίνεσθαι ἐάν τίς τι ἔρηται, ὥσπερ εἰκὸς τοὺς [70c] εἰδότας, ἅτε καὶ αὐτὸς παρέχων αὑτὸν ἐρωτᾶν τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ βουλομένῳ ὅτι ἄν τις βούληται, καὶ οὐδενὶ ὅτῳ οὐκ ἀποκρινόμενος.

70c ἐνθάδε δέ, ὦ φίλε Μένων, τὸ ἐναντίον περιέστηκεν· ὥσπερ αὐχμός τις τῆς σοφίας γέγονεν, καὶ κινδυνεύει [71a] ἐκ τῶνδε τῶν τόπων παρ' ὑμᾶς οἴχεσθαι ἡ σοφία. εἰ γοῦν τινα ἐθέλεις οὕτως ἐρέσθαι τῶν ἐνθάδε, οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ γελάσεται καὶ ἐρεῖ· "ὦ ξένε, κινδυνεύω σοι δοκεῖν μακάριός τις εἶναι—ἀρετὴν γοῦν εἴτε διδακτὸν εἴθ' ὅτῳ τρόπῳ παραγίγνεται εἰδέναι—ἐγὼ δὲ τοσοῦτον δέω εἴτε διδακτὸν εἴτε μὴ διδακτὸν εἰδέναι, ὥστ' οὐδὲ αὐτὸ ὅτι ποτ' ἐστὶ τὸ παράπαν ἀρετὴ τυγχάνω εἰδώς." [71b]

71b ἐγὼ οὖν καὶ αὐτός, ὦ Μένων, οὕτως ἔχω· συμπένομαι τοῖς πολίταις τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, καὶ ἐμαυτὸν καταμέμφομαι ὡς οὐκ εἰδὼς περὶ ἀρετῆς τὸ παράπαν· ὃ δὲ

ENGLISH

MENO Can you tell me, Socrates: is excellence something that can be taught? Or is it not teachable but acquired by practice? Or is it neither acquired by practice nor learned, but comes to people by nature, or in some other way?[1]

SOCRATES Meno, the Thessalians used to be famous among the Greeks, and admired for their horsemanship and their wealth. [70b] But now, it seems to me, they're admired for wisdom as well—not least the people of Larisa, your friend Aristippus' fellow citizens. You have Gorgias to thank for this. When he came to your city, he won over the leading men of the Aleuadae as lovers of his wisdom—your lover Aristippus among them—and the other Thessalians too. And in particular he has got you into this habit: answering any question anyone asks, fearlessly and grandly, as befits people [70c] who know—since he himself offers to be questioned by any Greek who wants, on any subject he likes, and there's no one he doesn't answer.[2]

But here, my dear Meno, the opposite has come about. There's been a kind of drought of wisdom, and it looks as if wisdom may have left [71a] these parts for yours. At any rate, if you care to ask anyone here a question like that, every one of them will laugh and say: "Stranger, you must think I'm someone blessed—to know whether excellence is teachable, or in what way it comes to people. But I'm so far from knowing whether it's teachable or not that I don't even happen to know what excellence itself is at all." [71b]

And that's how it is with me too, Meno. I share my fellow citizens' poverty in this matter, and I reproach myself for knowing nothing at all about ex-

1 *Aretē*, traditionally translated "virtue," covers any kind of excellence, including human goodness.
2 Gorgias of Leontini was a celebrated teacher of rhetoric; the Aleuadae were the ruling family of Larisa in Thessaly.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	μὴ οἶδα τί ἐστιν, πῶς ἂν ὁποῖόν γέ τι εἰδείην; ἢ δοκεῖ σοι οἷόν τε εἶναι, ὅστις Μένωνα μὴ γιγνώσκει τὸ παράπαν ὅστις ἐστίν, τοῦτον εἰδέναι εἴτε καλὸς εἴτε πλούσιος εἴτε καὶ γενναῖός ἐστιν, εἴτε καὶ τἀναντία τούτων; δοκεῖ σοι οἷόν τ' εἶναι;	cellence. And if I don't know what something is, how could I know what sort of thing it is? Or do you think it's possible for someone who has no idea at all who Meno is to know whether he's handsome or rich or well-born, or the opposite of these? Do you think that's possible?
	MENO οὐκ ἔμοιγε. ἀλλὰ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀληθῶς [71c] οὐδ' ὅτι ἀρετή ἐστιν οἶσθα, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα περὶ σοῦ καὶ οἴκαδε ἀπαγγέλλωμεν;	**MENO** No, I don't. But is it true, Socrates, that you [71c] don't even know what excellence is? Is this the report we're to take home about you?
71c	**SOCRATES** μὴ μόνον γε, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅτι οὐδ' ἄλλῳ πω ἐνέτυχον εἰδότι, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκῶ.	**SOCRATES** Not only that, my friend, but also that I've never yet met anyone else who knew, as far as I can tell.
	MENO τί δέ; Γοργίᾳ οὐκ ἐνέτυχες ὅτε ἐνθάδε ἦν;	**MENO** What? Didn't you meet Gorgias when he was here?
	SOCRATES ἔγωγε.	**SOCRATES** I did.
	MENO εἶτα οὐκ ἐδόκει σοι εἰδέναι;	**MENO** And didn't you think he knew?
	SOCRATES οὐ πάνυ εἰμὶ μνήμων, ὦ Μένων, ὥστε οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν ἐν τῷ παρόντι πῶς μοι τότε ἔδοξεν. ἀλλ' ἴσως ἐκεῖνός τε οἶδε, καὶ σὺ ἃ ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγε· ἀνάμνησον οὖν [71d] με πῶς ἔλεγεν. εἰ δὲ βούλει, αὐτὸς εἰπέ· δοκεῖ γὰρ δήπου σοὶ ἅπερ ἐκείνῳ.	**SOCRATES** I don't have much of a memory, Meno, so I can't tell you right now what I thought of him then. But perhaps he does know, and you know what he used to say. So remind [71d] me how he put it. Or if you like, tell me yourself—I take it you think the same as he does.
71d	**MENO** ἔμοιγε.	**MENO** I do.

WHAT IS EXCELLENCE?

Meno offers several definitions of excellence, and Socrates shows why each falls short.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES ἐκεῖνον μὲν τοίνυν ἐῶμεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἄπεστιν· σὺ δὲ αὐτός, ὦ πρὸς θεῶν, Μένων, τί φῂς ἀρετὴν εἶναι; εἶπον καὶ μὴ φθονήσῃς, ἵνα εὐτυχέστατον ψεῦσμα ἐψευσμένος ὦ, ἂν φανῇς σὺ μὲν εἰδὼς καὶ Γοργίας, ἐγὼ δὲ εἰρηκὼς μηδενὶ πώποτε εἰδότι ἐντετυχηκέναι.	**SOCRATES** Then let's leave him aside, since he isn't here anyway. But you yourself, Meno—in the gods' name—what do you say excellence is? Tell me, and don't hold back, so that I turn out to have told the happiest of lies, if it's revealed that you and Gorgias know, when I've said I've never met anyone who did.
71e	**MENO** ἀλλ' οὐ χαλεπόν, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰπεῖν. πρῶτον μέν, εἰ βούλει ἀνδρὸς ἀρετήν, ῥᾴδιον, ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς ἀρετή, ἱκανὸν εἶναι τὰ τῆς πόλεως πράττειν, καὶ πράττοντα τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς, καὶ αὐτὸν εὐλαβεῖσθαι μηδὲν τοιοῦτον παθεῖν. εἰ δὲ βούλει γυναικὸς ἀρετήν, οὐ χαλεπὸν διελθεῖν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὴν τὴν οἰκίαν εὖ οἰκεῖν, σῴζουσάν τε τὰ ἔνδον καὶ κατήκοον οὖσαν τοῦ ἀνδρός. καὶ ἄλλη ἐστὶν παιδὸς	**MENO** But it isn't hard to say, Socrates. First, if you want a man's excellence, that's easy: a man's excellence is to be capable of managing the city's affairs, and in managing them to do good to his friends and harm to his enemies, and to take care that he suffers nothing of the kind himself. If you want a woman's excellence, that's not hard to describe either: she must manage the household well, looking after its contents and obeying her

GREEK

ENGLISH

ἀρετή, καὶ θηλείας καὶ ἄρρενος, καὶ πρεσβυτέρου ἀνδρός, εἰ μὲν βούλει, ἐλευθέρου, εἰ δὲ βούλει, [72a] δούλου.

husband. And there's another excellence for a child, girl or boy, and another for an older man—a free man, if you like, or, if you like, [72a] a slave.

72a καὶ ἄλλαι πάμπολλαι ἀρεταί εἰσιν, ὥστε οὐκ ἀπορία εἰπεῖν ἀρετῆς πέρι ὅτι ἐστίν· καθ' ἑκάστην γὰρ τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῶν ἡλικιῶν πρὸς ἕκαστον ἔργον ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἡ ἀρετή ἐστιν, ὡσαύτως δὲ οἶμαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ἡ κακία.

And there are a great many other excellences, so there's no difficulty in saying what excellence is. For each of us has an excellence corresponding to each activity and each time of life, for each task—and the same goes for badness too, Socrates, I think.

SOCRATES πολλῇ γέ τινι εὐτυχίᾳ ἔοικα κεχρῆσθαι, ὦ Μένων, εἰ μίαν ζητῶν ἀρετὴν σμῆνός τι ἀνηύρηκα ἀρετῶν παρὰ σοὶ κείμενον. ἀτάρ, ὦ Μένων, κατὰ ταύτην τὴν εἰκόνα τὴν [72b] περὶ τὰ σμήνη, εἴ μου ἐρομένου μελίττης περὶ οὐσίας ὅτι ποτ' ἐστίν, πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς ἔλεγες αὐτὰς εἶναι, τί ἂν ἀπεκρίνω μοι, εἴ σε ἠρόμην· "ἆρα τούτῳ φῂς πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς εἶναι καὶ διαφερούσας ἀλλήλων, τῷ μελίττας εἶναι; ἢ τούτῳ μὲν οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν, ἄλλῳ δέ τῳ, οἷον ἢ κάλλει ἢ μεγέθει ἢ ἄλλῳ τῳ τῶν τοιούτων;" εἰπέ, τί ἂν ἀπεκρίνω οὕτως ἐρωτηθείς;

SOCRATES I seem to have had a great stroke of luck, Meno: I was looking for one excellence and I've found a whole swarm of them settled on you. But, Meno, to follow up this image [72b] of swarms: suppose I asked you about the being of a bee, what it is, and you said there are many bees of all sorts. What would you answer if I then asked you: "Do you say they are many and of all sorts and different from one another in being bees? Or do they not differ at all in that respect, but in something else—in beauty, say, or size, or something of that kind?" Tell me, what would you answer if you were asked that?

72b **MENO** τοῦτ' ἔγωγε, ὅτι οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν, ᾗ μέλιτται εἰσίν, ἡ ἑτέρα τῆς ἑτέρας.

MENO This: that insofar as they're bees, they don't differ at all, one from another.

72c **SOCRATES** εἰ οὖν εἶπον μετὰ ταῦτα· "τοῦτο τοίνυν μοι αὐτὸ εἰπέ, ὦ Μένων· ᾧ οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν ἀλλὰ ταὐτόν εἰσιν ἅπασαι, τί τοῦτο φῂς εἶναι;" εἶχες δήπου ἄν τί μοι εἰπεῖν;

SOCRATES Suppose I then said: "Well then, Meno, tell me just this: that in which they don't differ at all but are all the same—what do you say that is?" You could surely give me some answer?

MENO ἔγωγε.

MENO I could.

SOCRATES οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν· κἂν εἰ πολλαὶ καὶ παντοδαπαί εἰσιν, ἕν γέ τι εἶδος ταὐτὸν ἅπασαι ἔχουσιν δι' ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί, εἰς ὃ καλῶς που ἔχει ἀποβλέψαντα τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ ἐρωτήσαντι ἐκεῖνο δηλῶσαι, ὃ τυγχάνει [72d] οὖσα ἀρετή· ἢ οὐ μανθάνεις ὅτι λέγω;

SOCRATES It's the same with the excellences, then. Even if they're many and of all sorts, they all have some one form, the same in all, which makes them excellences. Someone answering the question would do well to keep his eyes on that in order to show the questioner just what excellence [72d] is. Or don't you understand what I mean?

72d **MENO** δοκῶ γέ μοι μανθάνειν· οὐ μέντοι ὡς βούλομαί γέ πω κατέχω τὸ ἐρωτώμενον.

MENO I think I understand. But I don't yet grasp the question as well as I'd like.

SOCRATES πότερον δὲ περὶ ἀρετῆς μόνον σοι οὕτω δοκεῖ, ὦ Μένων, ἄλλη μὲν ἀνδρὸς εἶναι, ἄλλη δὲ γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ἢ καὶ περὶ ὑγιείας καὶ περὶ μεγέθους καὶ περὶ ἰσχύος ὡσαύτως; ἄλλη μὲν ἀνδρὸς δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι ὑγίεια, ἄλλη δὲ γυναικός; ἢ ταὐτὸν πανταχοῦ εἶδός ἐστιν, ἐάνπερ ὑγίεια [72e] ᾖ, ἐάντε ἐν ἀνδρὶ ἐάντε ἐν ἄλλῳ ὁτῳοῦν ᾖ;

SOCRATES Is it only about excellence that you think this way, Meno—that there's one for a man, another for a woman, and so on for the rest? Or do you think the same about health and size and strength? Do you think a man's health is one thing and a woman's another? Or is it the same form

