

Name _____

DIRECTIONS: In the 4th century B.C., Socrates was charged with corrupting the youth of Athens. The passage below is from his famous speech in his own defense. Read the passage.

I am going to explain to you why I have such an evil name. When I heard the answer, I said to myself, what can the god mean? and what is the interpretation of this riddle? for I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. What can he mean when he says that I am the wisest of men? And yet he is a god and cannot lie; that would be against his nature. After a long consideration, I at last thought of a method of trying the question. I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand. I should say to him, "Here is a man who is wiser than I am; but you said that I was the wisest." Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed to him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and wiser still by himself; and I went and tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him. Then I went to another, who had still higher philosophical pretensions, and my conclusion was exactly the same. I made another enemy of him, and of many others besides him.

TOPIC: Socrates lived six thousand years ago. Why do you think that people still read his words today? Is what he has to say still relevant and applicable to us today? How? Complement what you have read in this passage with research of your own about Socrates, listing your sources below. Then, take a position on the value of studying Socrates. On a separate page, write a paragraph explaining your position. Use relevant and specific evidence from credible sources to support your response.

SOURCE: _____

SOURCE: _____

SOURCE: _____