

Ostraka are fragments of broken pottery which have the names of politicians scratched on them.



Ostracism was the process of getting rid of an unpopular politician from Athens. They would have to go away for 10 years and could not come into the city at all in that time.

Every Athenian citizen could vote – but remember a citizen had to be an adult, and a man! Each citizen had a small piece of pottery (ostrakon). They would scratch the name of the politician they wanted to be ostracised on it, they would also add the politician's father's name to act like a surname today. The politician with the most votes would be made to leave Athens.