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		everywhere, if it really is [72e] health, whether it's in a man or in anyone else?
72e	**MENO** ἡ αὐτή μοι δοκεῖ ὑγίειά γε εἶναι καὶ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικός.	**MENO** Health, at least, seems to me the same for a man and a woman.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ μέγεθος καὶ ἰσχύς; ἐάνπερ ἰσχυρὰ γυνὴ ᾖ, τῷ αὐτῷ εἴδει καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ ἰσχύϊ ἰσχυρὰ ἔσται; τὸ γὰρ τῇ αὐτῇ τοῦτο λέγω· οὐδὲν διαφέρει πρὸς τὸ ἰσχὺς εἶναι ἡ ἰσχύς, ἐάντε ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾖ ἐάντε ἐν γυναικί. ἢ δοκεῖ τί σοι διαφέρειν;	**SOCRATES** And size and strength too? If a woman is strong, will she be strong by the same form and the same strength? By "the same" I mean this: strength doesn't differ at all in its being strength, whether it's in a man or in a woman. Or do you think it differs at all?
	MENO οὐκ ἔμοιγε.	**MENO** I don't.
73a	**SOCRATES** ἡ δὲ ἀρετὴ πρὸς τὸ ἀρετὴ εἶναι διοίσει τι, ἐάντε ἐν παιδὶ ᾖ ἐάντε ἐν πρεσβύτῃ, ἐάντε ἐν γυναικὶ ἐάντε ἐν ἀνδρί;	**SOCRATES** And will excellence differ at all in its being excellence, whether it's in a child or an old man, in a woman or a man?
	MENO ἔμοιγέ πως δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτο οὐκέτι ὅμοιον εἶναι τοῖς ἄλλοις τούτοις.	**MENO** Somehow I feel, Socrates, that this is no longer like those other cases.
	SOCRATES τί δέ; οὐκ ἀνδρὸς μὲν ἀρετὴν ἔλεγες πόλιν εὖ διοικεῖν, γυναικὸς δὲ οἰκίαν;	**SOCRATES** Why? Didn't you say that a man's excellence is to manage a city well, and a woman's to manage a household?
	MENO ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I did.
	SOCRATES ἆρ' οὖν οἷόν τε εὖ διοικεῖν ἢ πόλιν ἢ οἰκίαν ἢ ἄλλο ὁτιοῦν, μὴ σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως διοικοῦντα;	**SOCRATES** Well, is it possible to manage a city or a household or anything else well without managing it moderately and justly?
	MENO οὐ δῆτα.	**MENO** Certainly not.
73b	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν ἄνπερ δικαίως καὶ σωφρόνως διοικῶσιν, δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ σωφροσύνῃ διοικήσουσιν;	**SOCRATES** And if people manage justly and moderately, won't they manage with justice and moderation?
	MENO ἀνάγκη.	**MENO** Necessarily.
	SOCRATES τῶν αὐτῶν ἄρα ἀμφότεροι δέονται, εἴπερ μέλλουσιν ἀγαθοὶ εἶναι, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ὁ ἀνήρ, δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης.	**SOCRATES** Then both of them need the same things if they're going to be good, the woman and the man: justice and moderation.
	MENO φαίνονται.	**MENO** Apparently.
	SOCRATES τί δὲ παῖς καὶ πρεσβύτης; μῶν ἀκόλαστοι ὄντες καὶ ἄδικοι ἀγαθοὶ ἄν ποτε γένοιντο;	**SOCRATES** What about a child and an old man? Could they ever be good if they were undisciplined and unjust?
	MENO οὐ δῆτα.	**MENO** Certainly not.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ σώφρονες καὶ [73c] δίκαιοι;	**SOCRATES** Only if they're moderate and [73c] just?
73c	**MENO** ναί.	**MENO** Yes.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES πάντες ἄρ᾽ ἄνθρωποι τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ ἀγαθοί εἰσιν· τῶν αὐτῶν γὰρ τυχόντες ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται.	**SOCRATES** So all human beings are good in the same way, since they become good by acquiring the same things.
	MENO ἔοικε.	**MENO** It seems so.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἂν δήπου, εἴ γε μὴ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἦν αὐτῶν, τῷ αὐτῷ ἂν τρόπῳ ἀγαθοὶ ἦσαν.	**SOCRATES** And surely they wouldn't be good in the same way if their excellence weren't the same.
	MENO οὐ δῆτα.	**MENO** Certainly not.
	SOCRATES ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ πάντων ἐστίν, πειρῶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἀναμνησθῆναι τί αὐτό φησι Γοργίας εἶναι καὶ σὺ μετ᾽ ἐκείνου.	**SOCRATES** Then since everyone's excellence is the same, try to tell me—try to recollect—what Gorgias says it is, and you along with him.
	MENO τί ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ ἄρχειν οἷόν τ᾽ εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων; [73d] εἴπερ ἕν γέ τι ζητεῖς κατὰ πάντων.	**MENO** What else but being able to rule over people? [73d] If you're looking for one thing that covers them all.
73d	**SOCRATES** ἀλλὰ μὴν ζητῶ γε. ἀλλ᾽ ἆρα καὶ παιδὸς ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετή, ὦ Μένων, καὶ δούλου, ἄρχειν οἵω τε εἶναι τοῦ δεσπότου, καὶ δοκεῖ σοι ἔτι ἂν δοῦλος εἶναι ὁ ἄρχων;	**SOCRATES** That's just what I'm looking for. But is this also a child's excellence, Meno, and a slave's—to be able to rule over his master? And do you think someone who rules would still be a slave?
	MENO οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** I don't think so at all, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐ γὰρ εἰκός, ὦ ἄριστε· ἔτι γὰρ καὶ τόδε σκόπει. ἄρχειν φῂς οἷόν τ᾽ εἶναι. οὐ προσθήσομεν αὐτόσε τὸ δικαίως, ἀδίκως δὲ μή;	**SOCRATES** No, it wouldn't be likely, my excellent friend. And consider this further point. You say "being able to rule." Shouldn't we add to that "justly, and not unjustly"?
	MENO οἶμαι ἔγωγε· ἡ γὰρ δικαιοσύνη, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀρετή ἐστιν.	**MENO** I think so, since justice, Socrates, is excellence.
73e	**SOCRATES** πότερον ἀρετή, ὦ Μένων, ἢ ἀρετή τις;	**SOCRATES** Is it excellence, Meno, or an excellence?
	MENO πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις;	**MENO** What do you mean by that?
	SOCRATES ὡς περὶ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν. οἷον, εἰ βούλει, στρογγυλότητος πέρι εἴποιμ᾽ ἂν ἔγωγε ὅτι σχῆμά τί ἐστιν, οὐχ οὕτως ἁπλῶς ὅτι σχῆμα. διὰ ταῦτα δὲ οὕτως ἂν εἴποιμι, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλα ἔστι σχήματα.	**SOCRATES** The same as with anything else. For example, take roundness, if you like: I'd say it's a shape, not simply that it's shape. And I'd put it that way because there are other shapes as well.
	MENO ὀρθῶς γε λέγων σύ, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐγὼ λέγω οὐ μόνον δικαιοσύνην ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλας εἶναι ἀρετάς.	**MENO** And you'd be right, since I too say that there are other excellences besides justice.
74a	**SOCRATES** τίνας ταύτας; εἰπέ. οἷον καὶ ἐγώ σοι εἴποιμι ἂν καὶ ἄλλα σχήματα, εἴ με κελεύοις· καὶ σὺ οὖν ἐμοὶ εἰπὲ ἄλλας ἀρετάς.	**SOCRATES** What are they? Tell me. Just as I could name other shapes for you, if you told me to, so you name other excellences for me.
	MENO ἡ ἀνδρεία τοίνυν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ ἀρετὴ εἶναι καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ σοφία καὶ μεγαλοπρέπεια καὶ ἄλλαι πάμπολλαι.	**MENO** Well, courage seems to me to be an excellence, and moderation, and wisdom, and magnificence, and a great many others.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES πάλιν, ὦ Μένων, ταὐτὸν πεπόνθαμεν· πολλὰς αὖ ηὑρήκαμεν ἀρετὰς μίαν ζητοῦντες, ἄλλον τρόπον ἢ νυνδή· τὴν δὲ μίαν, ἣ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἐστίν, οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀνευρεῖν.	**SOCRATES** Once again, Meno, the same thing has happened to us. We were looking for one excellence and we've found many—in a different way from before. But the one that runs through all of them we can't find.
	MENO οὐ γὰρ δύναμαί πω, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὡς σὺ ζητεῖς, [74b] μίαν ἀρετὴν λαβεῖν κατὰ πάντων, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις.	**MENO** No, Socrates, I can't yet grasp one excellence covering them all, the way you're looking for it, [74b] as in those other cases.
74b	**SOCRATES** εἰκότως γε· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ προθυμήσομαι, ἐὰν οἷός τ' ὦ, ἡμᾶς προβιβάσαι. μανθάνεις γάρ που ὅτι οὑτωσὶ ἔχει περὶ παντός· εἴ τίς σε ἀνέροιτο τοῦτο ὃ νυνδὴ ἐγὼ ἔλεγον, "τί ἐστιν σχῆμα, ὦ Μένων;" εἰ αὐτῷ εἶπες ὅτι στρογγυλότης, εἴ σοι εἶπεν ἅπερ ἐγώ, "πότερον σχῆμα ἡ στρογγυλότης ἐστὶν ἢ σχῆμά τι;" εἶπες δήπου ἂν ὅτι σχῆμά τι.	**SOCRATES** No wonder. But I'll do my best, if I can, to move us forward. You understand, I suppose, that it's like this with everything. If someone asked you what I asked just now—"What is shape, Meno?"—and you told him "roundness," and he then said to you what I did—"Is roundness shape, or a shape?"—you'd surely say it was a shape.
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
74c	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν διὰ ταῦτα, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλα ἔστιν σχήματα;	**SOCRATES** Because there are other shapes as well?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES καὶ εἴ γε προσανηρώτα σε ὁποῖα, ἔλεγες ἄν;	**SOCRATES** And if he went on to ask you what they were, you'd tell him?
	MENO ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I would.
	SOCRATES καὶ αὖ εἰ περὶ χρώματος ὡσαύτως ἀνήρετο ὅτι ἐστίν, καὶ εἰπόντος σου ὅτι τὸ λευκόν, μετὰ ταῦτα ὑπέλαβεν ὁ ἐρωτῶν· "πότερον τὸ λευκὸν χρῶμά ἐστιν ἢ χρῶμά τι;" εἶπες ἂν ὅτι χρῶμά τι, διότι καὶ ἄλλα τυγχάνει ὄντα;	**SOCRATES** And again, if he asked you in the same way what color is, and when you said "white," the questioner then took you up: "Is white color, or a color?"—you'd say it was a color, because there happen to be others as well?
	MENO ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I would.
	SOCRATES καὶ εἴ γέ σε ἐκέλευε λέγειν ἄλλα χρώματα, ἔλεγες [74d] ἂν ἄλλα, ἃ οὐδὲν ἧττον τυγχάνει ὄντα χρώματα τοῦ λευκοῦ;	**SOCRATES** And if he told you to name other colors, you'd name [74d] others, which are colors every bit as much as white is?
74d	**MENO** ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES εἰ οὖν ὥσπερ ἐγὼ μετῄει τὸν λόγον, καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι "ἀεὶ εἰς πολλὰ ἀφικνούμεθα, ἀλλὰ μή μοι οὕτως, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τὰ πολλὰ ταῦτα ἑνί τινι προσαγορεύεις ὀνόματι, καὶ φῂς οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ὅτι οὐ σχῆμα εἶναι, καὶ ταῦτα καὶ ἐναντία ὄντα ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι ἐστὶν τοῦτο ὃ οὐδὲν ἧττον κατέχει τὸ στρογγύλον ἢ τὸ εὐθύ, ὃ δὴ ὀνομάζεις σχῆμα [74e] καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῂς τὸ στρογγύλον σχῆμα εἶναι ἢ τὸ εὐθύ;" ἢ οὐχ οὕτω λέγεις;	**SOCRATES** Now if he pursued the argument as I did, and said: "We keep arriving at many things—but don't give me that. Since you call these many things by one name, and say that every one of them is a shape, even though they're opposed to each other, what is this thing that includes the round no less than the straight—the thing you call shape, [74e] when you say the round is no more a shape than the straight is?" Isn't that what you say?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
74e	**MENO** ἔγωγε.	**MENO** It is.
	SOCRATES ἆρ' οὖν, ὅταν οὕτω λέγῃς, τότε οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῂς τὸ στρογγύλον εἶναι στρογγύλον ἢ εὐθύ, οὐδὲ τὸ εὐθὺ εὐθὺ ἢ στρογγύλον;	**SOCRATES** Well, when you say that, are you saying that the round is no more round than straight, and the straight no more straight than round?
	MENO οὐ δήπου, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** Surely not, Socrates.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ μὴν σχῆμά γε οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῂς εἶναι τὸ στρογγύλον τοῦ εὐθέος, οὐδὲ τὸ ἕτερον τοῦ ἑτέρου.	**SOCRATES** But you do say that the round is no more a shape than the straight is, nor the one more than the other.
	MENO ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**MENO** That's true.
	SOCRATES τί ποτε οὖν τοῦτο οὗ τοῦτο ὄνομά ἐστιν, τὸ σχῆμα; [75a] πειρῶ λέγειν. εἰ οὖν τῷ ἐρωτῶντι οὕτως ἢ περὶ σχήματος ἢ χρώματος εἶπες ὅτι "ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μανθάνω ἔγωγε ὅτι βούλει, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, οὐδὲ οἶδα ὅτι λέγεις," ἴσως ἂν ἐθαύμασε καὶ εἶπεν· "οὐ μανθάνεις ὅτι ζητῶ τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τούτοις ταὐτόν;" ἢ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὦ Μένων, ἔχοις ἂν εἰπεῖν, εἴ τίς σε ἐρωτῴη· "τί ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῷ στρογγύλῳ καὶ εὐθεῖ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἃ δὴ σχήματα καλεῖς, ταὐτὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν;" πειρῶ εἰπεῖν, ἵνα καὶ γένηταί σοι μελέτη πρὸς τὴν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπόκρισιν.	**SOCRATES** Then what on earth is this thing whose name is "shape"? [75a] Try to say. Suppose that when someone asked you this about shape or color, you said, "But I don't understand what you want, sir, or know what you mean." He'd probably be surprised and say, "Don't you understand that I'm looking for what's the same in all these cases?" Or would you be unable to answer even in these cases, Meno, if someone asked you, "What is it that's the same in the round and the straight and the other things you call shapes—the same in all of them?" Try to say, so that you get some practice for your answer about excellence.
75b	**MENO** μή, ἀλλὰ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰπέ.	**MENO** No—you tell me, Socrates.
	SOCRATES βούλει σοι χαρίσωμαι;	**SOCRATES** You want me to do you the favor?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Very much.
	SOCRATES ἐθελήσεις οὖν καὶ σὺ ἐμοὶ εἰπεῖν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς;	**SOCRATES** And will you then be willing to tell me about excellence?
	MENO ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I will.
	SOCRATES προθυμητέον τοίνυν· ἄξιον γάρ.	**SOCRATES** Then I must do my best. It's worth it.
	MENO πάνυ μὲν οὖν.	**MENO** It certainly is.
	SOCRATES φέρε δή, πειρώμεθά σοι εἰπεῖν τί ἐστιν σχῆμα. σκόπει οὖν εἰ τόδε ἀποδέχῃ αὐτὸ εἶναι· ἔστω γὰρ δὴ ἡμῖν τοῦτο σχῆμα, ὃ μόνον τῶν ὄντων τυγχάνει χρώματι ἀεὶ ἑπόμενον. ἱκανῶς σοι, ἢ ἄλλως πως ζητεῖς; ἐγὼ γὰρ κἂν [75c] οὕτως ἀγαπῴην εἴ μοι ἀρετὴν εἴποις.	**SOCRATES** Come on, then, let's try to tell you what shape is. See whether you accept this. Let's say that shape is the one thing among all things that always happens to accompany color. Is that enough for you, or are you looking for something different? For my part, I'd be [75c] content if you told me what excellence is in this way.
75c	**MENO** ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε εὔηθες, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** But that's simple-minded, Socrates.
	SOCRATES πῶς λέγεις;	**SOCRATES** How do you mean?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	MENO ὅτι σχῆμά πού ἐστιν κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ὃ ἀεὶ χρόᾳ ἕπεται. εἶεν· εἰ δὲ δὴ τὴν χρόαν τις μὴ φαίη εἰδέναι, ἀλλὰ ὡσαύτως ἀποροῖ ὥσπερ περὶ τοῦ σχήματος, τί ἂν οἴει σοι ἀποκεκρίσθαι;	**MENO** That according to your account shape is what always accompanies color. Fine. But if someone said he didn't know what color is, and was just as much at a loss about it as about shape, what do you think your answer would amount to?
	SOCRATES τἀληθῆ ἔγωγε· καὶ εἰ μέν γε τῶν σοφῶν τις εἴη καὶ ἐριστικῶν τε καὶ ἀγωνιστικῶν ὁ ἐρόμενος, εἴποιμ' ἂν [75d] αὐτῷ ὅτι "ἐμοὶ μὲν εἴρηται· εἰ δὲ μὴ ὀρθῶς λέγω, σὸν ἔργον λαμβάνειν λόγον καὶ ἐλέγχειν." εἰ δὲ ὥσπερ ἐγώ τε καὶ σὺ νυνὶ φίλοι ὄντες βούλοιντο ἀλλήλοις διαλέγεσθαι, δεῖ δὴ πρᾳότερόν πως καὶ διαλεκτικώτερον ἀποκρίνεσθαι. ἔστι δὲ ἴσως τὸ διαλεκτικώτερον μὴ μόνον τἀληθῆ ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἐκείνων ὧν ἂν προσομολογῇ εἰδέναι ὁ ἐρωτώμενος. πειράσομαι δὴ καὶ ἐγώ σοι οὕτως εἰπεῖν. [75e] λέγε γάρ μοι· τελευτὴν καλεῖς τι; τοιόνδε λέγω οἷον πέρας καὶ ἔσχατον—πάντα ταῦτα ταὐτόν τι λέγω· ἴσως δ' ἂν ἡμῖν Πρόδικος διαφέροιτο, ἀλλὰ σύ γέ που καλεῖς πεπεράνθαι τι καὶ τετελευτηκέναι —τὸ τοιοῦτον βούλομαι λέγειν, οὐδὲν ποικίλον.	**SOCRATES** A true one, I'd say. And if the questioner were one of those clever people who love disputes and contests, I'd tell [75d] him: "I've given my answer. If I'm wrong, it's your job to take up the argument and refute it." But if people are friends, as you and I are now, and want to have a discussion with each other, then one has to answer more gently and in a way more suited to discussion. And perhaps what's more suited to discussion is not only to answer truly, but also to answer in terms that the person being questioned agrees he knows. So I'll try to answer you that way too. [75e] Tell me: is there something you call an end? I mean something like a limit or a boundary—I'm saying all these are the same thing. Prodicus might disagree with us, perhaps, but you, at least, speak of something as being limited or ended—that's the sort of thing I mean, nothing fancy.[3]
75e	**MENO** ἀλλὰ καλῶ, καὶ οἶμαι μανθάνειν ὃ λέγεις.	**MENO** Yes, I do, and I think I understand what you mean.
76a	**SOCRATES** τί δ'; ἐπίπεδον καλεῖς τι, καὶ ἕτερον αὖ στερεόν, οἷον ταῦτα τὰ ἐν ταῖς γεωμετρίαις;	**SOCRATES** And do you call something a surface, and something else again a solid, as in geometry?
	MENO ἔγωγε καλῶ.	**MENO** I do.
	SOCRATES ἤδη τοίνυν ἂν μάθοις μου ἐκ τούτων σχῆμα ὃ λέγω. κατὰ γὰρ παντὸς σχήματος τοῦτο λέγω, εἰς ὃ τὸ στερεὸν περαίνει, τοῦτ' εἶναι σχῆμα· ὅπερ ἂν συλλαβὼν εἴποιμι στερεοῦ πέρας σχῆμα εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** Then from these you can already understand what I mean by shape. For I say this of every shape: shape is that in which a solid ends. To sum it up, I'd say shape is the limit of a solid.
	MENO τὸ δὲ χρῶμα τί λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**MENO** And what do you say color is, Socrates?
	SOCRATES ὑβριστής γ' εἶ, ὦ Μένων· ἀνδρὶ πρεσβύτῃ πράγματα προστάττεις ἀποκρίνεσθαι, αὐτὸς δὲ οὐκ ἐθέλεις [76b] ἀναμνησθεὶς εἰπεῖν ὅτι ποτε λέγει Γοργίας ἀρετὴν εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** You're outrageous, Meno. You pester an old man to answer questions, while you yourself won't [76b] recollect and tell me what Gorgias says excellence is.
76b	**MENO** ἀλλ' ἐπειδάν μοι σὺ τοῦτ' εἴπῃς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐρῶ σοι.	**MENO** Once you've told me this, Socrates, I'll tell you.

3 Prodicus of Ceos was a sophist famous for drawing fine distinctions between near-synonyms.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES κἂν κατακεκαλυμμένος τις γνοίη, ὦ Μένων, διαλεγομένου σου, ὅτι καλὸς εἶ καὶ ἐρασταί σοι ἔτι εἰσίν.	**SOCRATES** Even someone blindfolded, Meno, could tell from the way you talk that you're handsome and still have lovers.
	MENO τί δή;	**MENO** Why?
	SOCRATES ὅτι οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ ἐπιτάττεις ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, ὅπερ ποιοῦσιν οἱ τρυφῶντες, ἅτε τυραννεύοντες ἕως ἂν ἐν ὥρᾳ 76c ὦσιν, καὶ ἅμα ἐμοῦ ἴσως κατέγνωκας ὅτι εἰμὶ ἥττων τῶν καλῶν· χαριοῦμαι οὖν σοι καὶ ἀποκρινοῦμαι.	**SOCRATES** Because you do nothing but give orders in discussion, the way spoiled beauties do—they play the tyrant as long as they're 76c in their bloom. And perhaps you've also spotted that I have a weakness for handsome people. So I'll do you the favor and answer.
76c	**MENO** πάνυ μὲν οὖν χάρισαι.	**MENO** By all means do me the favor.
	SOCRATES βούλει οὖν σοι κατὰ Γοργίαν ἀποκρίνωμαι, ᾗ ἂν σὺ μάλιστα ἀκολουθήσαις;	**SOCRATES** Would you like me to answer in the manner of Gorgias, the way you'd find easiest to follow?
	MENO βούλομαι· πῶς γὰρ οὔ;	**MENO** I would—of course.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν λέγετε ἀπορροάς τινας τῶν ὄντων κατὰ Ἐμπεδοκλέα;	**SOCRATES** Don't you people say, following Empedocles, that there are certain effluences given off by things?[4]
	MENO σφόδρα γε.	**MENO** Very much so.
	SOCRATES καὶ πόρους εἰς οὓς καὶ δι' ὧν αἱ ἀπορροαὶ πορεύονται;	**SOCRATES** And pores into which and through which the effluences travel?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES καὶ τῶν ἀπορροῶν τὰς μὲν ἁρμόττειν ἐνίοις τῶν 76d πόρων, τὰς δὲ ἐλάττους ἢ μείζους εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** And that some of the effluences fit some of the 76d pores, while others are too small or too large?
76d	**MENO** ἔστι ταῦτα.	**MENO** That's right.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ ὄψιν καλεῖς τι;	**SOCRATES** And is there something you call sight?
	MENO ἔγωγε.	**MENO** There is.
	SOCRATES ἐκ τούτων δὴ "σύνες ὅ τοι λέγω," ἔφη Πίνδαρος. ἔστιν γὰρ χρόα ἀπορροὴ σχημάτων ὄψει σύμμετρος καὶ αἰσθητός.	**SOCRATES** From these, then, "grasp what I tell you," as Pindar said. Color is an effluence from shapes, commensurate with sight and perceptible.[5]
	MENO ἄριστά μοι δοκεῖς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ταύτην τὴν ἀπόκρισιν εἰρηκέναι.	**MENO** I think that's an excellent answer you've given, Socrates.
		SOCRATES Probably because it's been given in terms you're used to. And I expect you also notice

4 Empedocles of Acragas, a fifth-century BC philosopher-poet, explained perception by particles flowing from objects into pores in the sense organs.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES ἴσως γάρ σοι κατὰ συνήθειαν εἴρηται· καὶ ἅμα οἶμαι ἐννοεῖς ὅτι ἔχοις ἂν ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰπεῖν καὶ φωνὴν ὃ ἔστι, [76e] καὶ ὀσμὴν καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ τῶν τοιούτων.	that you could use it to say what sound is too, [76e] and smell, and many other things of that kind.
76e	**MENO** πάνυ μὲν οὖν.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES τραγικὴ γάρ ἐστιν, ὦ Μένων, ἡ ἀπόκρισις, ὥστε ἀρέσκει σοι μᾶλλον ἢ ἡ περὶ τοῦ σχήματος.	**SOCRATES** It's a grand, theatrical answer, Meno, so you like it better than the one about shape.
	MENO ἔμοιγε.	**MENO** I do.
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ παῖ Ἀλεξιδήμου, ὡς ἐγὼ ἐμαυτὸν πείθω, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη βελτίων· οἶμαι δὲ οὐδ' ἂν σοὶ δόξαι, εἰ μή, ὥσπερ χθὲς ἔλεγες, ἀναγκαῖόν σοι ἀπιέναι πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων, ἀλλ' εἰ περιμείναις τε καὶ μυηθείης.	**SOCRATES** But it isn't better, son of Alexidemus—I'm convinced of that. The other one is better. And I don't think you'd think so either, if you didn't have to leave before the Mysteries, as you were saying yesterday, but could stay and be initiated.[6]
77a	**MENO** ἀλλὰ περιμένοιμ' ἄν, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἴ μοι πολλὰ τοιαῦτα λέγοις.	**MENO** But I would stay, Socrates, if you gave me many answers like that.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ μὴν προθυμίας γε οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω, καὶ σοῦ ἕνεκα καὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, λέγων τοιαῦτα· ἀλλ' ὅπως μὴ οὐχ οἷός τ' ἔσομαι πολλὰ τοιαῦτα λέγειν. ἀλλ' ἴθι δὴ πειρῶ καὶ σὺ ἐμοὶ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν ἀποδοῦναι, κατὰ ὅλου εἰπὼν ἀρετῆς πέρι ὅτι ἐστίν, καὶ παῦσαι πολλὰ ποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ ἑνός, ὅπερ φασὶ τοὺς συντρίβοντάς τι ἑκάστοτε οἱ σκώπτοντες, ἀλλὰ ἐάσας ὅλην καὶ ὑγιῆ εἰπὲ τί ἐστιν ἀρετή. τὰ δέ γε παραδείγματα [77b] παρ' ἐμοῦ εἴληφας.	**SOCRATES** Well, I certainly won't fall short in effort, for your sake and my own, in giving answers like that. But I'm afraid I won't be able to give many of them. Now come on, you try to keep your promise to me: tell me what excellence is as a whole, and stop making many out of one, as the joke goes about people who break things; leave it whole and in one piece, and tell me what excellence is. You've got [77b] the examples from me.
77b	**MENO** δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀρετὴ εἶναι, καθάπερ ὁ ποιητὴς λέγει, "χαίρειν τε καλοῖσι καὶ δύνασθαι·" καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦτο λέγω ἀρετήν, ἐπιθυμοῦντα τῶν καλῶν δυνατὸν εἶναι πορίζεσθαι.	**MENO** Well then, Socrates, it seems to me that excellence is, as the poet says, "to delight in fine things and have power." And that's what I call excellence: to desire fine things and be able to get them.
	SOCRATES ἆρα λέγεις τὸν τῶν καλῶν ἐπιθυμοῦντα ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμητὴν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Do you mean that someone who desires fine things desires good things?
	MENO μάλιστά γε.	**MENO** Very much so.
	SOCRATES ἆρα ὡς ὄντων τινῶν οἳ τῶν κακῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, ἑτέρων δὲ οἳ τῶν [77c] ἀγαθῶν; οὐ πάντες, ὦριστε, δοκοῦσί σοι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμεῖν;	**SOCRATES** Implying that there are some people who desire bad things and others who desire [77c] good things? Don't you think, my excellent friend, that everyone desires good things?
77c	**MENO** οὐκ ἔμοιγε.	**MENO** No, I don't.
	SOCRATES ἀλλά τινες τῶν κακῶν;	**SOCRATES** Some desire bad things?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.

5 Pindar was a lyric poet of the fifth century BC.
6 The Eleusinian Mysteries, a secret religious rite near Athens into which participants were initiated in stages.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES οἰόμενοι τὰ κακὰ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, λέγεις, ἢ καὶ γιγνώσκοντες ὅτι κακά ἐστιν ὅμως ἐπιθυμοῦσιν αὐτῶν;	**SOCRATES** Thinking the bad things are good, you mean, or knowing that they're bad and desiring them all the same?
	MENO ἀμφότερα ἔμοιγε δοκοῦσιν.	**MENO** Both, I think.
	SOCRATES ἦ γὰρ δοκεῖ τίς σοι, ὦ Μένων, γιγνώσκων τὰ κακὰ ὅτι κακά ἐστιν ὅμως ἐπιθυμεῖν αὐτῶν;	**SOCRATES** Really, Meno? You think someone knows that bad things are bad and still desires them?
	MENO μάλιστα.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES τί ἐπιθυμεῖν λέγεις; ἢ γενέσθαι αὐτῷ;	**SOCRATES** What do you mean by "desires"? That they should come to be his?
	MENO γενέσθαι· τί γὰρ [77d] ἄλλο;	**MENO** That they should come to be his—what [77d] else?
77d	**SOCRATES** πότερον ἡγούμενος τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν ἐκεῖνον ᾧ ἂν γένηται, ἢ γιγνώσκων τὰ κακὰ ὅτι βλάπτει ᾧ ἂν παρῇ;	**SOCRATES** Thinking that bad things benefit the person who gets them, or knowing that bad things harm whoever has them?
	MENO εἰσὶ μὲν οἳ ἡγούμενοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν, εἰσὶν δὲ καὶ οἳ γιγνώσκοντες ὅτι βλάπτει.	**MENO** There are some who think bad things benefit them, and some who know they do harm.
	SOCRATES ἦ καὶ δοκοῦσί σοι γιγνώσκειν τὰ κακὰ ὅτι κακά ἐστιν οἱ ἡγούμενοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν;	**SOCRATES** And do you think that those who believe bad things benefit them know that the bad things are bad?
	MENO οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό γε.	**MENO** No, I don't think that at all.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν δῆλον ὅτι οὗτοι μὲν οὐ τῶν κακῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, [77e] οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτά, ἀλλὰ ἐκείνων ἃ ᾤοντο ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, ἔστιν δὲ ταῦτά γε κακά· ὥστε οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτὰ καὶ οἰόμενοι ἀγαθὰ εἶναι δῆλον ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν. ἢ οὔ;	**SOCRATES** Then clearly these people, who don't recognize bad things for what they are, don't desire bad things, [77e] but things they thought were good, though in fact they're bad. So people who don't recognize them and think they're good clearly desire good things. Isn't that so?
77e	**MENO** κινδυνεύουσιν οὗτοί γε.	**MENO** In their case, it looks like it.
	SOCRATES τί δέ; οἱ τῶν κακῶν μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦντες, ὡς φῂς σύ, ἡγούμενοι δὲ τὰ κακὰ βλάπτειν ἐκεῖνον ᾧ ἂν γίγνηται, γιγνώσκουσιν δήπου ὅτι βλαβήσονται ὑπ' αὐτῶν;	**SOCRATES** Well then, those who desire bad things, as you say, but believe that bad things harm whoever gets them—surely they know they'll be harmed by them?
78a	**MENO** ἀνάγκη.	**MENO** Necessarily.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ τοὺς βλαπτομένους οὗτοι οὐκ οἴονται ἀθλίους εἶναι καθ' ὅσον βλάπτονται;	**SOCRATES** But don't they think that people who are harmed are miserable, to the extent that they're harmed?
	MENO καὶ τοῦτο ἀνάγκη.	**MENO** That's necessary too.
	SOCRATES τοὺς δὲ ἀθλίους οὐ κακοδαίμονας;	**SOCRATES** And that the miserable are unhappy?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	MENO οἶμαι ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I think so.
	SOCRATES ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις βούλεται ἄθλιος καὶ κακοδαίμων εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Well, is there anyone who wants to be miserable and unhappy?
	MENO οὔ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** I don't think so, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἄρα βούλεται, ὦ Μένων, τὰ κακὰ οὐδείς, εἴπερ μὴ βούλεται τοιοῦτος εἶναι. τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἄθλιον εἶναι ἢ ἐπιθυμεῖν τε τῶν κακῶν καὶ κτᾶσθαι;	**SOCRATES** Then no one wants bad things, Meno, if no one wants to be like that. For what else is being miserable but desiring bad things and getting them?
	MENO κινδυνεύεις [78b] ἀληθῆ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες· καὶ οὐδεὶς βούλεσθαι τὰ κακά.	**MENO** It looks as if you're [78b] right, Socrates. No one wants bad things.
78b	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν νυνδὴ ἔλεγες ὅτι ἔστιν ἡ ἀρετὴ βούλεσθαί τε τἀγαθὰ καὶ δύνασθαι;	**SOCRATES** Weren't you saying just now that excellence is to want good things and have the power to get them?
	MENO εἶπον γάρ.	**MENO** Yes, I said that.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν τοῦ λεχθέντος τὸ μὲν βούλεσθαι πᾶσιν ὑπάρχει, καὶ ταύτῃ γε οὐδὲν ὁ ἕτερος τοῦ ἑτέρου βελτίων;	**SOCRATES** And of what was said, the wanting is common to everyone, and in that respect no one is any better than anyone else?
	MENO φαίνεται.	**MENO** Apparently.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι εἴπερ ἐστὶ βελτίων ἄλλος ἄλλου, κατὰ τὸ δύνασθαι ἂν εἴη ἀμείνων.	**SOCRATES** So clearly, if one person is better than another, it would be in the power to get them.
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ἀρετή, [78c] δύναμις τοῦ πορίζεσθαι τἀγαθά.	**SOCRATES** Then this, it seems, is excellence on your account: [78c] the power to get good things.
78c	**MENO** παντάπασί μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς σὺ νῦν ὑπολαμβάνεις.	**MENO** I think it's exactly as you now take it, Socrates.
	SOCRATES ἴδωμεν δὴ καὶ τοῦτο εἰ ἀληθὲς λέγεις· ἴσως γὰρ ἂν εὖ λέγοις. τἀγαθὰ φῂς οἷόν τ' εἶναι πορίζεσθαι ἀρετὴν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Then let's see whether this is true as well; you may well be right. You say excellence is being able to get good things?
	MENO ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I do.
	SOCRATES ἀγαθὰ δὲ καλεῖς οὐχὶ οἷον ὑγίειάν τε καὶ πλοῦτον;	**SOCRATES** And by good things don't you mean such things as health and wealth?
	MENO καὶ χρυσίον λέγω καὶ ἀργύριον κτᾶσθαι καὶ τιμὰς ἐν πόλει καὶ ἀρχάς.	**MENO** And I mean acquiring gold and silver, and honors and offices in the city.
	SOCRATES μὴ ἄλλ' ἄττα λέγεις τἀγαθὰ ἢ τὰ τοιαῦτα;	**SOCRATES** You don't mean any good things other than things of that kind?
	MENO οὔκ, ἀλλὰ [78d] πάντα λέγω τὰ τοιαῦτα.	**MENO** No, [78d] I mean all things of that kind.
78d		

