

**Plato *Republic*: The allegory of the cave 514a-520a**

Plato's *Republic* starts from the question 'What is justice?'. In seeking an answer, Socrates suggests they construct an imaginary 'ideal city-state' which will be perfectly just, and see what justice looks like there.

The allegory of the cave is in a section which describes the ideal education. It is meant to explain the ascent towards knowledge which is possible for the true philosopher.

Activity – read *Republic* 514a-520a. Lots of translations are available, including

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html>

Questions for discussion

What are the similarities and differences between the allegory of the cave (*Republic* 514a and the Ladder of Love (*Symposium* 210a)?