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES εἶεν· χρυσίον δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀργύριον πορίζεσθαι ἀρετή ἐστιν, ὥς φησι Μένων ὁ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως πατρικὸς ξένος. πότερον προστιθεῖς τούτῳ τῷ πόρῳ, ὦ Μένων, τὸ δικαίως καὶ ὁσίως, ἢ οὐδέν σοι διαφέρει, ἀλλὰ κἂν ἀδίκως τις αὐτὰ πορίζηται, ὁμοίως σὺ αὐτὰ ἀρετὴν καλεῖς;	**SOCRATES** Very well. Getting gold and silver is excellence—so says Meno, hereditary guest-friend of the Great King. Do you add "justly and piously" to this getting, Meno, or does it make no difference to you, and even if someone gets them unjustly you still call it excellence all the same?[7]
	MENO οὐ δήπου, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** Surely not, Socrates.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ κακίαν.	**SOCRATES** You'd call it badness.
	MENO πάντως δήπου.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES δεῖ ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, τούτῳ τῷ πόρῳ δικαιοσύνην ἢ σωφροσύνην ἢ 78e ὁσιότητα προσεῖναι, ἢ ἄλλο τι μόριον ἀρετῆς· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐκ ἔσται ἀρετή, καίπερ ἐκπορίζουσα τἀγαθά.	**SOCRATES** So it seems that justice or moderation or 78e piety, or some other part of excellence, has to accompany this getting. Otherwise it won't be excellence, even though it gets good things.
78e	**MENO** πῶς γὰρ ἄνευ τούτων ἀρετὴ γένοιτ' ἄν;	**MENO** Yes—how could it be excellence without those?
	SOCRATES τὸ δὲ μὴ ἐκπορίζειν χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον, ὅταν μὴ δίκαιον ᾖ, μήτε αὑτῷ μήτε ἄλλῳ, οὐκ ἀρετὴ καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπορία;	**SOCRATES** And not getting gold and silver, when it wouldn't be just, either for oneself or for someone else—isn't this not-getting excellence too?
	MENO φαίνεται.	**MENO** Apparently.
	SOCRATES οὐδὲν ἄρα μᾶλλον ὁ πόρος τῶν τοιούτων ἀγαθῶν ἢ ἡ ἀπορία ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη, ἀλλά, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὃ μὲν ἂν μετὰ δικαιοσύνης γίγνηται, ἀρετὴ ἔσται, ὃ δ' 79a ἂν ἄνευ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων, κακία.	**SOCRATES** So getting good things of this kind would be no more excellence than not getting them. Rather, it seems, whatever is done with justice will be excellence, and whatever is done 79a without anything of that kind will be badness.
79a	**MENO** δοκεῖ μοι ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι ὡς λέγεις.	**MENO** I think it must be as you say.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν τούτων ἕκαστον ὀλίγον πρότερον μόριον ἀρετῆς ἔφαμεν εἶναι, τὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ σωφροσύνην καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα;	**SOCRATES** And a little while ago didn't we say that each of these—justice and moderation and all the rest—was a part of excellence?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES εἶτα, ὦ Μένων, παίζεις πρός με;	**SOCRATES** So, Meno, are you making fun of me?
	MENO τί δή, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**MENO** Why do you say that, Socrates?
	SOCRATES ὅτι ἄρτι ἐμοῦ δεηθέντος σου μὴ καταγνύναι μηδὲ κερματίζειν τὴν ἀρετήν, καὶ δόντος παραδείγματα καθ' ἃ δέοι ἀποκρίνεσθαι, τούτου μὲν ἠμέλησας, λέγεις δέ μοι ὅτι ἀρετή 79b ἐστιν οἷόν τ' εἶναι τἀγαθὰ πορίζεσθαι μετὰ δικαιοσύνης· τοῦτο δὲ φῂς μόριον ἀρετῆς εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Because just now I asked you not to break excellence up or chop it into small change, and I gave you examples of how you should answer. You ignored that, and now you tell me that excellence 79b is being able to get good things with justice. And justice, you say, is a part of excellence?

7 The Great King was the king of Persia; a hereditary guest-friendship was a formal bond of hospitality passed down in families.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
79b	**MENO** ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I do.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν συμβαίνει ἐξ ὧν σὺ ὁμολογεῖς, τὸ μετὰ μορίου ἀρετῆς πράττειν ὅτι ἂν πράττῃ, τοῦτο ἀρετὴν εἶναι· τὴν γὰρ δικαιοσύνην μόριον φῂς ἀρετῆς εἶναι, καὶ ἕκαστα τούτων. τί οὖν δὴ τοῦτο λέγω; ὅτι ἐμοῦ δεηθέντος ὅλον εἰπεῖν τὴν ἀρετήν, αὐτὴν μὲν πολλοῦ δεῖς εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἐστίν, πᾶσαν δὲ φῂς πρᾶξιν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, ἐάνπερ μετὰ μορίου [79c] ἀρετῆς πράττηται, ὥσπερ εἰρηκὼς ὅτι ἀρετή ἐστιν τὸ ὅλον καὶ ἤδη γνωσομένου ἐμοῦ, καὶ ἐὰν σὺ κατακερματίζῃς αὐτὴν κατὰ μόρια. δεῖται οὖν σοι πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, τῆς αὐτῆς ἐρωτήσεως, ὦ φίλε Μένων, τί ἐστιν ἀρετή, εἰ μετὰ μορίου ἀρετῆς πᾶσα πρᾶξις ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη; τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν λέγειν, ὅταν λέγῃ τις, ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ μετὰ δικαιοσύνης πρᾶξις ἀρετή ἐστιν.	**SOCRATES** Then it follows from what you agree that doing whatever one does with a part of excellence—that is excellence. For you say justice is a part of excellence, and so is each of the others. So why do I say this? Because when I asked you to tell me about excellence as a whole, you're far from saying what it is. Instead you say every action is excellence as long as it's done with a part [79c] of excellence—as if you'd already said what excellence is as a whole, and I'd recognize it right away, even if you chop it up into parts. So it seems to me you need to face the same question again from the beginning, my dear Meno: what is excellence, if every action done with a part of excellence would be excellence? For that's what someone is saying when he says that every action done with justice is excellence.
79c	ἢ οὐ δοκεῖ σοι πάλιν δεῖσθαι τῆς αὐτῆς ἐρωτήσεως, ἀλλ' οἴει τινὰ εἰδέναι μόριον ἀρετῆς ὅτι ἐστίν, αὐτὴν μὴ εἰδότα;	Or don't you think you need to face the same question again? Do you think someone knows what a part of excellence is when he doesn't know excellence itself?
	MENO οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.	**MENO** No, I don't think so.
79d	**SOCRATES** εἰ γὰρ καὶ μέμνησαι, ὅτ' ἐγώ σοι ἄρτι ἀπεκρινάμην περὶ τοῦ σχήματος, ἀπεβάλλομέν που τὴν τοιαύτην ἀπόκρισιν τὴν διὰ τῶν ἔτι ζητουμένων καὶ μήπω ὡμολογημένων ἐπιχειροῦσαν ἀποκρίνεσθαι.	**SOCRATES** And if you remember, when I answered you about shape just now, we rejected that kind of answer, the kind that tries to answer in terms of things still being looked for and not yet agreed on.
	MENO καὶ ὀρθῶς γε ἀπεβάλλομεν, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** And we were right to reject it, Socrates.
	SOCRATES μὴ τοίνυν, ὦ ἄριστε, μηδὲ σὺ ἔτι ζητουμένης ἀρετῆς ὅλης ὅτι ἐστὶν οἵου διὰ τῶν ταύτης μορίων ἀποκρινόμενος δηλώσειν αὐτὴν ὁτῳοῦν, ἢ ἄλλο ὁτιοῦν τούτῳ τῷ αὐτῷ [79e] τρόπῳ λέγων, ἀλλὰ πάλιν τῆς αὐτῆς δεήσεσθαι ἐρωτήσεως, τίνος ὄντος ἀρετῆς λέγεις ἃ λέγεις· ἢ οὐδέν σοι δοκῶ λέγειν;	**SOCRATES** Then, my excellent friend, don't you think either, while we're still looking for what excellence as a whole is, that you'll make it clear to anyone by answering in terms of its parts, or by saying anything else in this same [79e] way. No, you'll need to face the same question again: what is this excellence you keep talking about? Or do you think I'm talking nonsense?
79e	**MENO** ἔμοιγε δοκεῖς ὀρθῶς λέγειν.	**MENO** I think you're right.
	SOCRATES ἀπόκριναι τοίνυν πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς· τί φῂς ἀρετὴν εἶναι καὶ σὺ καὶ ὁ ἑταῖρός σου;	**SOCRATES** Then answer again from the beginning: what do you and your friend say excellence is?

MENO'S PARADOX

Meno compares Socrates to a stingray and asks how one can search for what one does not know.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	MENO ὦ Σώκρατες, ἤκουον μὲν ἔγωγε πρὶν καὶ συγγενέσθαι [80a] σοι ὅτι σὺ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ αὐτός τε ἀπορεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιεῖς ἀπορεῖν· καὶ νῦν, ὡς γέ μοι δοκεῖς, γοητεύεις με καὶ φαρμάττεις καὶ ἀτεχνῶς κατεπᾴδεις, ὥστε μεστὸν ἀπορίας γεγονέναι. καὶ δοκεῖς μοι παντελῶς, εἰ δεῖ τι καὶ σκῶψαι, ὁμοιότατος εἶναι τό τε εἶδος καὶ τἆλλα ταύτῃ τῇ πλατείᾳ νάρκῃ τῇ θαλαττίᾳ· καὶ γὰρ αὕτη τὸν ἀεὶ πλησιάζοντα καὶ ἁπτόμενον ναρκᾶν ποιεῖ, καὶ σὺ δοκεῖς μοι νῦν ἐμὲ τοιοῦτόν τι πεποιηκέναι, ναρκᾶν· ἀληθῶς γὰρ ἔγωγε καὶ [80b] τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ στόμα ναρκῶ, καὶ οὐκ ἔχω ὅτι ἀποκρίνωμαί σοι.	**MENO** Socrates, even before I met [80a] you I used to hear that you do nothing but get into difficulties yourself and make others get into difficulties too. And now, it seems to me, you're bewitching me, drugging me, casting a real spell on me, so that I've become full of perplexity. And if I may make a bit of a joke, I think you're very like the flat stingray of the sea, both in looks and in other ways. It numbs whoever comes near it and touches it, and I think you've now done something like that to me —numbed me. I really am numb, in [80b] soul and mouth alike, and I don't know how to answer you.[8]
80b	καίτοι μυριάκις γε περὶ ἀρετῆς παμπόλλους λόγους εἴρηκα καὶ πρὸς πολλούς, καὶ πάνυ εὖ, ὡς γε ἐμαυτῷ ἐδόκουν· νῦν δὲ οὐδ' ὅτι ἐστὶν τὸ παράπαν ἔχω εἰπεῖν. καί μοι δοκεῖς εὖ βουλεύεσθαι οὐκ ἐκπλέων ἐνθένδε οὐδ' ἀποδημῶν· εἰ γὰρ ξένος ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει τοιαῦτα ποιοῖς, τάχ' ἂν ὡς γόης ἀπαχθείης.	And yet I've given countless speeches about excellence, and at length, to many people—and very good ones too, or so I thought. But now I can't even say what it is at all. I think you're wise not to sail away from here or travel abroad. If you did this sort of thing as a stranger in another city, you might well be arrested as a sorcerer.
	SOCRATES πανοῦργος εἶ, ὦ Μένων, καὶ ὀλίγου ἐξηπάτησάς με.	**SOCRATES** You're a rascal, Meno. You nearly tricked me.
	MENO τί μάλιστα, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**MENO** How so, Socrates?
80c	**SOCRATES** γιγνώσκω οὗ ἕνεκά με ᾔκασας.	**SOCRATES** I know why you made that comparison with me.
	MENO τίνος δὴ οἴει;	**MENO** Why do you think?
	SOCRATES ἵνα σε ἀντεικάσω. ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο οἶδα περὶ πάντων τῶν καλῶν, ὅτι χαίρουσιν εἰκαζόμενοι— λυσιτελεῖ γὰρ αὐτοῖς· καλαὶ γὰρ οἶμαι τῶν καλῶν καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες—ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀντεικάσομαί σε. ἐγὼ δέ, εἰ μὲν ἡ νάρκη αὐτὴ ναρκῶσα οὕτω καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιεῖ ναρκᾶν, ἔοικα αὐτῇ· εἰ δὲ μή, οὔ. οὐ γὰρ εὐπορῶν αὐτὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ποιῶ ἀπορεῖν, ἀλλὰ παντὸς μᾶλλον αὐτὸς ἀπορῶν οὕτως καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιῶ [80d] ἀπορεῖν. καὶ νῦν περὶ ἀρετῆς ὃ ἔστιν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ οἶδα, σὺ μέντοι ἴσως πρότερον μὲν ἤδησθα πρὶν ἐμοῦ ἅψασθαι, νῦν μέντοι ὅμοιος εἶ οὐκ εἰδότι. ὅμως δὲ ἐθέλω μετὰ σοῦ σκέψασθαι καὶ συζητῆσαι ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν.	**SOCRATES** So that I'd make one of you in return. I know this about all good-looking people: they enjoy being compared to things. It works in their favor, since the likenesses of beautiful people are beautiful too, I suppose. But I won't make a comparison of you in return. As for me, if the stingray is numb itself and that's how it makes others numb, then I'm like it; if not, I'm not. It isn't that I have the answers myself and make others perplexed. I'm more perplexed than anyone, and that's how I make others [80d] perplexed too. So now, as for what excellence is, I don't know; you perhaps knew before you came into contact with me, though now you're like someone who doesn't

8 The Greek *narkē* is the electric ray, or torpedo fish, which numbs whatever touches it.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
		know. Still, I'm willing to examine it with you and search together for what it is.
80d	**MENO** καὶ τίνα τρόπον ζητήσεις, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτο ὃ μὴ οἶσθα τὸ παράπαν ὅτι ἐστίν; ποῖον γὰρ ὧν οὐκ οἶσθα προθέμενος ζητήσεις; ἢ εἰ καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα ἐντύχοις αὐτῷ, πῶς εἴσῃ ὅτι τοῦτό ἐστιν ὃ σὺ οὐκ ᾔδησθα;	**MENO** And how will you search, Socrates, for something when you don't know at all what it is? Which of the things you don't know will you set up as the object of your search? And even if you bump right into it, how will you know that this is the thing you didn't know?
80e	**SOCRATES** μανθάνω οἷον βούλει λέγειν, ὦ Μένων. ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις, ὡς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ζητεῖν ἀνθρώπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδε οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδε; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὅ γε οἶδεν ζητοῖ—οἶδεν γάρ, καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως—οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν—οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι ζητήσει.	**SOCRATES** I understand what you mean, Meno. Do you see what a contentious argument you're bringing in? That a person can't search either for what he knows or for what he doesn't know? He wouldn't search for what he knows, since he knows it, and someone like that has no need to search; nor for what he doesn't know, since then he doesn't even know what he's going to search for.
81a	**MENO** οὐκοῦν καλῶς σοι δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι ὁ λόγος οὗτος, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**MENO** Well, don't you think it's a good argument, Socrates?
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἔμοιγε.	**SOCRATES** No, I don't.
	MENO ἔχεις λέγειν ὅπῃ;	**MENO** Can you say why not?

RECOLLECTION

Socrates answers with the view that the soul is immortal and all learning is recollection.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES ἔγωγε· ἀκήκοα γὰρ ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν σοφῶν περὶ τὰ θεῖα πράγματα—	**SOCRATES** I can. I've heard men and women who are wise about divine matters—
	MENO τίνα λόγον λεγόντων;	**MENO** Saying what?
	SOCRATES ἀληθῆ, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖν, καὶ καλόν.	**SOCRATES** Something true, it seems to me, and beautiful.
	MENO τίνα τοῦτον, καὶ τίνες οἱ λέγοντες;	**MENO** What is it, and who are the people saying it?
	SOCRATES οἱ μὲν λέγοντές εἰσι τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ τῶν ἱερειῶν ὅσοις μεμέληκε περὶ ὧν μεταχειρίζονται λόγον οἵοις τ' εἶναι [81b] διδόναι· λέγει δὲ καὶ Πίνδαρος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ὅσοι θεῖοί εἰσιν. ἃ δὲ λέγουσιν, ταυτί ἐστιν· ἀλλὰ σκόπει εἴ σοι δοκοῦσιν ἀληθῆ λέγειν. φασὶ γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι ἀθάνατον, καὶ τοτὲ μὲν τελευτᾶν—ὃ δὴ ἀποθνήσκειν καλοῦσι—τοτὲ δὲ πάλιν γίγνεσθαι, ἀπόλλυσθαι δ' οὐδέποτε· δεῖν δὴ διὰ ταῦτα ὡς ὁσιώτατα διαβιῶναι τὸν βίον· οἷσιν γὰρ ἂν— Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος δέξεται, εἰς τὸν ὕπερθεν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτῳ ἔτεϊ ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν, [81c] ἐκ τᾶν	**SOCRATES** The people saying it are those priests and priestesses who have made it their concern to be able to [81b] give an account of the rites they perform. Pindar says it too, and many other poets, the ones who are divinely inspired. What they say is this—but see whether you think they're telling the truth. They say that the human soul is immortal: at one time it comes to an end, which is what people call dying, and at another it is born again, but it is never destroyed. For this reason, they say,

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφίᾳ τε μέγιστοι ἄνδρες αὔξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥρωες ἁγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλεῦνται.	one must live one's life as piously as possible. For those from whom "Persephone accepts atonement for ancient grief, their souls in the ninth year she sends back again to the sun above; [81c] from them grow noble kings, and men swift in strength and greatest in wisdom, and for the rest of time they are called pure heroes by humankind."[9]
81c	ἅτε οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός τε οὖσα καὶ πολλάκις γεγονυῖα, καὶ ἑωρακυῖα καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε καὶ τὰ ἐν Ἅιδου καὶ πάντα χρήματα, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι οὐ μεμάθηκεν· ὥστε οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ ἄλλων οἷόν τ' εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀναμνησθῆναι, ἅ γε καὶ πρότερον ἠπίστατο. ἅτε γὰρ τῆς φύσεως [81d] ἁπάσης συγγενοῦς οὔσης, καὶ μεμαθηκυίας τῆς ψυχῆς ἅπαντα, οὐδὲν κωλύει ἓν μόνον ἀναμνησθέντα—ὃ δὴ μάθησιν καλοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι—τἆλλα πάντα αὐτὸν ἀνευρεῖν, ἐάν τις ἀνδρεῖος ᾖ καὶ μὴ ἀποκάμνῃ ζητῶν· τὸ γὰρ ζητεῖν ἄρα καὶ τὸ μανθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν.	So, since the soul is immortal and has been born many times, and has seen both what is here and what is in Hades—everything, in fact—there is nothing it hasn't learned. So it's no wonder that it can recollect about excellence and about other things, since it knew them before. And since nature [81d] as a whole is akin, and the soul has learned everything, nothing prevents someone who has recollected just one thing—which is what people call learning—from discovering all the rest for himself, if he is brave and doesn't tire of searching. Searching and learning, then, are recollection, all of it.
81d	οὔκουν δεῖ πείθεσθαι τούτῳ τῷ ἐριστικῷ λόγῳ· οὗτος μὲν γὰρ ἂν ἡμᾶς ἀργοὺς ποιήσειεν καὶ ἔστιν τοῖς μαλακοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡδὺς ἀκοῦσαι, ὅδε [81e] δὲ ἐργατικούς τε καὶ ζητητικοὺς ποιεῖ· ᾧ ἐγὼ πιστεύων ἀληθεῖ εἶναι ἐθέλω μετὰ σοῦ ζητεῖν ἀρετὴ ὅτι ἐστίν.	So we mustn't be persuaded by that contentious argument. It would make us lazy, and it's pleasant for the soft among us to hear, whereas this one [81e] makes us hardworking and eager to search. Trusting that it's true, I'm willing to search with you for what excellence is.
81e	**MENO** ναί, ὦ Σώκρατες· ἀλλὰ πῶς λέγεις τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐ μανθάνομεν, ἀλλὰ ἣν καλοῦμεν μάθησιν ἀνάμνησίς ἐστιν; ἔχεις με τοῦτο διδάξαι ὡς οὕτως ἔχει;	**MENO** Yes, Socrates. But what do you mean by saying that we don't learn, and that what we call learning is recollection? Can you teach me that this is so?
	SOCRATES καὶ ἄρτι εἶπον, ὦ Μένων, ὅτι πανοῦργος εἶ, καὶ [82a] νῦν ἐρωτᾷς εἰ ἔχω σε διδάξαι, ὃς οὐ φημι διδαχὴν εἶναι ἀλλ' ἀνάμνησιν, ἵνα δὴ εὐθὺς φαίνωμαι αὐτὸς ἐμαυτῷ τἀναντία λέγων.	**SOCRATES** I said just now, Meno, that you're a rascal, and [82a] now you ask whether I can teach you, when I say there's no teaching, only recollection—so that I'll be caught contradicting myself straightaway.
82a	**MENO** οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐ πρὸς τοῦτο βλέψας εἶπον, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔθους· ἀλλ' εἴ πώς μοι ἔχεις ἐνδείξασθαι ὅτι ἔχει ὥσπερ λέγεις, ἔνδειξαι.	**MENO** No, by Zeus, Socrates, I didn't say it with that in view; it was just habit. But if you can somehow show me that it is as you say, please show me.

THE GEOMETRY LESSON

Socrates questions a slave boy about doubling a square to show recollection at work.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' ἔστι μὲν οὐ ῥᾴδιον, ὅμως δὲ ἐθέλω προθυμηθῆναι σοῦ ἕνεκα. ἀλλά μοι προσκάλεσον τῶν	**SOCRATES** It isn't easy, but I'm still willing to make the effort for your sake. Call over one of

9 These lines come from a lost poem of Pindar.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	πολλῶν [82b] ἀκολούθων τουτωνὶ τῶν σαυτοῦ ἕνα, ὅντινα βούλει, ἵνα ἐν τούτῳ σοι ἐπιδείξωμαι.	these many [82b] attendants of yours, whichever you like, so that I can demonstrate it to you with him.
82b	**MENO** πάνυ γε. δεῦρο πρόσελθε.	**MENO** Certainly. Come here.
	SOCRATES Ἕλλην μέν ἐστι καὶ ἑλληνίζει;	**SOCRATES** He's Greek, and speaks Greek?
	MENO πάνυ γε σφόδρα, οἰκογενής γε.	**MENO** Absolutely—he was born in the household.[10]
	SOCRATES πρόσεχε δὴ τὸν νοῦν ὁπότερ' ἄν σοι φαίνηται, ἢ ἀναμιμνῃσκόμενος ἢ μανθάνων παρ' ἐμοῦ.	**SOCRATES** Now pay attention and see which he seems to you to be doing: recollecting, or learning from me.
	MENO ἀλλὰ προσέξω.	**MENO** I will.
	SOCRATES εἰπὲ δή μοι, ὦ παῖ, γιγνώσκεις τετράγωνον χωρίον ὅτι τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν;	**SOCRATES** Tell me, boy, do you know that a square looks like this?[11]
	BOY ἔγωγε.	**BOY** I do.
	SOCRATES ἔστιν οὖν [82c] τετράγωνον χωρίον ἴσας ἔχον τὰς γραμμὰς ταύτας πάσας, τέτταρας οὔσας;	**SOCRATES** So a [82c] square has all these sides equal, all four of them?
82c	**BOY** πάνυ γε.	**BOY** Certainly.
	SOCRATES οὐ καὶ ταυτασὶ τὰς διὰ μέσου ἐστὶν ἴσας ἔχον;	**SOCRATES** And these lines through the middle are equal too?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν εἴη ἂν τοιοῦτον χωρίον καὶ μεῖζον καὶ ἔλαττον;	**SOCRATES** And a square like this could be larger or smaller?
	BOY πάνυ γε.	**BOY** Certainly.
	SOCRATES εἰ οὖν εἴη αὕτη ἡ πλευρὰ δυοῖν ποδοῖν καὶ αὕτη δυοῖν, πόσων ἂν εἴη ποδῶν τὸ ὅλον; ὧδε δὲ σκόπει· εἰ ἦν ταύτῃ δυοῖν ποδοῖν, ταύτῃ δὲ ἑνὸς ποδὸς μόνον, ἄλλο τι ἅπαξ ἂν ἦν δυοῖν ποδοῖν τὸ χωρίον;	**SOCRATES** Now if this side were two feet long and this one two feet, how many feet would the whole be? Look at it this way: if it were two feet this way and only one foot that way, wouldn't the figure be two feet taken once?
82d	**BOY** ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES ἐπειδὴ δὲ δυοῖν ποδοῖν καὶ ταύτῃ, ἄλλο τι ἢ δὶς δυοῖν γίγνεται;	**SOCRATES** But since it's two feet this way too, doesn't it become twice two?
	BOY γίγνεται.	**BOY** It does.
	SOCRATES δυοῖν ἄρα δὶς γίγνεται ποδῶν;	**SOCRATES** So it comes to twice two feet?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.

10 That is, he was born a slave in Meno's household; the boy is never named.
11 Socrates draws figures in the sand as he speaks; "this" and "here" point to the drawing. Areas are counted in "feet," meaning square feet.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES πόσοι οὖν εἰσιν οἱ δύο δὶς πόδες; λογισάμενος εἰπέ.	**SOCRATES** Then how many feet are twice two? Work it out and tell me.
	BOY τέτταρες, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**BOY** Four, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν γένοιτ' ἂν τούτου τοῦ χωρίου ἕτερον διπλάσιον, τοιοῦτον δέ, ἴσας ἔχον πάσας τὰς γραμμὰς ὥσπερ τοῦτο;	**SOCRATES** Now could there be another figure twice the size of this one, but of the same kind, with all its sides equal like this one?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES πόσων οὖν ἔσται ποδῶν;	**SOCRATES** How many feet will it be?
	BOY ὀκτώ.	**BOY** Eight.
	SOCRATES φέρε δή, πειρῶ μοι εἰπεῖν πηλίκη τις ἔσται [82e] ἐκείνου ἡ γραμμὴ ἑκάστη. ἡ μὲν γὰρ τοῦδε δυοῖν ποδοῖν· τί δὲ ἡ ἐκείνου τοῦ διπλασίου;	**SOCRATES** Come on, then, try to tell me how long each [82e] side of that one will be. This one's side is two feet; what about the side of the double one?
82e	**BOY** δῆλον δή, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι διπλασία.	**BOY** Obviously, Socrates, double.
	SOCRATES ὁρᾷς, ὦ Μένων, ὡς ἐγὼ τοῦτον οὐδὲν διδάσκω, ἀλλ' ἐρωτῶ πάντα; καὶ νῦν οὗτος οἴεται εἰδέναι ὁποία ἐστὶν ἀφ' ἧς τὸ ὀκτώπουν χωρίον γενήσεται· ἢ οὐ δοκεῖ σοι;	**SOCRATES** Do you see, Meno, that I'm not teaching him anything, only asking him everything? And now he thinks he knows what sort of line the eight-foot square will come from. Or don't you think so?
	MENO ἔμοιγε.	**MENO** I do.
	SOCRATES οἶδεν οὖν;	**SOCRATES** Well, does he know?
	MENO οὐ δῆτα.	**MENO** Certainly not.
	SOCRATES οἴεται δέ γε ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας;	**SOCRATES** But he thinks it comes from the double line?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES θεῶ δὴ αὐτὸν ἀναμιμνῃσκόμενον ἐφεξῆς, ὡς δεῖ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι.	**SOCRATES** Now watch him recollecting, step by step, as one should recollect.
	σὺ δέ μοι λέγε· ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας γραμμῆς φῂς τὸ [83a] διπλάσιον χωρίον γίγνεσθαι; τοιόνδε λέγω, μὴ ταύτῃ μὲν μακρόν, τῇ δὲ βραχύ, ἀλλὰ ἴσον πανταχῇ ἔστω ὥσπερ τουτί, διπλάσιον δὲ τούτου, ὀκτώπουν· ἀλλ' ὅρα εἴ ἔτι σοι ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας δοκεῖ ἔσεσθαι.	You tell me: do you say the [83a] double square comes from the double line? I mean a figure like this, not long this way and short that way, but equal every way, like this one, and twice the size of this one: eight feet. See whether you still think it will come from the double line.
83a	**BOY** ἔμοιγε.	**BOY** I do.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν διπλασία αὕτη ταύτης γίγνεται, ἂν ἑτέραν τοσαύτην προσθῶμεν ἐνθένδε;	**SOCRATES** Now this line becomes double this one if we add another of the same length here?
	BOY πάνυ γε.	**BOY** Certainly.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES ἀπὸ ταύτης δή, φῄς, ἔσται τὸ ὀκτώπουν χωρίον, ἂν τέτταρες τοσαῦται [83b] γένωνται;	**SOCRATES** And from this one, you say, the eight-foot square will come, if four lines of this length [83b] are made?
83b	**BOY** ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES ἀναγραψώμεθα δὴ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἴσας τέτταρας. ἄλλο τι ἢ τουτὶ ἂν εἴη ὃ φῂς τὸ ὀκτώπουν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Then let's draw four equal sides from it. Wouldn't this be what you say is the eight-foot square?
	BOY πάνυ γε.	**BOY** Certainly.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστιν ταυτὶ τέτταρα, ὧν ἕκαστον ἴσον τούτῳ ἐστὶν τῷ τετράποδι;	**SOCRATES** And inside it there are these four squares, each of them equal to this four-foot one?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES πόσον οὖν γίγνεται; οὐ τετράκις τοσοῦτον;	**SOCRATES** So how big does it come out? Isn't it four times as big?
	BOY πῶς δ' οὔ;	**BOY** Of course.
	SOCRATES διπλάσιον οὖν ἐστιν τὸ τετράκις τοσοῦτον;	**SOCRATES** So is four times as big the same as double?
	BOY οὐ μὰ Δία.	**BOY** No, by Zeus.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ ποσαπλάσιον;	**SOCRATES** Then how many times as big?
	BOY τετραπλάσιον.	**BOY** Four times.
	SOCRATES ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας [83c] ἄρα, ὦ παῖ, οὐ διπλάσιον ἀλλὰ τετραπλάσιον γίγνεται χωρίον.	**SOCRATES** So from the double [83c] line, boy, you get a square not double but four times as big.
83c	**BOY** ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**BOY** That's true.
	SOCRATES τεττάρων γὰρ τετράκις ἐστὶν ἑκκαίδεκα. οὐχί;	**SOCRATES** Yes, since four times four is sixteen, isn't it?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES ὀκτώπουν δ' ἀπὸ ποίας γραμμῆς; οὐχὶ ἀπὸ μὲν ταύτης τετραπλάσιον;	**SOCRATES** And the eight-foot square comes from what sort of line? Doesn't this one give us a square four times as big?
	BOY φημί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES τετράπουν δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμισέας ταυτησὶ τουτί;	**SOCRATES** And this four-foot square here comes from this line here, half as long?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES εἶεν· τὸ δὲ ὀκτώπουν οὐ τοῦδε μὲν διπλάσιόν ἐστιν, τούτου δὲ ἥμισυ;	**SOCRATES** Very well. Isn't the eight-foot square double this four-foot one, and half this sixteen-foot one?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἀπὸ μὲν μείζονος ἔσται ἢ τοσαύτης γραμμῆς, ἀπὸ ἐλάττονος δὲ ἢ [83d] τοσησδί; ἢ οὔ;	**SOCRATES** So won't it come from a line longer than this one, and shorter than [83d] this one? Or not?
83d	**BOY** ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ οὕτω.	**BOY** I think so.
	SOCRATES καλῶς· τὸ γάρ σοι δοκοῦν τοῦτο ἀποκρίνου. καί μοι λέγε· οὐχ ἥδε μὲν δυοῖν ποδοῖν ἦν, ἡ δὲ τεττάρων;	**SOCRATES** Good—answer what you think. And tell me: wasn't this line two feet, and this one four?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES δεῖ ἄρα τὴν τοῦ ὀκτώποδος χωρίου γραμμὴν μείζω μὲν εἶναι τῆσδε τῆς δίποδος, ἐλάττω δὲ τῆς τετράποδος.	**SOCRATES** So the side of the eight-foot square must be longer than this two-foot line and shorter than the four-foot one.
	BOY δεῖ.	**BOY** It must.
83e	**SOCRATES** πειρῶ δὴ λέγειν πηλίκην τινὰ φῂς αὐτὴν εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** Then try to tell me how long you say it is.
	BOY τρίποδα.	**BOY** Three feet.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἄνπερ τρίπους ᾖ, τὸ ἥμισυ ταύτης προσληψόμεθα καὶ ἔσται τρίπους; δύο μὲν γὰρ οἵδε, ὁ δὲ εἷς· καὶ ἐνθένδε ὡσαύτως δύο μὲν οἵδε, ὁ δὲ εἷς· καὶ γίγνεται τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ὃ φῄς.	**SOCRATES** Well, if it's three feet, we'll add half of this line to it, and it will be three feet? Here are two feet, and here one more; and on this side likewise, two here and one here. And this gives us the square you mean.
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἂν ᾖ τῇδε τριῶν καὶ τῇδε τριῶν, τὸ ὅλον χωρίον τριῶν τρὶς ποδῶν γίγνεται;	**SOCRATES** Now if it's three feet this way and three feet this way, doesn't the whole square come to three times three feet?
	BOY φαίνεται.	**BOY** Apparently.
	SOCRATES τρεῖς δὲ τρὶς πόσοι εἰσὶ πόδες;	**SOCRATES** And how many feet are three times three?
	BOY ἐννέα.	**BOY** Nine.
	SOCRATES ἔδει δὲ τὸ διπλάσιον πόσων εἶναι ποδῶν;	**SOCRATES** And how many feet was the double square supposed to be?
	BOY ὀκτώ.	**BOY** Eight.
	SOCRATES οὐδ' ἄρ' ἀπὸ τῆς τρίποδός πω τὸ ὀκτώπουν χωρίον γίγνεται.	**SOCRATES** So the eight-foot square doesn't come from the three-foot line either.
	BOY οὐ δῆτα.	**BOY** Certainly not.
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' ἀπὸ ποίας; πειρῶ ἡμῖν εἰπεῖν ἀκριβῶς· καὶ [84a] εἰ μὴ βούλει ἀριθμεῖν, ἀλλὰ δεῖξον ἀπὸ ποίας.	**SOCRATES** Then from what line? Try to tell us exactly; and [84a] if you'd rather not count it out, just point to the line it comes from.
84a	**BOY** ἀλλὰ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔγωγε οὐκ οἶδα.	**BOY** But by Zeus, Socrates, I don't know.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES ἐννοεῖς αὖ, ὦ Μένων, οὗ ἐστιν ἤδη βαδίζων ὅδε τοῦ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι; ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἤδει μὲν οὔ, ἦτις ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ ὀκτώποδος χωρίου γραμμή, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ νῦν πω οἶδεν, ἀλλ' οὖν ᾤετό γ' αὐτὴν τότε εἰδέναι, καὶ θαρραλέως ἀπεκρίνετο ὡς εἰδώς, καὶ οὐχ ἡγεῖτο ἀπορεῖν· νῦν δὲ ἡγεῖται [84b] ἀπορεῖν ἤδη, καὶ ὥσπερ οὐκ οἶδεν, οὐδ' οἴεται εἰδέναι.	**SOCRATES** Do you notice, Meno, how far along the road of recollecting he's come now? At first he didn't know what the side of the eight-foot square is—just as he still doesn't know now—but back then he at least thought he knew it, and answered confidently as if he knew, and didn't think he was perplexed. Now he does recognize that he's [84b] perplexed, and just as he doesn't know, he doesn't think he knows either.
84b	**MENO** ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**MENO** That's true.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν νῦν βέλτιον ἔχει περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ὃ οὐκ ᾔδει;	**SOCRATES** So isn't he better off now with regard to the thing he didn't know?
	MENO καὶ τοῦτό μοι δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I think so too.
	SOCRATES ἀπορεῖν οὖν αὐτὸν ποιήσαντες καὶ ναρκᾶν ὥσπερ ἡ νάρκη, μῶν τι ἐβλάψαμεν;	**SOCRATES** So by making him perplexed and numb, the way the stingray does, have we done him any harm?
	MENO οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I don't think so.
	SOCRATES προὔργου γοῦν τι πεποιήκαμεν, ὡς ἔοικε, πρὸς τὸ ἐξευρεῖν ὅπῃ ἔχει· νῦν μὲν γὰρ καὶ ζητήσειεν ἂν ἡδέως οὐκ εἰδώς, τότε δὲ ῥᾳδίως ἂν καὶ πρὸς πολλοὺς καὶ πολλάκις [84c] ᾤετ' ἂν εὖ λέγειν περὶ τοῦ διπλασίου χωρίου, ὡς δεῖ διπλασίαν τὴν γραμμὴν ἔχειν μήκει.	**SOCRATES** We've certainly done something useful, it seems, toward finding out how things stand. Now, since he doesn't know, he'd be glad to search, whereas before he'd readily have thought, in front of many people and many times, [84c] that he was speaking well about the double square, saying that it must have a side double in length.
84c	**MENO** ἔοικεν.	**MENO** It seems so.
	SOCRATES οἴει οὖν ἂν αὐτὸν πρότερον ἐπιχειρῆσαι ζητεῖν ἢ μανθάνειν τοῦτο ὃ ᾤετο εἰδέναι οὐκ εἰδώς, πρὶν εἰς ἀπορίαν κατέπεσεν ἡγησάμενος μὴ εἰδέναι, καὶ ἐπόθησεν τὸ εἰδέναι;	**SOCRATES** Do you think he would have tried to search for or learn what he thought he knew but didn't, before he fell into perplexity, recognizing that he didn't know, and longed to know?
	MENO οὔ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** I don't think so, Socrates.
	SOCRATES ὤνητο ἄρα ναρκήσας;	**SOCRATES** So being numbed did him good?
	MENO δοκεῖ μοι.	**MENO** I think so.
	SOCRATES σκέψαι δὴ ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἀπορίας ὅτι καὶ ἀνευρήσει ζητῶν μετ' ἐμοῦ, οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ ἐρωτῶντος ἐμοῦ καὶ οὐ διδάσκοντος· [84d] φύλαττε δὲ ἄν που εὕρῃς με διδάσκοντα καὶ διεξιόντα αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ μὴ τὰς τούτου δόξας ἀνερωτῶντα.	**SOCRATES** Now see what he will actually discover, starting from this perplexity, by searching with me, while I do nothing but ask questions and don't teach. [84d] Watch out in case you catch me teaching him and explaining things, rather than asking for his opinions.
84d	λέγε γάρ μοι σύ· οὐ τὸ μὲν τετράπουν τοῦτο ἡμῖν ἐστι χωρίον; μανθάνεις;	Tell me, you: isn't this our four-foot square? Do you follow?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	BOY ἔγωγε.	**BOY** I do.
	SOCRATES ἕτερον δὲ αὐτῷ προσθεῖμεν ἂν τουτὶ ἴσον;	**SOCRATES** And could we add this other square to it, equal to it?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES καὶ τρίτον τόδε ἴσον ἑκατέρῳ τούτων;	**SOCRATES** And this third one, equal to each of them?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν προσαναπληρωσαίμεθ' ἂν τὸ ἐν τῇ γωνίᾳ τόδε;	**SOCRATES** And could we fill in this one here in the corner?
	BOY πάνυ γε.	**BOY** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἄλλο τι οὖν γένοιτ' ἂν τέτταρα ἴσα χωρία [84e] τάδε;	**SOCRATES** So wouldn't these be four equal [84e] squares?
84e	**BOY** ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES τί οὖν; τὸ ὅλον τόδε ποσαπλάσιον τοῦδε γίγνεται;	**SOCRATES** Well then, how many times as big as this one does this whole one come out?
	BOY τετραπλάσιον.	**BOY** Four times.
	SOCRATES ἔδει δέ γε διπλάσιον ἡμῖν γενέσθαι· ἢ οὐ μέμνησαι;	**SOCRATES** But we needed one that was double; don't you remember?
	BOY πάνυ γε.	**BOY** Certainly.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἐστιν αὕτη γραμμὴ ἐκ γωνίας εἰς γωνίαν [85a] τινὰ τέμνουσα δίχα ἕκαστον τούτων τῶν χωρίων;	**SOCRATES** Now doesn't this line, from corner to corner, [85a] cut each of these squares in two?
85a	**BOY** ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν τέτταρες αὗται γίγνονται γραμμαὶ ἴσαι, περιέχουσαι τουτὶ τὸ χωρίον;	**SOCRATES** So these are four equal lines, enclosing this figure?
	BOY γίγνονται γάρ.	**BOY** They are.
	SOCRATES σκόπει δή· πηλίκον τί ἐστιν τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον;	**SOCRATES** Now consider: how big is this figure?
	BOY οὐ μανθάνω.	**BOY** I don't understand.
	SOCRATES οὐχὶ τεττάρων ὄντων τούτων ἥμισυ ἑκάστου ἑκάστη ἡ γραμμὴ ἀποτέτμηκεν ἐντός; ἢ οὔ;	**SOCRATES** There are four squares here: hasn't each line cut off the inner half of each one? Or not?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES πόσα οὖν τηλικαῦτα ἐν τούτῳ ἔνεστιν;	**SOCRATES** So how many halves of that size are there in this figure?
	BOY τέτταρα.	**BOY** Four.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES πόσα δὲ ἐν τῷδε;	**SOCRATES** And how many in this four-foot square?
	BOY δύο.	**BOY** Two.
	SOCRATES τὰ δὲ τέτταρα τοῖν δυοῖν τί ἐστιν;	**SOCRATES** And what is four compared to two?
	BOY διπλάσια.	**BOY** Double.
	SOCRATES τόδε οὖν [85b] ποσάπουν γίγνεται;	**SOCRATES** So this one [85b] is how many feet?
85b	**BOY** ὀκτώπουν.	**BOY** Eight feet.
	SOCRATES ἀπὸ ποίας γραμμῆς;	**SOCRATES** From what line?
	BOY ἀπὸ ταύτης.	**BOY** From this one.
	SOCRATES ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκ γωνίας εἰς γωνίαν τεινούσης τοῦ τετράποδος;	**SOCRATES** From the line stretching from corner to corner of the four-foot square?
	BOY ναί.	**BOY** Yes.
	SOCRATES καλοῦσιν δέ γε ταύτην διάμετρον οἱ σοφισταί· ὥστ' εἰ ταύτῃ διάμετρος ὄνομα, ἀπὸ τῆς διαμέτρου ἄν, ὡς σὺ φῄς, ὦ παῖ Μένωνος, γίγνοιτ' ἂν τὸ διπλάσιον χωρίον.	**SOCRATES** The experts call this the diagonal. So if its name is the diagonal, then it's from the diagonal, as you say, Meno's boy, that the double square would come.
	BOY πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**BOY** Yes, certainly, Socrates.
	SOCRATES τί σοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Μένων; ἔστιν ἥντινα δόξαν οὐχ αὑτοῦ οὗτος ἀπεκρίνατο;	**SOCRATES** What do you think, Meno? Did he give any opinion in his answers that wasn't his own?
85c	**MENO** οὔκ, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῦ.	**MENO** No, they were his own.
	SOCRATES καὶ μὴν οὐκ ᾔδει γε, ὡς ἔφαμεν ὀλίγον πρότερον.	**SOCRATES** And yet he didn't know, as we said a little earlier.
	MENO ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**MENO** That's true.
	SOCRATES ἐνῆσαν δέ γε αὐτῷ αὗται αἱ δόξαι· ἢ οὔ;	**SOCRATES** But these opinions were in him, weren't they?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES τῷ οὐκ εἰδότι ἄρα περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἰδῇ ἔνεισιν ἀληθεῖς δόξαι περὶ τούτων ὧν οὐκ οἶδε;	**SOCRATES** So someone who doesn't know has true opinions within him about the things he doesn't know?
	MENO φαίνεται.	**MENO** Apparently.
	SOCRATES καὶ νῦν μέν γε αὐτῷ ὥσπερ ὄναρ ἄρτι ἀνακεκίνηνται αἱ δόξαι αὗται· εἰ δὲ αὐτόν τις ἀνερήσεται πολλάκις τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα καὶ πολλαχῇ, οἶσθ' ὅτι τελευτῶν οὐδενὸς ἧττον ἀκριβῶς [85d] ἐπιστήσεται περὶ τούτων.	**SOCRATES** And now these opinions have just been stirred up in him, as in a dream. But if someone asks him these same questions many times and in many ways, you can be sure he'll end up knowing about them no less precisely [85d] than anyone.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
85d	**MENO** ἔοικεν.	**MENO** It seems so.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν οὐδενὸς διδάξαντος ἀλλ' ἐρωτήσαντος ἐπιστήσεται, ἀναλαβὼν αὐτὸς ἐξ αὑτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστήμην;	**SOCRATES** So he'll know without anyone having taught him, only asked him questions, recovering the knowledge himself from within himself?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES τὸ δὲ ἀναλαμβάνειν αὐτὸν ἐν αὑτῷ ἐπιστήμην οὐκ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαί ἐστιν;	**SOCRATES** And isn't recovering knowledge oneself within oneself recollecting?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἆρ' οὖν οὐ τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἣν νῦν οὗτος ἔχει, ἤτοι ἔλαβέν ποτε ἢ ἀεὶ εἶχεν;	**SOCRATES** Now the knowledge he has now—didn't he either acquire it at some time, or always have it?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν εἰ μὲν ἀεὶ εἶχεν, ἀεὶ καὶ ἦν ἐπιστήμων· εἰ δὲ ἔλαβέν ποτε, οὐκ ἂν ἔν γε τῷ νῦν βίῳ εἰληφὼς εἴη. ἢ [85e] δεδίδαχέν τις τοῦτον γεωμετρεῖν; οὗτος γὰρ ποιήσει περὶ πάσης γεωμετρίας ταὐτὰ ταῦτα, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μαθημάτων ἁπάντων. ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις τοῦτον πάντα δεδίδαχεν; δίκαιος γάρ που εἶ εἰδέναι, ἄλλως τε ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ σῇ οἰκίᾳ γέγονεν καὶ τέθραπται.	**SOCRATES** If he always had it, he was always knowledgeable; and if he acquired it at some time, he can't have acquired it in his present life. Or [85e] has someone taught him geometry? He'll do exactly the same with all of geometry and every other branch of learning. So is there anyone who has taught him all this? You ought to know, I suppose, especially since he was born and raised in your house.
85e	**MENO** ἀλλ' οἶδα ἔγωγε ὅτι οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἐδίδαξεν.	**MENO** But I know that nobody has ever taught him.
	SOCRATES ἔχει δὲ ταύτας τὰς δόξας, ἢ οὐχί;	**SOCRATES** Yet he has these opinions, doesn't he?
	MENO ἀνάγκη, ὦ Σώκρατες, φαίνεται.	**MENO** It seems he must, Socrates.
	SOCRATES εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐν τῷ νῦν βίῳ λαβών, οὐκ ἤδη τοῦτο [86a] δῆλον, ὅτι ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ χρόνῳ εἶχε καὶ ἐμεμαθήκει;	**SOCRATES** And if he didn't acquire them in his present life, isn't it [86a] clear by now that he had them and had learned them at some other time?
86a	**MENO** φαίνεται.	**MENO** Apparently.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν οὗτός γέ ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος ὅτ' οὐκ ἦν ἄνθρωπος;	**SOCRATES** And isn't that the time when he wasn't a human being?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES εἰ οὖν ὅν τ' ἂν ᾖ χρόνον καὶ ὃν ἂν μὴ ᾖ ἄνθρωπος, ἐνέσονται αὐτῷ ἀληθεῖς δόξαι, αἳ ἐρωτήσει ἐπεγερθεῖσαι ἐπιστῆμαι γίγνονται, ἆρ' οὖν τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον μεμαθηκυῖα ἔσται ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ; δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι τὸν πάντα χρόνον ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος.	**SOCRATES** So if, both during the time he is a human being and the time he isn't, there are to be true opinions in him which become knowledge when awakened by questioning, won't his soul have had this learning for all time? For clearly, through all time he either is or isn't a human being.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	MENO φαίνεται.	**MENO** Apparently.
86b	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν εἰ ἀεὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἡμῖν τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἀθάνατος ἂν ἡ ψυχὴ εἴη, ὥστε θαρροῦντα χρὴ ὃ μὴ τυγχάνεις ἐπιστάμενος νῦν—τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ μεμνημένος—ἐπιχειρεῖν ζητεῖν καὶ ἀναμιμνῄσκεσθαι;	**SOCRATES** So if the truth about the things that are is always in our soul, the soul would be immortal. So shouldn't you confidently try to search for and recollect what you happen not to know now—that is, what you don't remember?
	MENO εὖ μοι δοκεῖς λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως.	**MENO** I think you're right, Socrates, though I don't know how.
	SOCRATES καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἐμοί, ὦ Μένων. καὶ τὰ μέν γε ἄλλα οὐκ ἂν πάνυ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λόγου διισχυρισαίμην· ὅτι δ' οἰόμενοι δεῖν ζητεῖν ἃ μή τις οἶδεν βελτίους ἂν εἶμεν καὶ ἀνδρικώτεροι καὶ ἧττον ἀργοὶ ἢ εἰ οἰοίμεθα ἃ μὴ ἐπιστάμεθα μηδὲ [86c] δυνατὸν εἶναι εὑρεῖν μηδὲ δεῖν ζητεῖν, περὶ τούτου πάνυ ἂν διαμαχοίμην, εἰ οἷός τε εἴην, καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ.	**SOCRATES** So do I, Meno. Most of the argument I wouldn't insist on very firmly. But that we'd be better, braver and less lazy if we believed we should search for what we don't know than if we believed that it is neither [86c] possible to discover what we don't know nor necessary to search for it —on that point I'd fight hard, if I could, in word and in deed.
86c	**MENO** καὶ τοῦτο μέν γε δοκεῖς μοι εὖ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** That too I think you're right about, Socrates.

CAN EXCELLENCE BE TAUGHT?

Socrates reasons on a hypothesis that excellence is knowledge, then doubts it because it has no teachers.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES βούλει οὖν, ἐπειδὴ ὁμονοοῦμεν ὅτι ζητητέον περὶ οὗ μή τις οἶδεν, ἐπιχειρήσωμεν κοινῇ ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετή;	**SOCRATES** Since we agree, then, that one should search for what one doesn't know, shall we try together to search for what excellence is?
	MENO πάνυ μὲν οὖν. οὐ μέντοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλ' ἔγωγε ἐκεῖνο ἂν ἥδιστα, ὅπερ ἠρόμην τὸ πρῶτον, καὶ σκεψαίμην καὶ ἀκούσαιμι, πότερον ὡς διδακτῷ ὄντι αὐτῷ δεῖ ἐπιχειρεῖν, [86d] ἢ ὡς φύσει ἢ ὡς τίνι ποτὲ τρόπῳ παραγιγνομένης τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τῆς ἀρετῆς.	**MENO** Certainly. And yet, Socrates, what I'd like best is to examine and hear about the question I asked at first: whether we should approach it as something that can be taught, [86d] or as something that comes to people by nature, or in some other way.
86d	**SOCRATES** ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐγὼ ἦρχον, ὦ Μένων, μὴ μόνον ἐμαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ σοῦ, οὐκ ἂν ἐσκεψάμεθα πρότερον εἴτε διδακτὸν εἴτε οὐ διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετή, πρὶν ὅτι ἐστὶν πρῶτον ἐζητήσαμεν αὐτό· ἐπειδὴ δὲ σὺ σαυτοῦ μὲν οὐδ' ἐπιχειρεῖς ἄρχειν, ἵνα δὴ ἐλεύθερος ᾖς, ἐμοῦ δὲ ἐπιχειρεῖς τε ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεις, συγχωρήσομαί σοι—τί γὰρ χρὴ ποιεῖν; —ἔοικεν οὖν σκεπτέον [86e] εἶναι ποῖόν τί ἐστιν ὃ μήπω ἴσμεν ὅτι ἐστίν. εἰ μή τι οὖν ἀλλὰ σμικρόν γέ μοι τῆς ἀρχῆς χάλασον, καὶ συγχώρησον ἐξ ὑποθέσεως αὐτὸ σκοπεῖσθαι, εἴτε διδακτόν ἐστιν εἴτε ὁπωσοῦν.	**SOCRATES** Well, Meno, if I were in charge not only of myself but of you too, we wouldn't have examined whether excellence can be taught or not before first inquiring what it is. But since you don't even try to govern yourself—so as to be free, no doubt—but you do try to govern me, and succeed, I'll give in to you. What else can I do? So it seems we must examine [86e] what sort of thing something is when we don't yet know what it is. Well, if nothing else, at least relax your rule over me a little, and agree to let us examine it on a hypothesis—whether it can be taught, or whatever else.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
86e	λέγω δὲ τὸ ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ὧδε, ὥσπερ οἱ γεωμέτραι πολλάκις σκοποῦνται, ἐπειδάν τις ἔρηται αὐτούς, οἷον περὶ χωρίου, εἰ οἷόν τε ἐς τόνδε τὸν κύκλον τόδε τὸ χωρίον [87a] τρίγωνον ἐνταθῆναι, εἴποι ἄν τις ὅτι "οὔπω οἶδα εἰ ἔστιν τοῦτο τοιοῦτον, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ μέν τινα ὑπόθεσιν προὔργου οἶμαι ἔχειν πρὸς τὸ πρᾶγμα τοιάνδε· εἰ μέν ἐστιν τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον τοιοῦτον οἷον παρὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτοῦ γραμμὴν παρατείναντα ἐλλείπειν τοιούτῳ χωρίῳ οἷον ἂν αὐτὸ τὸ παρατεταμένον ᾖ, ἄλλο τι συμβαίνειν μοι δοκεῖ, καὶ ἄλλο αὖ, εἰ ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ταῦτα παθεῖν.	By "on a hypothesis" I mean the way geometers often examine things. When someone asks them, say, about a figure, whether this figure can be inscribed in this circle [87a] as a triangle, one of them might say: "I don't yet know whether it is of that kind. But I think I have, as it were, a hypothesis that will help with the problem, as follows. If this figure is such that, when you apply it along the given line of the circle, it falls short by a figure like the one that has been applied, then one result seems to me to follow; and another, again, if it's impossible for it to do this.[12]
87a	ὑποθέμενος οὖν ἐθέλω [87b] εἰπεῖν σοι τὸ συμβαῖνον περὶ τῆς ἐντάσεως αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κύκλον, εἴτε ἀδύνατον εἴτε μή." οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς ἡμεῖς, ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἴσμεν οὔθ' ὅτι ἐστὶν οὔθ' ὁποῖόν τι, ὑποθέμενοι αὐτὸ σκοπῶμεν εἴτε διδακτὸν εἴτε οὐ διδακτόν ἐστιν, ὧδε λέγοντες· εἰ ποῖόν τί ἐστιν τῶν περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὄντων ἀρετή, διδακτὸν ἂν εἴη ἢ οὐ διδακτόν; πρῶτον μὲν δὴ εἰ ἔστιν ἀλλοῖον ἢ οἷον ἐπιστήμη, ἆρα διδακτὸν ἢ οὔ, ἢ ὃ νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν, ἀναμνηστόν—διαφερέτω δὲ μηδὲν ἡμῖν [87c] ὁποτέρῳ ἂν τῷ ὀνόματι χρώμεθα—ἀλλ' ἆρα διδακτόν; ἢ τοῦτό γε παντὶ δῆλον, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο διδάσκεται ἄνθρωπος ἢ ἐπιστήμην;	"So, having laid down this hypothesis, I'm willing [87b] to tell you what follows about inscribing it in the circle: whether it's impossible or not." In the same way with excellence, since we know neither what it is nor what sort of thing it is, let's lay down a hypothesis and examine whether it can be taught or not, putting it like this: if excellence is a certain sort of thing among the things that concern the soul, would it be teachable or not? First, if it's a different sort of thing from knowledge, can it be taught or not—or, as we were saying just now, recollected? Let it make no difference to us [87c] which word we use—but can it be taught? Or isn't this clear to everyone, that a person is taught nothing but knowledge?
87c	**MENO** ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I think so.
	SOCRATES εἰ δέ γ' ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη τις ἡ ἀρετή, δῆλον ὅτι διδακτὸν ἂν εἴη.	**SOCRATES** But if excellence is some kind of knowledge, clearly it would be teachable.
	MENO πῶς γὰρ οὔ;	**MENO** Of course.
	SOCRATES τούτου μὲν ἄρα ταχὺ ἀπηλλάγμεθα, ὅτι τοιοῦδε μὲν ὄντος διδακτόν, τοιοῦδε δ' οὔ.	**SOCRATES** So we've quickly disposed of that: if it's of one kind it's teachable, if of another, not.
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES τὸ δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο, ὡς ἔοικε, δεῖ σκέψασθαι πότερόν ἐστιν ἐπιστήμη ἡ ἀρετὴ ἢ ἀλλοῖον ἐπιστήμης.	**SOCRATES** Next, it seems, we must examine whether excellence is knowledge or something different from knowledge.
87d	**MENO** ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ τοῦτο μετὰ τοῦτο σκεπτέον εἶναι.	**MENO** Yes, I think that's what we must examine next.
	SOCRATES τί δὲ δή; ἄλλο τι ἢ ἀγαθὸν αὐτό φαμεν εἶναι τὴν ἀρετήν, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ὑπόθεσις μένει ἡμῖν, ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Well then: don't we say that excellence is good, and doesn't this hypothesis stand firm for us, that it is good?

12 The geometrical example is notoriously obscure, and its exact meaning is disputed.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	MENO πάνυ μὲν οὖν.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν εἰ μέν τί ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἄλλο χωριζόμενον ἐπιστήμης, τάχ᾽ ἂν εἴη ἡ ἀρετὴ οὐκ ἐπιστήμη τις· εἰ δὲ μηδέν ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν ὃ οὐκ ἐπιστήμη περιέχει, ἐπιστήμην ἄν τιν᾽ αὐτὸ ὑποπτεύοντες εἶναι ὀρθῶς ὑποπτεύοιμεν.	**SOCRATES** So if there's something good that is also separate from knowledge, perhaps excellence wouldn't be a kind of knowledge. But if there's nothing good that knowledge doesn't encompass, we'd be right to suspect that it is some kind of knowledge.
	MENO ἔστι ταῦτα.	**MENO** That's so.
	SOCRATES καὶ μὴν [87e] ἀρετῇ γ᾽ ἐσμὲν ἀγαθοί;	**SOCRATES** And surely [87e] it's by excellence that we're good?
87e	**MENO** ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES εἰ δὲ ἀγαθοί, ὠφέλιμοι· πάντα γὰρ τἀγαθὰ ὠφέλιμα. οὐχί;	**SOCRATES** And if we're good, we're beneficial; for all good things are beneficial. Aren't they?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ δὴ ὠφέλιμόν ἐστιν;	**SOCRATES** So excellence is beneficial too?
	MENO ἀνάγκη ἐκ τῶν ὡμολογημένων.	**MENO** That must follow from what we've agreed.
	SOCRATES σκεψώμεθα δὴ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον ἀναλαμβάνοντες ποῖά ἐστιν ἃ ἡμᾶς ὠφελεῖ. ὑγίεια, φαμέν, καὶ ἰσχὺς καὶ κάλλος καὶ πλοῦτος δή· ταῦτα λέγομεν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὠφέλιμα. οὐχί;	**SOCRATES** Then let's take them one by one and examine what sorts of things benefit us. Health, we say, and strength, and beauty, and of course wealth: these and things like them we call beneficial. Don't we?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
88a	**SOCRATES** ταὐτὰ δὲ ταῦτά φαμεν ἐνίοτε καὶ βλάπτειν· ἢ σὺ ἄλλως φῂς ἢ οὕτως;	**SOCRATES** But we say these same things sometimes do harm as well. Or do you say otherwise?
	MENO οὐκ, ἀλλ᾽ οὕτως.	**MENO** No, I say so.
	SOCRATES σκόπει δή, ὅταν τί ἑκάστου τούτων ἡγῆται, ὠφελεῖ ἡμᾶς, καὶ ὅταν τί, βλάπτει; ἆρ᾽ οὐχ ὅταν μὲν ὀρθὴ χρῆσις, ὠφελεῖ, ὅταν δὲ μή, βλάπτει;	**SOCRATES** Then consider: what guides each of these when it benefits us, and what when it harms us? Isn't it that it benefits us when there's right use, and harms us when there isn't?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἔτι τοίνυν καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν σκεψώμεθα. σωφροσύνην τι καλεῖς καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ εὐμαθίαν καὶ μνήμην καὶ μεγαλοπρέπειαν καὶ πάντα τὰ [88b] τοιαῦτα;	**SOCRATES** Next, let's also consider the things that belong to the soul. Is there something you call moderation, and justice, and courage, and quickness at learning, and memory, and magnificence, and all things [88b] of that kind?
88b	**MENO** ἔγωγε.	**MENO** I do.
	SOCRATES σκόπει δή, τούτων ἄττα σοι δοκεῖ μὴ ἐπιστήμη εἶναι ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλο ἐπιστήμης, εἰ οὐχὶ τοτὲ μὲν	**SOCRATES** Then consider: those of these that you think are not knowledge but something other than

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	βλάπτει, τοτὲ δὲ ὠφελεῖ; οἷον ἀνδρεία, εἰ μὴ ἔστι φρόνησις ἡ ἀνδρεία ἀλλ' οἷον θάρρος τι· οὐχ ὅταν μὲν ἄνευ νοῦ θαρρῇ ἄνθρωπος, βλάπτεται, ὅταν δὲ σὺν νῷ, ὠφελεῖται;	knowledge—don't they sometimes harm and sometimes benefit? Courage, for example, if courage isn't understanding but a kind of boldness: when a person is bold without sense, isn't he harmed, and when he's bold with sense, benefited?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ σωφροσύνη ὡσαύτως καὶ εὐμαθία· μετὰ μὲν νοῦ καὶ μανθανόμενα καὶ καταρτυόμενα ὠφέλιμα, ἄνευ δὲ νοῦ βλαβερά;	**SOCRATES** And the same with moderation and quickness at learning: things learned and trained with sense are beneficial, but without sense harmful?
	MENO πάνυ [88c] σφόδρα.	**MENO** Very [88c] much so.
88c	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν συλλήβδην πάντα τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιχειρήματα καὶ καρτερήματα ἡγουμένης μὲν φρονήσεως εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν τελευτᾷ, ἀφροσύνης δ' εἰς τοὐναντίον;	**SOCRATES** So, in short, everything the soul attempts or endures ends in happiness when understanding leads, and in the opposite when folly leads?
	MENO ἔοικεν.	**MENO** It seems so.
	SOCRATES εἰ ἄρα ἀρετὴ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τί ἐστιν καὶ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῷ ὠφελίμῳ εἶναι, φρόνησιν αὐτὸ δεῖ εἶναι, ἐπειδήπερ πάντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτὰ μὲν καθ' αὑτὰ οὔτε ὠφέλιμα οὔτε βλαβερά ἐστιν, προσγενομένης δὲ φρονήσεως [88d] ἢ ἀφροσύνης βλαβερά τε καὶ ὠφέλιμα γίγνεται. κατὰ δὴ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ὠφέλιμόν γε οὖσαν τὴν ἀρετὴν φρόνησιν δεῖ τιν' εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** So if excellence is one of the things in the soul and must be beneficial, it must be understanding, since everything that belongs to the soul is, taken by itself, neither beneficial nor harmful, but becomes harmful or beneficial with the addition of understanding [88d] or folly. By this argument, then, excellence, since it is beneficial, must be some kind of understanding.
88d	**MENO** ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I think so.
	SOCRATES καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ τἆλλα ἃ νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν, πλοῦτόν τε καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, τοτὲ μὲν ἀγαθὰ τοτὲ δὲ βλαβερὰ εἶναι, ἆρα οὐχ ὥσπερ τῇ ἄλλῃ ψυχῇ ἡ φρόνησις ἡγουμένη ὠφέλιμα τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐποίει, ἡ δὲ ἀφροσύνη βλαβερά, οὕτως αὖ [88e] καὶ τούτοις ἡ ψυχὴ ὀρθῶς μὲν χρωμένη καὶ ἡγουμένη ὠφέλιμα αὐτὰ ποιεῖ, μὴ ὀρθῶς δὲ βλαβερά;	**SOCRATES** And what's more, the other things we were just talking about, wealth and the like, which are sometimes good and sometimes harmful: isn't it that, just as understanding, when it guides the rest of the soul, makes the soul's qualities beneficial, and folly makes them harmful, so in turn [88e] the soul makes these things beneficial when it uses and guides them rightly, and harmful when it doesn't?
88e	**MENO** πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ὀρθῶς δέ γε ἡ ἔμφρων ἡγεῖται, ἡμαρτημένως δ' ἡ ἄφρων;	**SOCRATES** And a wise soul guides rightly, a foolish one wrongly?
	MENO ἔστι ταῦτα.	**MENO** That's so.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν οὕτω δὴ κατὰ πάντων εἰπεῖν ἔστιν, τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνηρτῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῆς εἰς φρόνησιν, εἰ [89a]	**SOCRATES** So we can say this about everything: for a human being, all other things depend on the soul, and the soul's own qualities depend on un-

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	μέλλει ἀγαθὰ εἶναι· καὶ τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ φρόνησις ἂν εἴη τὸ ὠφέλιμον· φαμὲν δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὠφέλιμον εἶναι;	derstanding, if [89a] they are to be good. And by this argument understanding would be what is beneficial. And we say that excellence is beneficial?
89a	**MENO** πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES φρόνησιν ἄρα φαμὲν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, ἤτοι σύμπασαν ἢ μέρος τι;	**SOCRATES** So we say that excellence is understanding, either the whole of it or some part?
	MENO δοκεῖ μοι καλῶς λέγεσθαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὰ λεγόμενα.	**MENO** I think what's been said is well said, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν εἰ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει, οὐκ ἂν εἶεν φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοί.	**SOCRATES** Then if this is so, good people wouldn't be good by nature.
	MENO οὔ μοι δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I don't think so.
89b	**SOCRATES** καὶ γὰρ ἄν που καὶ τόδ' ἦν· εἰ φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἐγίγνοντο, ἦσάν που ἂν ἡμῖν οἳ ἐγίγνωσκον τῶν νέων τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς τὰς φύσεις, οὓς ἡμεῖς ἂν παραλαβόντες ἐκείνων ἀποφηνάντων ἐφυλάττομεν ἂν ἐν ἀκροπόλει, κατασημηνάμενοι πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ χρυσίον, ἵνα μηδεὶς αὐτοὺς διέφθειρεν, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἀφίκοιντο εἰς τὴν ἡλικίαν, χρήσιμοι γίγνοιντο ταῖς πόλεσι.	**SOCRATES** Yes, and there's this too, I suppose: if good people became good by nature, we'd surely have people who could recognize which of the young were good by nature, and when they had pointed them out we would take them over and guard them on the Acropolis, sealed up far more carefully than gold, so that no one could corrupt them, and so that when they came of age they would be useful to their cities.
	MENO εἰκός γέ τοι, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** That's likely enough, Socrates.
	SOCRATES ἆρ' οὖν ἐπειδὴ οὐ φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται, [89c] ἆρα μαθήσει;	**SOCRATES** So since good people don't become good by nature, [89c] is it by learning?
89c	**MENO** δοκεῖ μοι ἤδη ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι· καὶ δῆλον, ὦ Σώκρατες, κατὰ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν, εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶν ἀρετή, ὅτι διδακτόν ἐστιν.	**MENO** I think it must be now. And it's clear, Socrates, on our hypothesis, that if excellence is knowledge, it can be taught.
	SOCRATES ἴσως νὴ Δία· ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦτο οὐ καλῶς ὡμολογήσαμεν;	**SOCRATES** Perhaps, by Zeus. But what if we were wrong to agree to that?
	MENO καὶ μὴν ἐδόκει γε ἄρτι καλῶς λέγεσθαι.	**MENO** Well, it certainly seemed right just now.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἄρτι μόνον δέῃ αὐτὸ δοκεῖν καλῶς λέγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔπειτα, εἰ μέλλει τι αὐτοῦ ὑγιὲς εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** But perhaps it has to seem right not only just now, but now and in the future too, if there's to be anything sound in it.
89d	**MENO** τί οὖν δή; πρὸς τί βλέπων δυσχεραίνεις αὐτὸ καὶ ἀπιστεῖς μὴ οὐκ ἐπιστήμη ᾖ ἡ ἀρετή;	**MENO** What is it, then? What makes you uneasy about it and doubt that excellence is knowledge?
	SOCRATES ἐγώ σοι ἐρῶ, ὦ Μένων. τὸ μὲν γὰρ διδακτὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι, εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη ἐστίν, οὐκ ἀνατίθεμαι μὴ οὐ καλῶς λέγεσθαι· ὅτι δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη, σκέψαι εἰάν σοι δοκῶ εἰκότως ἀπιστεῖν. τόδε γάρ μοι εἰπέ· εἴ ἔστιν διδακτὸν ὁτιοῦν πρᾶγμα, μὴ μόνον ἀρετή, οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτοῦ καὶ διδασκάλους καὶ μαθητὰς εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** I'll tell you, Meno. That it's teachable if it's knowledge—I don't take that back; I don't say it was wrong. But as for my doubt that it is knowledge, see whether you think it's reasonable. Tell me this: if anything whatever can be taught, not just excellence, mustn't there be teachers and students of it?

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	MENO ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I think so.
89e	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν τοὐναντίον αὖ, οὗ μήτε διδάσκαλοι μήτε μαθηταὶ εἶεν, καλῶς ἂν αὐτὸ εἰκάζοντες εἰκάζοιμεν μὴ διδακτὸν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** And conversely, if something has neither teachers nor students, would we be right to guess that it can't be taught?
	MENO ἔστι ταῦτα· ἀλλ' ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλοι οὐ δοκοῦσί σοι εἶναι;	**MENO** That's so. But don't you think there are teachers of excellence?

ANYTUS

Anytus scorns the sophists, and Socrates notes that great Athenians failed to pass excellence to their sons.

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	SOCRATES πολλάκις γοῦν ζητῶν εἴ τινες εἶεν αὐτῆς διδάσκαλοι, πάντα ποιῶν οὐ δύναμαι εὑρεῖν. καίτοι μετὰ πολλῶν γε ζητῶ, καὶ τούτων μάλιστα οὓς ἂν οἰῶμαι ἐμπειροτάτους εἶναι τοῦ πράγματος. καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν, ὦ Μένων, εἰς καλὸν ἡμῖν Ἄνυτος ὅδε παρεκαθέζετο, ᾧ μεταδῶμεν τῆς ζητήσεως.	**SOCRATES** Well, I've often looked to see whether there are any teachers of it, and for all my efforts I can't find any. And yet I search along with many others, especially those I think most experienced in the matter. And look, Meno, right now Anytus here has sat down beside us at just the right moment; let's give him a share in our search.[13]
90a	εἰκότως δ' ἂν μεταδοῖμεν· Ἄνυτος γὰρ ὅδε πρῶτον μέν ἐστι πατρὸς πλουσίου τε καὶ σοφοῦ Ἀνθεμίωνος, ὃς ἐγένετο πλούσιος οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου οὐδὲ δόντος τινός, ὥσπερ ὁ νῦν νεωστὶ εἰληφὼς τὰ Πολυκράτους χρήματα Ἰσμηνίας ὁ Θηβαῖος, ἀλλὰ τῇ αὑτοῦ σοφίᾳ κτησάμενος καὶ ἐπιμελείᾳ, ἔπειτα καὶ τὰ ἄλλα οὐχ ὑπερήφανος δοκῶν εἶναι πολίτης οὐδὲ ὀγκώδης τε καὶ ἐπαχθής, ἀλλὰ κόσμιος καὶ εὐσταλὴς [90b] ἀνήρ· ἔπειτα τοῦτον εὖ ἔθρεψεν καὶ ἐπαίδευσεν, ὡς δοκεῖ Ἀθηναίων τῷ πλήθει· αἱροῦνται γοῦν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰς μεγίστας ἀρχάς. δίκαιον δὴ μετὰ τοιούτων ζητεῖν ἀρετῆς πέρι διδασκάλους, εἴτ' εἰσὶν εἴτε μή, καὶ οἵτινες. σὺ οὖν ἡμῖν, ὦ Ἄνυτε, συζήτησον, ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ σαυτοῦ ξένῳ Μένωνι τῷδε, περὶ τούτου τοῦ πράγματος τίνες ἂν εἶεν διδάσκαλοι.	And we'd have good reason to. First, Anytus here is the son of a wealthy and wise father, Anthemion, who became wealthy not by chance or through someone's gift—like Ismenias the Theban, who has just recently come into Polycrates' money—but acquired it by his own wisdom and hard work. Then, in other respects too, he has the reputation of a citizen who isn't arrogant, pompous or offensive, but an orderly, well-mannered [90b] man. Then too he brought up and educated this son of his well, as the Athenian people think: at any rate they elect him to the highest offices. So it's right to search with men like this for teachers of excellence—whether there are any or not, and who they are. So, Anytus, join us, me and your guest-friend Meno here, in searching into this question: who might the teachers be?[14]
90b	ὧδε δὲ σκέψαι· εἰ βουλοίμεθα Μένωνα τόνδε ἀγαθὸν ἰατρὸν [90c] γενέσθαι, παρὰ τίνας ἂν αὐτὸν πέμποιμεν διδασκάλους; ἆρ' οὐ παρὰ τοὺς ἰατρούς;	Look at it this way. If we wanted Meno here to become a good doctor, [90c] what teachers would we send him to? Wouldn't it be the doctors?
90c	**ANYTUS** πάνυ γε.	**ANYTUS** Certainly.
	SOCRATES τί δ' εἰ σκυτοτόμον ἀγαθὸν βουλοίμεθα γενέσθαι, ἆρ' οὐ παρὰ τοὺς σκυτοτόμους;	**SOCRATES** And what if we wanted him to become a good shoemaker? Wouldn't it be the shoemakers?
	ANYTUS ναί.	**ANYTUS** Yes.

13 Anytus was a prominent Athenian politician who later became one of Socrates' accusers at his trial in 399 BC.
14 Ismenias was a leading politician in Thebes; who this Polycrates was, and how Ismenias came by his money, is uncertain.

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SOCRATES καὶ τἆλλα οὕτως;

SOCRATES And the same with everything else?

ANYTUS πάνυ γε.

ANYTUS Certainly.

SOCRATES ὦδε δή μοι πάλιν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν εἰπέ. παρὰ τοὺς ἰατρούς, φαμέν, πέμποντες τόνδε καλῶς ἂν ἐπέμπομεν, βουλόμενοι ἰατρὸν γενέσθαι· ἦ ῥ' ὅταν τοῦτο λέγωμεν, τόδε 90d λέγομεν, ὅτι παρὰ τούτους πέμποντες αὐτὸν σωφρονοῖμεν ἄν, τοὺς ἀντιποιουμένους τε τῆς τέχνης μᾶλλον ἢ τοὺς μή, καὶ τοὺς μισθὸν πραττομένους ἐπ' αὐτῷ τούτῳ, ἀποφήναντας αὐτοὺς διδασκάλους τοῦ βουλομένου ἰέναι τε καὶ μανθάνειν; ἆρ' οὐ πρὸς ταῦτα βλέψαντες καλῶς ἂν πέμποιμεν;

SOCRATES Now tell me something more about the same point. We say we'd be doing well to send him to the doctors if we wanted him to become a doctor. When we say that, do we mean 90d that we'd be sensible to send him to those who lay claim to the art rather than to those who don't, and who charge a fee for this very service, having declared themselves teachers of anyone who wants to come and learn? Isn't it with this in view that we'd do well to send him?

90d **ANYTUS** ναί.

ANYTUS Yes.

SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ αὐλήσεως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τὰ αὐτὰ 90e ταῦτα; πολλὴ ἄνοιά ἐστι βουλομένους αὐλητήν τινα ποιῆσαι παρὰ μὲν τοὺς ὑπισχνουμένους διδάξειν τὴν τέχνην καὶ μισθὸν πραττομένους μὴ ἐθέλειν πέμπειν, ἄλλοις δέ τισιν πράγματα παρέχειν, ζητοῦντα μανθάνειν παρὰ τούτων, οἳ μήτε προσποιοῦνται διδάσκαλοι εἶναι μήτ' ἔστιν αὐτῶν μαθητὴς μηδεὶς τούτου τοῦ μαθήματος ὃ ἡμεῖς ἀξιοῦμεν μανθάνειν παρ' αὐτῶν ὃν ἂν πέμπωμεν. οὐ πολλή σοι δοκεῖ ἀλογία εἶναι;

SOCRATES And isn't it just the same 90e with flute-playing and everything else? If we wanted to make someone a flute player, it would be sheer folly to refuse to send him to those who promise to teach the art and charge a fee for it, and instead to go bothering other people, having him try to learn from those who neither claim to be teachers nor have a single pupil in the subject we expect the person we send to learn from them. Don't you think that would be quite unreasonable?

90e **ANYTUS** ναὶ μὰ Δία ἔμοιγε, καὶ ἀμαθία γε πρός.

ANYTUS By Zeus, I do—and ignorant besides.

SOCRATES καλῶς λέγεις. νῦν τοίνυν ἔξεστί σε μετ' ἐμοῦ 91a κοινῇ βουλεύεσθαι περὶ τοῦ ξένου τουτουΐ Μένωνος. οὗτος γάρ, ὦ Ἄνυτε, πάλαι λέγει πρός με ὅτι ἐπιθυμεῖ ταύτης τῆς σοφίας καὶ ἀρετῆς ᾗ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τάς τε οἰκίας καὶ τὰς πόλεις καλῶς διοικοῦσι, καὶ τοὺς γονέας τοὺς αὑτῶν θεραπεύουσι, καὶ πολίτας καὶ ξένους ὑποδέξασθαί τε καὶ ἀποπέμψαι ἐπίστανται ἀξίως ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ. ταύτην οὖν τὴν 91b ἀρετὴν σκόπει παρὰ τίνας ἂν πέμποντες αὐτὸν ὀρθῶς πέμποιμεν. ἢ δῆλον δὴ κατὰ τὸν ἄρτι λόγον ὅτι παρὰ τούτους τοὺς ὑπισχνουμένους ἀρετῆς διδασκάλους εἶναι καὶ ἀποφήναντας αὐτοὺς κοινοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ βουλομένῳ μανθάνειν, μισθὸν τούτου ταξαμένους τε καὶ πραττομένους;

SOCRATES Well said. Now, then, you can join me 91a in deliberating about our guest here, Meno. For some time now, Anytus, he's been telling me that he longs for the wisdom and excellence by which people manage their households and their cities well, look after their own parents, and know how to receive and send off citizens and foreigners in a way worthy of a good man. So consider: for this 91b excellence, whom should we send him to if we're to send him rightly? Or is it clear, by the argument we just made, that it's to those who promise to be teachers of excellence and have declared themselves open to any Greek who wants to learn, setting a fee for it and charging it?

91b **ANYTUS** καὶ τίνας λέγεις τούτους, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ANYTUS And who do you mean by that, Socrates?

SOCRATES οἶσθα δήπου καὶ σὺ ὅτι οὗτοί εἰσιν οὓς οἱ ἄνθρωποι καλοῦσι σοφιστάς.

SOCRATES Surely you know as well as I do: they're the people everyone calls sophists.

91c **ANYTUS** Ἡράκλεις, εὐφήμει, ὦ Σώκρατες. μηδένα τῶν γ' ἐμῶν μήτε οἰκείων μήτε φίλων, μήτε ἀστὸν μήτε ξένον,

ANYTUS Heracles! Don't say such a thing, Socrates. May no one of mine—no relative or friend,

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τοιαύτη μανία λάβοι, ὥστε παρὰ τούτους ἐλθόντα λωβηθῆναι, ἐπεὶ οὗτοί γε φανερά ἐστι λώβη τε καὶ διαφθορὰ τῶν συγγιγνομένων.

SOCRATES πῶς λέγεις, ὦ Ἄνυτε; οὗτοι ἄρα μόνοι τῶν ἀντιποιουμένων τι ἐπίστασθαι εὐεργετεῖν τοσοῦτον τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρουσιν, ὅσον οὐ μόνον οὐκ ὠφελοῦσιν, ὥσπερ οἱ ἄλλοι, ὅτι ἄν τις αὐτοῖς παραδῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον διαφθείρουσιν; [91d] καὶ τούτων φανερῶς χρήματα ἀξιοῦσι πράττεσθαι; ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔχω ὅπως σοι πιστεύσω· οἶδα γὰρ ἄνδρα ἕνα Πρωταγόραν πλείω χρήματα κτησάμενον ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς σοφίας ἢ Φειδίαν τε, ὃς οὕτω περιφανῶς καλὰ ἔργα ἠργάζετο, καὶ ἄλλους δέκα τῶν ἀνδριαντοποιῶν.

91d καίτοι τέρας λέγεις εἰ οἱ μὲν τὰ ὑποδήματα ἐργαζόμενοι τὰ παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ἐξακούμενοι οὐκ ἂν δύναιντο λαθεῖν τριάκονθ' [91e] ἡμέρας μοχθηρότερα ἀποδιδόντες ἢ παρέλαβον τὰ ἱμάτιά τε καὶ ὑποδήματα, ἀλλ' εἰ τοιαῦτα ποιοῖεν, ταχὺ ἂν τῷ λιμῷ ἀποθάνοιεν, Πρωταγόρας δὲ ἄρα ὅλην τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐλάνθανεν διαφθείρων τοὺς συγγιγνομένους καὶ μοχθηροτέρους ἀποπέμπων ἢ παρελάμβανεν πλέον ἢ τετταράκοντα ἔτη— οἶμαι γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀποθανεῖν ἐγγὺς καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτη γεγονότα, τετταράκοντα δὲ ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ ὄντα—

91e καὶ ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἔτι εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν ταυτηνὶ εὐδοκιμῶν οὐδὲν πέπαυται, καὶ οὐ μόνον Πρωταγόρας, ἀλλὰ καὶ [92a] ἄλλοι πάμπολλοι, οἱ μὲν πρότερον γεγονότες ἐκείνου, οἱ δὲ καὶ νῦν ἔτι ὄντες. πότερον δὴ οὖν φῶμεν κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον εἰδότας αὐτοὺς ἐξαπατᾶν καὶ λωβᾶσθαι τοὺς νέους, ἢ λελῆθέναι καὶ ἑαυτούς; καὶ οὕτω μαίνεσθαι ἀξιώσομεν τούτους, οὓς ἔνιοί φασι σοφωτάτους ἀνθρώπων εἶναι;

92a **ANYTUS** πολλοῦ γε δέουσι μαίνεσθαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον οἱ τούτοις διδόντες ἀργύριον τῶν νέων, τούτων [92b] δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ τούτοις ἐπιτρέποντες, οἱ προσήκοντες, πολὺ δὲ μάλιστα πάντων αἱ πόλεις, ἐῶσαι αὐτοὺς εἰσαφικνεῖσθαι καὶ οὐκ ἐξελαύνουσαι, εἴτε τις ξένος ἐπιχειρεῖ τοιοῦτόν τι ποιεῖν εἴτε ἀστός.

92b **SOCRATES** πότερον δέ, ὦ Ἄνυτε, ἠδίκηκέ τίς σε τῶν σοφιστῶν, ἢ τί οὕτως αὐτοῖς χαλεπὸς εἶ;

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citizen or foreigner—be seized by such madness as to go to those people and be ruined. They are plainly the ruin and corruption of anyone who spends time with them.

SOCRATES What do you mean, Anytus? Of all those who claim to know how to do people some good, are these the only ones so different from the rest that, where the others improve whatever is entrusted to them, these not only fail to improve it but do the opposite and corrupt it? [91d] And they openly expect to be paid for it? For my part, I can't see how to believe you. I know that one man, Protagoras, made more money from this wisdom than Phidias—who produced such conspicuously beautiful works—and ten other sculptors besides.[15]

And yet it's a monstrous thing you're describing. People who repair old shoes and mend cloaks couldn't go thirty [91e] days without being found out if they returned the cloaks and shoes in worse shape than they got them; if they did that, they'd soon starve to death. Yet Protagoras, it seems, went unnoticed by all of Greece, corrupting those who studied with him and sending them away worse than he received them, for more than forty years—I believe he died at nearly seventy, having spent forty of them practicing his art—

and in all that time, right up to this day, his reputation has never stopped standing high. And not only Protagoras, but [92a] a great many others too, some born before him and some still living now. So are we to say, on your account, that they deceive and ruin the young knowingly, or that they don't realize it themselves either? And are we to consider them as mad as that—men whom some call the wisest of human beings?

ANYTUS Far from being mad, Socrates. It's much more the young men who pay them money who are mad, and even more [92b] those who hand the young over to them, their relatives; and most of all the cities, which let them come in and don't drive them out, whether it's a foreigner who tries anything of the kind or a citizen.

SOCRATES Has one of the sophists done you some wrong, Anytus? Or why are you so hard on them?

15 Protagoras of Abdera (c. 490–420 BC) was the most famous of the sophists; Phidias was the sculptor of the great statues of Athena in the Parthenon and of Zeus at Olympia.

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	ANYTUS οὐδὲ μὰ Δία ἔγωγε συγγέγονα πώποτε αὐτῶν οὐδενί, οὐδ' ἂν ἄλλον ἐάσαιμι τῶν ἐμῶν οὐδένα.	**ANYTUS** By Zeus, no. I've never had anything to do with any of them myself, and I wouldn't let anyone of mine do so either.
	SOCRATES ἄπειρος ἄρ' εἶ παντάπασι τῶν ἀνδρῶν;	**SOCRATES** So you have no experience of these men at all?
	ANYTUS καὶ εἴην γε.	**ANYTUS** And may I never have any.
92c	**SOCRATES** πῶς οὖν ἄν, ὦ δαιμόνιε, εἰδείης περὶ τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, εἴτε τι ἀγαθὸν ἔχει ἐν αὐτῷ εἴτε φλαῦρον, οὗ παντάπασιν ἄπειρος εἶης;	**SOCRATES** Then how, my remarkable friend, could you know whether there's anything good in this business or anything bad, if you have no experience of it at all?
	ANYTUS ῥᾳδίως· τούτους γοῦν οἶδα οἵ εἰσιν, εἴτ' οὖν ἄπειρος αὐτῶν εἰμι εἴτε μή.	**ANYTUS** Easily. I know what sort of people they are, at any rate, whether I've had experience of them or not.
	SOCRATES μάντις εἶ ἴσως, ὦ Ἄνυτε· ἐπεὶ ὅπως γε ἄλλως οἶσθα τούτων πέρι, ἐξ ὧν αὐτὸς λέγεις θαυμάζοιμ' ἄν. ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ τούτους ἐπιζητοῦμεν τίνες εἰσίν, παρ' οὓς ἂν 92d Μένων ἀφικόμενος μοχθηρὸς γένοιτο—οὗτοι μὲν γάρ, εἰ σὺ βούλει, ἔστων οἱ σοφισταί—ἀλλὰ δὴ ἐκείνους εἰπὲ ἡμῖν, καὶ τὸν πατρικὸν τόνδε ἑταῖρον εὐεργέτησον φράσας αὐτῷ παρὰ τίνας ἀφικόμενος ἐν τοσαύτῃ πόλει τὴν ἀρετὴν ἣν νυνδὴ ἐγὼ διῆλθον γένοιτ' ἂν ἄξιος λόγου.	**SOCRATES** Perhaps you're a prophet, Anytus. Because how else you could know about them, going by what you yourself say, would amaze me. But anyway, it isn't these people we're looking for, the ones Meno would go to 92d and turn out bad—let those be the sophists, if you like. No, tell us about the others, and do a kindness to your family's friend here by telling him whom he should go to, in a city this great, to become worth talking about in the excellence I described just now.
92d	**ANYTUS** τί δὲ αὐτῷ οὐ σὺ ἔφρασας;	**ANYTUS** Why didn't you tell him yourself?
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' οὓς μὲν ἐγὼ ᾤμην διδασκάλους τούτων εἶναι, εἶπον, ἀλλὰ τυγχάνω οὐδὲν λέγων, ὡς σὺ φῄς· καὶ ἴσως τὶ 92e λέγεις. ἀλλὰ σὺ δὴ ἐν τῷ μέρει αὐτῷ εἰπὲ παρὰ τίνας ἔλθῃ Ἀθηναίων· εἰπὲ ὄνομα ὅτου βούλει.	**SOCRATES** Well, I did name those I thought were teachers of these things, but it turns out I'm talking nonsense, as you say—and maybe there's something 92e in what you say. But now it's your turn: tell him which Athenians to go to. Name anyone you like.
92e	**ANYTUS** τί δὲ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ὄνομα δεῖ ἀκοῦσαι; ὅτῳ γὰρ ἂν ἐντύχῃ Ἀθηναίων τῶν καλῶν κἀγαθῶν, οὐδεὶς ἔστιν ὃς οὐ βελτίω αὐτὸν ποιήσει ἢ οἱ σοφισταί, ἐάνπερ ἐθέλῃ πείθεσθαι.	**ANYTUS** Why does he need to hear one man's name? Any fine, upstanding Athenian he happens to meet—every one of them—will make him better than the sophists would, provided he's willing to do as he's told.
	SOCRATES πότερον δὲ οὗτοι οἱ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου ἐγένοντο τοιοῦτοι, παρ' οὐδενὸς μαθόντες ὅμως μέντοι ἄλλους διδάσκειν οἷοί τε ὄντες ταῦτα ἃ αὐτοὶ οὐκ 93a ἔμαθον;	**SOCRATES** And did these fine, upstanding men become that way spontaneously, having learned from no one, yet able all the same to teach others what they themselves never 93a learned?
93a	**ANYTUS** καὶ τούτους ἔγωγε ἀξιῶ παρὰ τῶν προτέρων μαθεῖν, ὄντων καλῶν κἀγαθῶν· ἢ οὐ δοκοῦσί σοι πολλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ γεγονέναι ἐν τῇδε τῇ πόλει ἄνδρες;	**ANYTUS** I'd say they, in turn, learned from those before them, who were fine and upstanding. Or don't you think there have been many good men in this city?

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	SOCRATES ἔμοιγε, ὦ Ἄνυτε, καὶ εἶναι δοκοῦσιν ἐνθάδε ἀγαθοὶ τὰ πολιτικά, καὶ γεγονέναι ἔτι οὐχ ἧττον ἢ εἶναι· ἀλλὰ μῶν καὶ διδάσκαλοι ἀγαθοὶ γεγόνασιν τῆς αὑτῶν ἀρετῆς; τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν περὶ οὗ ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν τυγχάνει ὤν· οὐκ εἰ εἰσὶν ἀγαθοὶ ἢ μὴ ἄνδρες ἐνθάδε, οὐδ' εἰ γεγόνασιν ἐν τῷ [93b] πρόσθεν, ἀλλ' εἰ διδακτόν ἐστιν ἀρετὴ πάλαι σκοποῦμεν. τοῦτο δὲ σκοποῦντες τόδε σκοποῦμεν, ἆρα οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες καὶ τῶν νῦν καὶ τῶν προτέρων ταύτην τὴν ἀρετὴν ἣν αὐτοὶ ἀγαθοὶ ἦσαν ἠπίσταντο καὶ ἄλλῳ παραδοῦναι, ἢ οὐ παραδοτὸν τοῦτο ἀνθρώπῳ οὐδὲ παραληπτὸν ἄλλῳ παρ' ἄλλου· τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὃ πάλαι ζητοῦμεν ἐγώ τε καὶ Μένων. ὧδε οὖν σκόπει ἐκ τοῦ σαυτοῦ λόγου· Θεμιστοκλέα οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἂν [93c] φαίης ἄνδρα γεγονέναι;	**SOCRATES** I do, Anytus. I think there are men here who are good at politics, and that there have been no fewer in the past than there are now. But have they also been good teachers of their own excellence? That's what our discussion is actually about: not whether or not there are good men here, nor whether there have been in the [93b] past, but we've been examining all this while whether excellence can be taught. And in examining that, we're examining this: whether the good men of the present and of the past knew how to pass on to someone else the excellence in which they themselves were good, or whether this is something a person can't pass on or receive from another. That's what Meno and I have been looking into all along. So look at it this way, starting from what you yourself said. Wouldn't you [93c] say Themistocles was a good man?
93c	**ANYTUS** ἔγωγε, πάντων γε μάλιστα.	**ANYTUS** I would—the best of all.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ διδάσκαλον ἀγαθόν, εἴπερ τις ἄλλος τῆς αὑτοῦ ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλος ἦν, κἀκεῖνον εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Then also a good teacher, if anyone was ever a teacher of his own excellence?
	ANYTUS οἶμαι ἔγωγε, εἴπερ ἐβούλετό γε.	**ANYTUS** I think so—if he wanted to be.
	SOCRATES ἀλλ', οἶει, οὐκ ἂν ἐβουλήθη ἄλλους τέ τινας καλοὺς κἀγαθοὺς γενέσθαι, μάλιστα δέ που τὸν ὑὸν τὸν αὑτοῦ; ἢ οἴει αὐτὸν φθονεῖν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐξεπίτηδες οὐ παραδιδόναι [93d] τὴν ἀρετὴν ἣν αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς ἦν; ἢ οὐκ ἀκήκοας ὅτι Θεμιστοκλῆς Κλεόφαντον τὸν ὑὸν ἱππέα μὲν ἐδιδάξατο ἀγαθόν; ἐπέμενεν γοῦν ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων ὀρθὸς ἑστηκώς, καὶ ἠκόντιζεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων ὀρθός, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ θαυμαστὰ ἠργάζετο ἃ ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸν ἐπαιδεύσατο καὶ ἐποίησε σοφόν, ὅσα διδασκάλων ἀγαθῶν εἴχετο· ἢ ταῦτα οὐκ ἀκήκοας τῶν πρεσβυτέρων;	**SOCRATES** But don't you think he'd have wanted others to become fine and upstanding—and above all, surely, his own son? Or do you think he begrudged him that, and deliberately didn't pass on [93d] the excellence in which he himself was good? Haven't you heard that Themistocles had his son Cleophantus taught to be a good horseman? He could keep his balance standing upright on horseback, and throw a javelin standing upright on horseback, and do many other amazing things his father had him trained in, making him skilled in everything that depended on good teachers. Or haven't you heard this from older people?[16]
93d	**ANYTUS** ἀκήκοα.	**ANYTUS** I have.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἂν ἄρα τήν γε φύσιν τοῦ ὑέος αὐτοῦ ᾐτιάσατ' ἄν τις εἶναι κακήν.	**SOCRATES** Then no one could have blamed his son's nature for being poor.
93e	**ANYTUS** ἴσως οὐκ ἄν.	**ANYTUS** Perhaps not.
	SOCRATES τί δὲ τόδε; ὡς Κλεόφαντος ὁ Θεμιστοκλέους ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ σοφὸς ἐγένετο ἅπερ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ, ἤδη του ἀκήκοας ἢ νεωτέρου ἢ πρεσβυτέρου;	**SOCRATES** But what about this? Have you ever heard anyone, young or old, say that Cleophantus

16 Themistocles was the Athenian statesman and general who led the Greek fleet to victory over the Persians at Salamis in 480 BC.

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		son of Themistocles became a good and wise man in the things his father was good and wise in?
	ANYTUS οὐ δῆτα.	ANYTUS Certainly not.
	SOCRATES ἆρ' οὖν ταῦτα μὲν οἰόμεθα βούλεσθαι αὐτὸν τὸν αὑτοῦ υἱὸν παιδεῦσαι, ἣν δὲ αὐτὸς σοφίαν ἦν σοφός, οὐδὲν τῶν γειτόνων βελτίω ποιῆσαι, εἴπερ ἦν γε διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετή;	SOCRATES So are we to believe that he wanted to educate his own son in those other things, but not to make him any better than the neighbors in the wisdom he himself had—if excellence really could be taught?
	ANYTUS ἴσως μὰ Δί' οὔ.	ANYTUS Probably not, by Zeus.
	SOCRATES οὗτος μὲν δή σοι τοιοῦτος διδάσκαλος ἀρετῆς, ὃν καὶ σὺ ὁμολογεῖς ἐν τοῖς ἄριστον τῶν προτέρων εἶναι· ἄλλον 94a δὲ δὴ σκεψώμεθα, Ἀριστείδην τὸν Λυσιμάχου· ἢ τοῦτον οὐχ ὁμολογεῖς ἀγαθὸν γεγονέναι;	SOCRATES There you are, then: that's the sort of teacher of excellence he was, a man you yourself agree was among the best of those who came before. Let's look at 94a another: Aristides son of Lysimachus. Or don't you agree he was a good man?[17]
94a	ANYTUS ἔγωγε, πάντως δήπου.	ANYTUS Of course I do, absolutely.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ οὗτος τὸν υἱὸν τὸν αὑτοῦ Λυσίμαχον, ὅσα μὲν διδασκάλων εἴχετο, κάλλιστα Ἀθηναίων ἐπαίδευσε, ἄνδρα δὲ βελτίω δοκεῖ σοι ὀτουοῦν πεποιηκέναι; τούτῳ γάρ που καὶ συγγέγονας καὶ ὁρᾷς οἷός ἐστιν. εἰ δὲ βούλει, 94b Περικλέα, οὕτως μεγαλοπρεπῶς σοφὸν ἄνδρα, οἶσθ' ὅτι δύο υἱεῖς ἔθρεψε, Πάραλον καὶ Ξάνθιππον;	SOCRATES Didn't he, too, give his son Lysimachus the finest education in Athens in everything that depended on teachers? But do you think he made him a better man than anyone at all? You've spent time with him, I believe, and you can see what he's like. Or, if you like, take 94b Pericles, a man of such magnificent wisdom. You know he raised two sons, Paralus and Xanthippus?[18]
94b	ANYTUS ἔγωγε.	ANYTUS I do.
	SOCRATES τούτους μέντοι, ὡς οἶσθα καὶ σύ, ἱππέας μὲν ἐδίδαξεν οὐδενὸς χείρους Ἀθηναίων, καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ ἀγωνίαν καὶ τἆλλα ἐπαίδευσεν ὅσα τέχνης ἔχεται οὐδενὸς χείρους· ἀγαθοὺς δὲ ἄρα ἄνδρας οὐκ ἐβούλετο ποιῆσαι; δοκῶ μέν, ἐβούλετο, ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐκ ᾖ διδακτόν. ἵνα δὲ μὴ ὀλίγους οἴῃ καὶ τοὺς φαυλοτάτους Ἀθηναίων ἀδυνάτους γεγονέναι τοῦτο 94c τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἐνθυμήθητι ὅτι Θουκυδίδης αὖ δύο υἱεῖς ἔθρεψεν, Μελησίαν καὶ Στέφανον, καὶ τούτους ἐπαίδευσεν τά τε ἄλλα εὖ καὶ ἐπάλαισαν κάλλιστα Ἀθηναίων—τὸν μὲν γὰρ Ξανθίᾳ ἔδωκε, τὸν δὲ Εὐδώρῳ· οὗτοι δέ που ἐδόκουν τῶν τότε κάλλιστα παλαίειν—ἢ οὐ μέμνησαι;	SOCRATES Well, as you know yourself, he taught them to be horsemen second to none in Athens, and trained them in music and athletics and everything else that falls under an art, second to none. Didn't he want to make them good men, then? I think he did want to—but it may be that it can't be taught. And so you won't think that only a few, and the most worthless of the Athenians, have proved incapable in this 94c matter, remember that Thucydides also raised two sons, Melesias and Stephanus. He educated them well in everything, and in particular they were the best wrestlers in Athens—he put one with Xanthias and the other with Eudorus, who were thought to be the finest wrestlers of their day. Or don't you remember?[19]

17 Aristides, called "the Just," was an Athenian statesman and general of the Persian Wars.
18 Pericles was the leading statesman of Athens from about 461 BC until his death in 429 BC.
19 Not the historian, but Thucydides son of Melesias, Pericles' chief political rival.

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94c	**ANYTUS** ἔγωγε, ἀκοῇ.	**ANYTUS** I do, by hearsay.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν δῆλον ὅτι οὗτος οὐκ ἄν ποτε, οὗ μὲν ἔδει 94d δαπανώμενον διδάσκειν, ταῦτα μὲν ἐδίδαξε τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς αὑτοῦ, οὗ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔδει ἀναλώσαντα ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας ποιῆσαι, ταῦτα δὲ οὐκ ἐδίδαξεν, εἰ διδακτὸν ἦν; ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴσως ὁ Θουκυδίδης φαῦλος ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἦσαν αὐτῷ πλεῖστοι φίλοι Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν συμμάχων; καὶ οἰκίας μεγάλης ἦν καὶ ἐδύνατο μέγα ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἕλλησιν, ὥστε εἴπερ ἦν τοῦτο διδακτόν, ἐξευρεῖν ἂν ὅστις ἔμελλεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς υἱεῖς ἀγαθοὺς ποιήσειν, ἢ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων τις ἢ τῶν 94e ξένων, εἰ αὐτὸς μὴ ἐσχόλαζεν διὰ τὴν τῆς πόλεως ἐπιμέλειαν. ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὦ ἑταῖρε Ἄνυτε, μὴ οὐκ ᾖ διδακτὸν ἀρετή.	**SOCRATES** Isn't it clear, then, that he would never have taught his own boys the things that required 94d spending money to teach, and yet failed to teach them what would have cost nothing—to make them good men—if that could be taught? Or perhaps Thucydides was a nobody, without a great many friends among the Athenians and the allies? He came of a great family and had great power in the city and among the other Greeks, so if this could be taught, he'd have found someone to make his sons good—either one of his fellow citizens or 94e a foreigner—if he himself had no time because of his public duties. No, my friend Anytus: it may be that excellence can't be taught.
94e	**ANYTUS** ὦ Σώκρατες, ῥᾳδίως μοι δοκεῖς κακῶς λέγειν ἀνθρώπους. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἄν σοι συμβουλεύσαιμι, εἰ ἐθέλεις ἐμοὶ πείθεσθαι, εὐλαβεῖσθαι· ὡς ἴσως μὲν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει ῥᾷόν ἐστιν κακῶς ποιεῖν ἀνθρώπους ἢ εὖ, ἐν τῇδε δὲ καὶ 95a πάνυ· οἶμαι δὲ σὲ καὶ αὐτὸν εἰδέναι.	**ANYTUS** Socrates, you seem to me very ready to speak ill of people. If you're willing to take my advice, I'd advise you to be careful. It may be that in other cities, too, it's easier to do people harm than good, but in this one 95a very much so. I think you know that yourself.
95a	**SOCRATES** ὦ Μένων, Ἄνυτος μέν μοι δοκεῖ χαλεπαίνειν, καὶ οὐδὲν θαυμάζω· οἴεται γάρ με πρῶτον μὲν κακηγορεῖν τούτους τοὺς ἄνδρας, ἔπειτα ἡγεῖται καὶ αὐτὸς εἶναι εἷς τούτων. ἀλλ' οὗτος μὲν ἐάν ποτε γνῷ οἷόν ἐστιν τὸ κακῶς λέγειν, παύσεται χαλεπαίνων, νῦν δὲ ἀγνοεῖ· σὺ δέ μοι εἰπέ, οὐ καὶ παρ' ὑμῖν εἰσιν καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες;	**SOCRATES** Meno, I think Anytus is angry, and it's no wonder. For one thing, he thinks I'm slandering these men; for another, he believes he himself is one of them. But if he ever comes to know what speaking ill really is, he'll stop being angry; for now he doesn't know. But tell me: aren't there fine, upstanding men where you come from, too?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
95b	**SOCRATES** τί οὖν; ἐθέλουσιν οὗτοι παρέχειν αὑτοὺς διδασκάλους τοῖς νέοις, καὶ ὁμολογεῖν διδάσκαλοί τε εἶναι καὶ διδακτὸν ἀρετήν;	**SOCRATES** Well then, are they willing to offer themselves as teachers to the young, and to agree that they are teachers and that excellence can be taught?
	MENO οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν ἂν αὐτῶν ἀκούσαις ὡς διδακτόν, τοτὲ δὲ ὡς οὔ.	**MENO** By Zeus, no, Socrates. Sometimes you'd hear them say it can be taught, and sometimes that it can't.
	SOCRATES φῶμεν οὖν τούτους διδασκάλους εἶναι τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, οἷς μηδὲ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὁμολογεῖται;	**SOCRATES** Then should we say they're teachers of this subject, when they can't even agree on this very point?
	MENO οὔ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** I don't think so, Socrates.
	SOCRATES τί δὲ δή; οἱ σοφισταί σοι οὗτοι, οἵπερ μόνοι ἐπαγγέλλονται, δοκοῦσι διδάσκαλοι εἶναι ἀρετῆς;	**SOCRATES** Well, what about these sophists, the only ones who profess it? Do you think they're teachers of excellence?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
95c	**MENO** καὶ Γοργίου μάλιστα, ὦ Σώκρατες, ταῦτα ἄγαμαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἄν ποτε αὐτοῦ τοῦτο ἀκούσαις ὑπισχνουμένου, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καταγελᾷ, ὅταν ἀκούσῃ ὑπισχνουμένων· ἀλλὰ λέγειν οἴεται δεῖν ποιεῖν δεινούς.	**MENO** What I especially admire about Gorgias, Socrates, is that you'd never hear him promise that. He even laughs at the others when he hears them promising it. He thinks the job is to make people clever speakers.
	SOCRATES οὐδ' ἄρα σοὶ δοκοῦσιν οἱ σοφισταὶ διδάσκαλοι εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** So you don't think the sophists are teachers either?
	MENO οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες. καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ πέπονθα· τοτὲ μέν μοι δοκοῦσιν, τοτὲ δὲ οὔ.	**MENO** I can't say, Socrates. I'm in the same state as most people: sometimes I think they are, and sometimes not.
	SOCRATES οἶσθα δὲ ὅτι οὐ μόνον σοί τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς πολιτικοῖς τοῦτο δοκεῖ τοτὲ μὲν εἶναι διδακτόν, τοτὲ δ' οὔ, [95d] ἀλλὰ καὶ Θέογνιν τὸν ποιητὴν οἶσθ' ὅτι ταὐτὰ ταῦτα λέγει;	**SOCRATES** And do you know that it's not only you and the other politicians who sometimes think this can be taught and sometimes not, [95d] but that the poet Theognis, too, says the very same thing?[20]
95d	**MENO** ἐν ποίοις ἔπεσιν;	**MENO** In which verses?
	SOCRATES ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις, οὗ λέγει— καὶ παρὰ τοῖσιν πῖνε καὶ ἔσθιε, καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν ἵζε, καὶ ἄνδανε τοῖς, ὧν μεγάλη δύναμις. ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἅπ' ἐσθλὰ διδάξεαι· ἢν δὲ κακοῖσιν [95e] συμμίσγῃς, ἀπολεῖς καὶ τὸν ἐόντα νόον. οἶσθ' ὅτι ἐν τούτοις μὲν ὡς διδακτοῦ οὔσης τῆς ἀρετῆς λέγει;	**SOCRATES** In his elegiacs, where he says: "Drink and eat with these, and sit with them, and please those whose power is great. For from the good you'll learn good things; but if you mingle [95e] with the bad, you'll lose even the sense you have." Do you see that here he speaks as though excellence can be taught?
95e	**MENO** φαίνεταί γε.	**MENO** Clearly.
	SOCRATES ἐν ἄλλοις δέ γε ὀλίγον μεταβάς,— εἰ δ' ἦν ποιητόν, φησί, καὶ ἔνθετον ἀνδρὶ νόημα, λέγει πως ὅτι— πολλοὺς ἂν μισθοὺς καὶ μεγάλους ἔφερον οἱ δυνάμενοι τοῦτο ποιεῖν, καὶ— οὔ ποτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς ἔγεντο κακός, [96a] πειθόμενος μύθοισι σαόφροσιν. ἀλλὰ διδάσκων οὔ ποτε ποιήσεις τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρ' ἀγαθόν. ἐννοεῖς ὅτι αὐτὸς αὑτῳ πάλιν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τἀναντία λέγει;	**SOCRATES** But in other lines, shifting ground a little, he says, "If sense could be made and put into a man," and then something like "those who could do this would carry off many large fees," and "Never would a bad son come from a good father, [96a] if he heeded wise words. But by teaching you'll never make the bad man good." Do you notice that he contradicts himself on the same subject?
96a	**MENO** φαίνεται.	**MENO** It seems so.
	SOCRATES ἔχεις οὖν εἰπεῖν ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν πράγματος, οὗ οἱ μὲν φάσκοντες διδάσκαλοι εἶναι οὐχ ὅπως ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι ὁμολογοῦνται, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτοὶ ἐπίστασθαι, ἀλλὰ πονηροὶ [96b] εἶναι περὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα οὗ φασι διδάσκαλοι εἶναι, οἱ δὲ ὁμολογούμενοι αὐτοὶ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ τοτὲ μέν φασιν αὐτὸ διδακτὸν εἶναι, τοτὲ δὲ οὔ; τοὺς οὖν οὕτω τεταραγμένους περὶ ὁτουοῦν φαίης ἂν σὺ κυρίως διδασκάλους εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Can you name any other subject in which those who claim to be teachers are not only not acknowledged as teachers of others, but aren't even acknowledged to know it themselves, and are considered bad [96b] at the very thing they claim to teach; while those acknowledged to be fine and upstanding themselves say at one time that it can be taught and at another that it can't? Would you

20 Theognis of Megara was a sixth-century BC poet whose elegiac verses of advice to a young man were widely quoted.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
		say that people so confused about anything whatever are teachers in any real sense?
96b	**MENO** μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγε.	**MENO** By Zeus, I wouldn't.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν εἰ μήτε οἱ σοφισταὶ μήτε οἱ αὐτοὶ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ ὄντες διδάσκαλοί εἰσι τοῦ πράγματος, δῆλον ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἄλλοι γε;	**SOCRATES** Then if neither the sophists nor those who are fine and upstanding themselves are teachers of the subject, clearly no one else could be?
	MENO οὔ μοι δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I don't think so.
96c	**SOCRATES** εἰ δέ γε μὴ διδάσκαλοι, οὐδὲ μαθηταί;	**SOCRATES** And if there are no teachers, there are no students either?
	MENO δοκεῖ μοι ἔχειν ὡς λέγεις.	**MENO** I think it's as you say.
	SOCRATES ὡμολογήκαμεν δέ γε, πράγματος οὗ μήτε διδάσκαλοι μήτε μαθηταὶ εἶεν, τοῦτο μηδὲ διδακτὸν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** And we've agreed that a subject with neither teachers nor students can't be taught?
	MENO ὡμολογήκαμεν.	**MENO** We have.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἀρετῆς οὐδαμοῦ φαίνονται διδάσκαλοι;	**SOCRATES** Now, nowhere do there appear to be teachers of excellence?
	MENO ἔστι ταῦτα.	**MENO** That's so.
	SOCRATES εἰ δέ γε μὴ διδάσκαλοι, οὐδὲ μαθηταί;	**SOCRATES** And if no teachers, no students either?
	MENO φαίνεται οὕτως.	**MENO** So it appears.
	SOCRATES ἀρετὴ ἄρα οὐκ ἂν εἴη διδακτόν;	**SOCRATES** Then excellence can't be taught?

KNOWLEDGE AND TRUE OPINION

Socrates distinguishes true opinion from knowledge and concludes that excellence comes by divine dispensation.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
96d	**MENO** οὐκ ἔοικεν, εἴπερ ὀρθῶς ἡμεῖς ἐσκέμμεθα. ὥστε καὶ θαυμάζω δή, ὦ Σώκρατες, πότερόν ποτε οὐδ᾽ εἰσὶν ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες, ἢ τίς ἂν εἴη τρόπος τῆς γενέσεως τῶν ἀγαθῶν γιγνομένων.	**MENO** It seems not, if we've examined it correctly. So I really do wonder, Socrates, whether there are no good men at all, or else how it is that good men come to be.
	SOCRATES κινδυνεύομεν, ὦ Μένων, ἐγώ τε καὶ σὺ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι ἄνδρες, καὶ σέ τε Γοργίας οὐχ ἱκανῶς πεπαιδευκέναι καὶ ἐμὲ Πρόδικος. παντὸς μᾶλλον οὖν προσεκτέον τὸν νοῦν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ζητητέον ὅστις ἡμᾶς ἐνί γέ τῳ τρόπῳ βελτίους [96e] ποιήσει· λέγω δὲ ταῦτα ἀποβλέψας πρὸς τὴν ἄρτι ζήτησιν, ὡς ἡμᾶς ἔλαθεν καταγελάστως ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἐπιστήμης ἡγουμένης ὀρθῶς τε καὶ εὖ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πράττεται τὰ πράγματα, ᾗ ἴσως καὶ διαφεύγει ἡμᾶς τὸ γνῶναι τίνα ποτὲ τρόπον γίγνονται οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες.	**SOCRATES** I'm afraid, Meno, that you and I are rather poor specimens, and that Gorgias hasn't educated you adequately, nor Prodicus me. So above all we must pay attention to ourselves, and look for someone who will, in one way or another, make us [96e] better. I say this with our recent inquiry in view: how ridiculously we failed to notice that it isn't only when knowledge guides them that people conduct their affairs rightly and well. That, perhaps, is why understanding how good men come to be escapes us.
96e	**MENO** πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**MENO** What do you mean by that, Socrates?

GREEK

ENGLISH

SOCRATES ὦδε· ὅτι μὲν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας δεῖ ὠφελίμους εἶναι, [97a] ὀρθῶς ὡμολογήκαμεν τοῦτό γε ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἄλλως ἔχοι· ἦ γάρ;

97a **MENO** ναί.

SOCRATES καὶ ὅτι γε ὠφέλιμοι ἔσονται, ἂν ὀρθῶς ἡμῖν ἡγῶνται τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ τοῦτό που καλῶς ὡμολογοῦμεν;

MENO ναί.

SOCRATES ὅτι δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὀρθῶς ἡγεῖσθαι, ἐὰν μὴ φρόνιμος ᾖ, τοῦτο ὅμοιοί ἐσμεν οὐκ ὀρθῶς ὡμολογηκόσιν.

MENO πῶς δὴ ὀρθῶς λέγεις;

SOCRATES ἐγὼ ἐρῶ. εἰ εἰδὼς τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν εἰς Λάρισαν ἢ ὅποι βούλει ἄλλοσε βαδίζοι καὶ ἄλλοις ἡγοῖτο, ἄλλο τι ὀρθῶς ἂν καὶ εὖ ἡγοῖτο;

MENO πάνυ γε.

97b **SOCRATES** τί δ' εἴ τις ὀρθῶς μὲν δοξάζων ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ ὁδός, ἐληλυθὼς δὲ μὴ μηδ' ἐπιστάμενος, οὐ καὶ οὗτος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἡγοῖτο;

MENO πάνυ γε.

SOCRATES καὶ ἕως γ' ἄν που ὀρθὴν δόξαν ἔχῃ περὶ ὧν ὁ ἕτερος ἐπιστήμην, οὐδὲν χείρων ἡγεμὼν ἔσται, οἰόμενος μὲν ἀληθῆ, φρονῶν δὲ μή, τοῦ τοῦτο φρονοῦντος.

MENO οὐδὲν γάρ.

SOCRATES δόξα ἄρα ἀληθὴς πρὸς ὀρθότητα πράξεως οὐδὲν χείρων ἡγεμὼν φρονήσεως· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ὃ νυνδὴ παρελείπομεν ἐν τῇ περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς σκέψει ὁποῖόν τι εἴη, λέγοντες [97c] ὅτι φρόνησις μόνον ἡγεῖται τοῦ ὀρθῶς πράττειν· τὸ δὲ ἄρα καὶ δόξα ἦν ἀληθής.

97c **MENO** ἔοικέ γε.

SOCRATES οὐδὲν ἄρα ἧττον ὠφέλιμόν ἐστιν ὀρθὴ δόξα ἐπιστήμης.

SOCRATES This. That good men must be beneficial— [97a] we were right to agree that it couldn't be otherwise. Weren't we?

MENO Yes.

SOCRATES And that they'll be beneficial if they guide our affairs rightly—we were right to agree to that too, I suppose?

MENO Yes.

SOCRATES But that it isn't possible to guide rightly without understanding—it looks as if we were wrong to agree to that.

MENO How do you mean, "rightly"?

SOCRATES I'll tell you. If someone who knew the road to Larisa, or anywhere else you like, walked there and guided others, wouldn't he guide them rightly and well?

MENO Certainly.

SOCRATES And what if someone had a true opinion about which road it was, but had never been there and didn't know it? Wouldn't he guide rightly too?

MENO Certainly.

SOCRATES And as long as he has true opinion about the things the other has knowledge of, he'll be no worse a guide—believing what's true without understanding it—than the one who does understand it.

MENO No worse at all.

SOCRATES So true opinion is no worse a guide to right action than understanding. And this is what we left out just now in our inquiry into what sort of thing excellence is, when we said [97c] that understanding alone guides right action. There was also, it turns out, true opinion.

MENO It seems so.

SOCRATES Then true opinion is no less beneficial than knowledge.

MENO Only in this respect, Socrates: the one who has knowledge would always hit the mark, where-

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	MENO τοσούτῳ γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἔχων ἀεὶ ἂν ἐπιτυγχάνοι, ὁ δὲ τὴν ὀρθὴν δόξαν τοτὲ μὲν ἂν τυγχάνοι, τοτὲ δ' οὔ.	as the one with true opinion would sometimes hit it and sometimes not.
	SOCRATES πῶς λέγεις; ὁ ἀεὶ ἔχων ὀρθὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἀεὶ ἂν τυγχάνοι, ἕωσπερ ὀρθὰ δοξάζοι;	**SOCRATES** What do you mean? Wouldn't someone who always has true opinion always hit the mark, as long as his opinion was true?
	MENO ἀνάγκη μοι φαίνεται· ὥστε θαυμάζω, ὦ Σώκρατες, [97d] τούτου οὕτως ἔχοντος, ὅτι δή ποτε πολὺ τιμιωτέρα ἡ ἐπιστήμη τῆς ὀρθῆς δόξης, καὶ δι' ὅτι τὸ μὲν ἕτερον, τὸ δὲ ἕτερόν ἐστιν αὐτῶν.	**MENO** It seems to me it must be so. Which makes me wonder, Socrates, [97d] if that's how it is, why on earth knowledge is valued so much more highly than true opinion, and what makes them two different things.
97d	**SOCRATES** οἶσθα οὖν δι' ὅτι θαυμάζεις, ἢ ἐγώ σοι εἴπω;	**SOCRATES** Do you know why you wonder, or shall I tell you?
	MENO πάνυ γ' εἰπέ.	**MENO** Please do tell me.
	SOCRATES ὅτι τοῖς Δαιδάλου ἀγάλμασιν οὐ προσέσχηκας τὸν νοῦν· ἴσως δὲ οὐδ' ἔστιν παρ' ὑμῖν.	**SOCRATES** It's because you haven't paid attention to the statues of Daedalus. But perhaps you don't have any where you come from.[21]
	MENO πρὸς τί δὲ δὴ τοῦτο λέγεις;	**MENO** What makes you say that?
	SOCRATES ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα, ἐὰν μὲν μὴ δεδεμένα ᾖ, ἀποδιδράσκει καὶ δραπετεύει, ἐὰν δὲ δεδεμένα, παραμένει.	**SOCRATES** Because they, too, if they aren't tied down, run off and escape; but if they're tied down, they stay put.
97e	**MENO** τί οὖν δή;	**MENO** What of it?
	SOCRATES τῶν ἐκείνου ποιημάτων λελυμένον μὲν ἐκτῆσθαι οὐ πολλῆς τινος ἄξιόν ἐστι τιμῆς, ὥσπερ δραπέτην ἄνθρωπον —οὐ γὰρ παραμένει—δεδεμένον δὲ πολλοῦ ἄξιον· πάνυ γὰρ καλὰ τὰ ἔργα ἐστίν. πρὸς τί οὖν δὴ λέγω ταῦτα; πρὸς τὰς δόξας τὰς ἀληθεῖς. καὶ γὰρ αἱ δόξαι αἱ ἀληθεῖς, ὅσον μὲν ἂν χρόνον παραμένωσιν, καλὸν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ πάντ' [98a] ἀγαθὰ ἐργάζονται· πολὺν δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ἐθέλουσι παραμένειν, ἀλλὰ δραπετεύουσιν ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὥστε οὐ πολλοῦ ἄξιαί εἰσιν, ἕως ἄν τις αὐτὰς δήσῃ αἰτίας λογισμῷ. τοῦτο δ' ἐστίν, ὦ Μένων ἑταῖρε, ἀνάμνησις, ὡς ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν ἡμῖν ὡμολόγηται. ἐπειδὰν δὲ δεθῶσιν, πρῶτον μὲν ἐπιστῆμαι γίγνονται, ἔπειτα μόνιμοι· καὶ διὰ ταῦτα δὴ τιμιώτερον ἐπιστήμη ὀρθῆς δόξης ἐστίν, καὶ διαφέρει δεσμῷ ἐπιστήμη ὀρθῆς δόξης.	**SOCRATES** To own one of his works untied isn't worth much—it's like owning a runaway slave, since it won't stay put—but tied down, it's worth a great deal, for they are very fine works. So what's my point? True opinions. True opinions, too, are a fine thing as long as they stay put, and all they accomplish is [98a] good. But they aren't willing to stay long; they run away from a person's soul, so they aren't worth much until someone ties them down by working out the reason why. And that, Meno my friend, is recollection, as we agreed earlier. Once they're tied down, they first become knowledge, and then they're stable. That's why knowledge is valued more highly than true opinion: knowledge differs from true opinion by being tied down.
98a	**MENO** νὴ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔοικεν τοιούτῳ τινί.	**MENO** By Zeus, Socrates, it does seem to be something like that.

21 Daedalus, the legendary craftsman, was said to have made statues so lifelike that they moved and would run away unless tied down.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
98b	**SOCRATES** καὶ μὴν καὶ ἐγὼ ὡς οὐκ εἰδὼς λέγω, ἀλλὰ εἰκάζων· ὅτι δέ ἐστίν τι ἀλλοῖον ὀρθὴ δόξα καὶ ἐπιστήμη, οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκῶ τοῦτο εἰκάζειν, ἀλλ' εἴπερ τι ἄλλο φαίην ἂν εἰδέναι—ὀλίγα δ' ἂν φαίην—ἓν δ' οὖν καὶ τοῦτο ἐκείνων θείην ἂν ὧν οἶδα.	**SOCRATES** Mind you, I too am speaking not as one who knows, but by conjecture. But that true opinion and knowledge are different things—that, I think, is not mere conjecture on my part. If there's anything else I'd claim to know—and there are few things I would—this, at any rate, is one I'd count among the things I know.
	MENO καὶ ὀρθῶς γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, λέγεις.	**MENO** And you're right, Socrates.
	SOCRATES τί δέ; τόδε οὐκ ὀρθῶς, ὅτι ἀληθὴς δόξα ἡγουμένη τὸ ἔργον ἑκάστης τῆς πράξεως οὐδὲν χεῖρον ἀπεργάζεται ἢ ἐπιστήμη;	**SOCRATES** Well then, isn't this right too: that true opinion, when it guides, accomplishes the work of each action no worse than knowledge?
	MENO καὶ τοῦτο δοκεῖς μοι ἀληθῆ λέγειν.	**MENO** I think what you say is true there as well.
98c	**SOCRATES** οὐδὲν ἄρα ὀρθὴ δόξα ἐπιστήμης χεῖρον οὐδὲ ἧττον ὠφελίμη ἔσται εἰς τὰς πράξεις, οὐδὲ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἔχων ὀρθὴν δόξαν ἢ ὁ ἐπιστήμην.	**SOCRATES** So true opinion will be no worse than knowledge, and no less beneficial, when it comes to action; nor will the man who has true opinion be any worse than the one who has knowledge.
	MENO ἔστι ταῦτα.	**MENO** That's so.
	SOCRATES καὶ μὴν ὅ γε ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ ὠφέλιμος ἡμῖν ὡμολόγηται εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** And we've agreed that the good man is beneficial.
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν οὐ μόνον δι' ἐπιστήμην ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες ἂν εἶεν καὶ ὠφέλιμοι ταῖς πόλεσιν, εἴπερ εἶεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ὀρθὴν δόξαν, τούτοιν δὲ οὐδέτερον φύσει ἐστὶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, [98d] οὔτε ἐπιστήμη οὔτε δόξα ἀληθής, οὔτ' ἐπίκτητα—ἢ δοκεῖ σοι φύσει ὁποτερονοῦν αὐτοῖν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Since, then, it's not only through knowledge that men would be good and beneficial to their cities, if they are, but also through true opinion; and since neither of these belongs to human beings by nature, [98d] neither knowledge nor true opinion, nor are they acquired—or do you think either of them is there by nature?
98d	**MENO** οὐκ ἔμοιγε.	**MENO** No, I don't.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ οὐ φύσει, οὐδὲ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ φύσει εἶεν ἄν.	**SOCRATES** Then since they're not by nature, good men wouldn't be good by nature either.
	MENO οὐ δῆτα.	**MENO** Certainly not.
	SOCRATES ἐπειδὴ δέ γε οὐ φύσει, ἐσκοποῦμεν τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο εἰ διδακτόν ἐστιν.	**SOCRATES** And since it's not by nature, what we examined next was whether it can be taught.
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν διδακτὸν ἔδοξεν εἶναι, εἰ φρόνησις ἡ ἀρετή;	**SOCRATES** And didn't we think it could be taught if excellence was understanding?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES κἂν εἴ γε διδακτὸν εἴη, φρόνησις ἂν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** And that if it could be taught, it would be understanding?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
98e	**SOCRATES** καὶ εἰ μέν γε διδάσκαλοι εἶεν, διδακτὸν ἂν εἶναι, μὴ ὄντων δὲ οὐ διδακτόν;	**SOCRATES** And that if there were teachers of it, it could be taught, and if there weren't, it couldn't?
	MENO οὕτω.	**MENO** Just so.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ μὴν ὡμολογήκαμεν μὴ εἶναι αὐτοῦ διδασκάλους;	**SOCRATES** But we've agreed that there are no teachers of it?
	MENO ἔστι ταῦτα.	**MENO** That's so.
	SOCRATES ὡμολογήκαμεν ἄρα μήτε διδακτὸν αὐτὸ μήτε φρόνησιν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** So we've agreed that it's neither teachable nor understanding?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀγαθόν γε αὐτὸ ὁμολογοῦμεν εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** But we do agree that it's good?
	MENO ναί.	**MENO** Yes.
	SOCRATES ὠφέλιμον δὲ καὶ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἡγούμενον;	**SOCRATES** And that what guides rightly is beneficial and good?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
99a	**SOCRATES** ὀρθῶς δέ γε ἡγεῖσθαι δύο ὄντα ταῦτα μόνα, δόξαν τε ἀληθῆ καὶ ἐπιστήμην, ἃ ἔχων ἄνθρωπος ὀρθῶς ἡγεῖται— τὰ γὰρ ἀπὸ τύχης τινὸς ὀρθῶς γιγνόμενα οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνῃ ἡγεμονίᾳ γίγνεται—ὧν δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἡγεμών ἐστιν ἐπὶ τὸ ὀρθόν, δύο ταῦτα, δόξα ἀληθὴς καὶ ἐπιστήμη.	**SOCRATES** And that only these two things guide rightly, true opinion and knowledge, and a person who has them guides rightly—for what turns out right by some chance doesn't come about through human guidance—but where a person is a guide to what's right, these are the two: true opinion and knowledge.
	MENO δοκεῖ μοι οὕτω.	**MENO** I think so.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ οὐ διδακτόν ἐστιν, οὐδ' ἐπιστήμη δὴ ἔτι γίγνεται ἡ ἀρετή;	**SOCRATES** Now since it can't be taught, excellence is no longer knowledge either?
	MENO οὐ φαίνεται.	**MENO** It appears not.
99b	**SOCRATES** δυοῖν ἄρα ὄντοιν ἀγαθοῖν καὶ ὠφελίμοιν τὸ μὲν ἕτερον ἀπολέλυται, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἐν πολιτικῇ πράξει ἐπιστήμη ἡγεμών.	**SOCRATES** So of the two things that are good and beneficial, one has been ruled out, and knowledge wouldn't be what guides us in political action.
	MENO οὔ μοι δοκεῖ.	**MENO** I don't think so.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἄρα σοφίᾳ τινὶ οὐδὲ σοφοὶ ὄντες οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἄνδρες ἡγοῦντο ταῖς πόλεσιν, οἱ ἀμφὶ Θεμιστοκλέα τε καὶ οὓς ἄρτι Ἄνυτος ὅδε ἔλεγεν· διὸ δὴ καὶ οὐχ οἷοί τε ἄλλους ποιεῖν τοιούτους οἷοι αὐτοί εἰσι, ἅτε οὐ δι' ἐπιστήμην ὄντες τοιοῦτοι.	**SOCRATES** So it wasn't by some wisdom, or because they were wise, that men like these led their cities—Themistocles and the others Anytus here was talking about just now. And that's why they can't make others like themselves: it isn't through knowledge that they are what they are.
	MENO ἔοικεν οὕτως ἔχειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὡς λέγεις.	

	GREEK	ENGLISH
		MENO It seems to be as you say, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ ἐπιστήμῃ, εὐδοξίᾳ δὴ τὸ λοιπὸν [99c] γίγνεται· ᾗ οἱ πολιτικοὶ ἄνδρες χρώμενοι τὰς πόλεις ὀρθοῦσιν, οὐδὲν διαφερόντως ἔχοντες πρὸς τὸ φρονεῖν ἢ οἱ χρησμῳδοί τε καὶ οἱ θεομάντεις· καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι ἐνθουσιῶντες λέγουσιν μὲν ἀληθῆ καὶ πολλά, ἴσασι δὲ οὐδὲν ὧν λέγουσιν.	**SOCRATES** Then if it isn't by knowledge, the only thing left is that it comes [99c] by good opinion. Statesmen use this to keep their cities on the right course, and as far as understanding goes they're no different from oracle-chanters and inspired prophets. For these, too, when inspired, say many true things, but know nothing of what they're saying.
99c	**MENO** κινδυνεύει οὕτως ἔχειν.	**MENO** It may well be so.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν, ὦ Μένων, ἄξιον τούτους θείους καλεῖν τοὺς ἄνδρας, οἵτινες νοῦν μὴ ἔχοντες πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα κατορθοῦσιν ὧν πράττουσι καὶ λέγουσι;	**SOCRATES** So, Meno, isn't it right to call these men divine, who without having intelligence get many great things right in what they do and say?
	MENO πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ὀρθῶς ἄρ' ἂν καλοῖμεν θείους τε οὓς νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν [99d] χρησμῳδοὺς καὶ μάντεις καὶ τοὺς ποιητικοὺς ἅπαντας· καὶ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς οὐχ ἥκιστα τούτων φαῖμεν ἂν θείους τε εἶναι καὶ ἐνθουσιάζειν, ἐπίπνους ὄντας καὶ κατεχομένους ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν κατορθῶσι λέγοντες πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα πράγματα, μηδὲν εἰδότες ὧν λέγουσιν.	**SOCRATES** Then we'd be right to call divine the ones we mentioned just now, [99d] oracle-chanters and seers, and all poets too. And statesmen, not least of all, we'd say are divine and inspired, breathed into and possessed by the god, when they succeed in saying many great things while knowing nothing of what they say.
99d	**MENO** πάνυ γε.	**MENO** Certainly.
	SOCRATES καὶ αἵ γε γυναῖκες δήπου, ὦ Μένων, τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας θείους καλοῦσι· καὶ οἱ Λάκωνες ὅταν τινὰ ἐγκωμιάζωσιν ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα, "θεῖος ἀνήρ," φασίν, "οὗτος."	**SOCRATES** And women, surely, Meno, call good men divine; and the Spartans, when they praise a good man, say, "He's a divine man."
99e	**MENO** καὶ φαίνονταί γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὀρθῶς λέγειν. καίτοι ἴσως Ἄνυτος ὅδε σοι ἄχθεται λέγοντι.	**MENO** And they seem to be right, Socrates. Though perhaps Anytus here is annoyed with you for saying so.
	SOCRATES οὐδὲν μέλει ἔμοιγε. τούτῳ μέν, ὦ Μένων, καὶ αὖθις διαλεξόμεθα· εἰ δὲ νῦν ἡμεῖς ἐν παντὶ τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ καλῶς ἐζητήσαμέν τε καὶ ἐλέγομεν, ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη οὔτε φύσει οὔτε διδακτόν, ἀλλὰ θείᾳ μοίρᾳ παραγιγνομένη ἄνευ νοῦ οἷς ἂν [100a] παραγίγνηται, εἰ μή τις εἴη τοιοῦτος τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀνδρῶν οἷος καὶ ἄλλον ποιῆσαι πολιτικόν. εἰ δὲ εἴη, σχεδὸν ἄν τι οὗτος λέγοιτο τοιοῦτος ἐν τοῖς ζῶσιν οἷον ἔφη Ὅμηρος ἐν τοῖς τεθνεῶσιν τὸν Τειρεσίαν εἶναι, λέγων περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οἷος πέπνυται τῶν ἐν Ἅιδου, τοὶ δὲ σκιαὶ ἀΐσσουσι. ταὐτὸν ἂν καὶ ἐνθάδε ὁ τοιοῦτος ὥσπερ παρὰ σκιὰς ἀληθὲς ἂν πρᾶγμα εἴη πρὸς ἀρετήν.	**SOCRATES** I don't care. We'll talk with him another time, Meno. But if in this whole discussion our inquiry and our arguments were sound, excellence would be neither by nature nor teachable, but would come by divine dispensation, without intelligence, to those it [100a] comes to—unless there were some statesman capable of making another man a statesman too. If there were, he could almost be said to be among the living what Homer said Tiresias was among the dead, when he says of him, "He alone has his wits of those in Hades; the others flit about as shadows." In the same way, here among us such a man would be, as regards excellence, like a real thing among shadows.[22]

	GREEK	ENGLISH
100b	**MENO** κάλλιστα δοκεῖς μοι λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MENO** I think that's very well said, Socrates.
	SOCRATES ἐκ μὲν τοίνυν τούτου τοῦ λογισμοῦ, ὦ Μένων, θείᾳ μοίρᾳ ἡμῖν φαίνεται παραγιγνομένη ἡ ἀρετὴ οἷς ἂν παραγίγνηται· τὸ δὲ σαφὲς περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰσόμεθα τότε, ὅταν πρὶν ᾧτινι τρόπῳ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις παραγίγνεται ἀρετή, πρότερον ἐπιχειρήσωμεν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἔστιν ἀρετή. νῦν δ' ἐμοὶ μὲν ὥρα ποι ἰέναι, σὺ δὲ ταὐτὰ ταῦτα ἅπερ αὐτὸς πέπεισαι πεῖθε καὶ τὸν ξένον τόνδε Ἄνυτον, ἵνα 100c πρᾳότερος ᾖ· ὡς ἐὰν πείσῃς τοῦτον, ἔστιν ὅτι καὶ Ἀθηναίους ὀνήσεις.	**SOCRATES** From this reasoning, then, Meno, it appears that excellence comes by divine dispensation to those it comes to. But we'll know the clear truth about it only when, before asking in what way excellence comes to people, we first try to inquire what excellence is, itself by itself. But now it's time for me to be going. You, persuade your guest-friend Anytus here of the very things you've been persuaded of yourself, so that 100c he'll be calmer. If you persuade him, you may do the Athenians some good as well.

22 Tiresias was the blind Theban prophet whom Odysseus consults among the dead in Homer's *Odyssey*.