



Dramatic Justice

Visual Prompt: Characters in dramas communicate emotions through words, actions, gestures, and facial expressions. How do masks either help or hinder the communication of emotions?

Unit Overview

Every culture must deal with issues of justice. Great literature, beginning with the dramatic literature of ancient Greece, gives us insight into the universal theme of the human struggle with issues of justice and injustice. Different cultures may have different standards and methods for arriving at justice, but every society must explore the question of what is just and fair. In this unit, you will look at texts from around the world as you explore how cultures address the complex issues of right and wrong.

GOALS:

- To analyze and present an oral interpretation of a monologue conveying a complex character’s voice
- To evaluate and critique oral interpretations
- To analyze characterization, conflicting motivations of complex characters, and major themes in a classic Greek drama
- To analyze point of view and cultural experience reflected in literature outside the United States
- To write a literary analysis essay examining the development of a tragic hero and the development of plot and theme

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

justice
criteria
advance

Literary Terms

direct/indirect characterization
complex character
character sketch
oral interpretation
stage directions
stichomythia
ode
dynamic/static character
foil

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Language and Writer's Craft

- Semicolons and Colons (4.6)
- Consulting a Style Manual (4.12)

Previewing the Unit

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

QHT, Marking the Text,
Graphic Organizer

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Preview the big ideas and the vocabulary for the unit.
- Identify and analyze the skills and knowledge required to complete Embedded Assessment 1 successfully.

Making Connections

In this unit, you will explore how literature gives us insight into people: their personalities, their motives, their choices, and their relationships with others. You will study monologues to prepare for an oral interpretation of a piece of literature. Study of the play *Antigone*, a classical dramatic work written by Sophocles, one of the great Greek tragic dramatists, ends the unit.

Essential Questions

Based on your current knowledge, respond to the following Essential Questions.

1. How can one communicate characterization through oral interpretation?
2. How do complex characters advance the plot and develop the themes of a drama?

Developing Vocabulary

3. Mark the Academic Vocabulary and Literary Terms using the QHT strategy.

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 1

Preview the assignment for Embedded Assessment 1: Presenting an Oral Interpretation of Literature.

Your assignment is to research, analyze, and present an oral interpretation of a monologue. Your monologue should represent a point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States. You will need to use vocal and visual delivery to convey a complex character’s voice. You will write a character sketch of the character you are portraying. You will also evaluate your own and other students’ performances and write a reflection on your oral interpretation of Literature.

In your own words, summarize what you will need to know to complete this assessment successfully. With your class, create a graphic organizer to represent the skills and knowledge you will need to complete the tasks identified in the Embedded Assessment.

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

This unit focuses on analyzing complex characters, performing oral interpretation, and reading dramatic works. For your independent reading, consider a classic or modern play with strong, compelling characters. Use a reading strategy such as note-taking, marking the text, or double-entry journals to examine the development of complex characters over the course of the play.

Learning Targets

- Examine the methods of characterization.
- Infer an author’s intended purposes and meanings for using each method.

Direct and Indirect Characterization

Earlier you learned about characterization, which includes the methods a writer uses to describe characters and reveal their personalities. To expand on that definition, two types of characterization that help writers create vivid characters are **direct** and **indirect characterization**.

1. Think of a memorable and **complex character** (one with multiple or conflicting motivations) from a book or film who advanced the plot or theme of the work. List three to five adjectives to describe this character. For each adjective, explain why you attribute this trait to the character and determine whether your interpretation is based on **direct** or **indirect characterization**.

2. From the information that authors share about characters, active readers make inferences to help their understanding of each character’s personality and contributions to the narrative.

Work with your group to make inferences about the character Eliza Sommers from Isabel Allende’s *Daughter of Fortune*. Highlight or underline clues within each excerpt that led to your interpretation.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Marking the Text,
Brainstorming, Graphic
Organizer

Literary Terms

Direct characterization is when the narrator or author provides information about the character.

Indirect characterization is when the narrator or author shows the character interacting with others, thinking about circumstances, or speaking his or her thoughts aloud.

A **complex character** is one that has multiple or conflicting motivations.

Methods of Character Development	Example	What can I infer?
Indirect —The character’s dialogue (what the character says, how the character speaks)	“I can’t force you,” Sommers said finally. “I will give you a letter of recommendation to my friend Vincent Katz who captains the brigantine Emilia;... Your ship will be slower than mine, but perhaps we will see each other in San Francisco, and if you regret your decision you can always come back to work for me.”	
Indirect —The character’s thoughts (what the character thinks)	“If those women could make the voyage alone, and survive without help, she could do it, too, she resolved.”	

Characterization

Activity Title

Methods of Character Development	Example	What can I infer?
Indirect —The character’s actions (what the character does)	“She walked quickly, her heart thudding and her face half hidden behind her fan, sweating in the December heat. She had brought her little velvet bag with the jewels of her trousseau.”	
Indirect —Comments or thoughts by other characters (what other characters say or think)	“Tao Chi’en had to admit that he felt bound to Eliza by countless fine threads, each easily cut but when twisted together forming strands like steel. They had known each other only a few years but they could look to the past and see the obstacle-filled road they had traveled together. Their similarities had erased differences of race.”	
Indirect —The character’s appearance (how the character dresses; physical appearance)	“Tao instructed Azucena to braid Eliza’s long hair in a queue like his own while he went to look for a set of his clothes. They dressed the girl in cut-off pants, a smocked tied at the waist with a cord, and a straw hat like a Japanese parasol.”	
Direct —Comments from the story’s narrator (information and details the narrator or speaker shares with the readers)	“Everyone is born with some special talent, and Eliza Sommers discovered early on that she had two: a good sense of smell and a good memory. She used the first to earn a living and the second to recall her life—”	

3. When you have completed the chart, compare your interpretations with your class, and make inferences about the author’s purpose for using each method of characterization. Be prepared to support your interpretation by citing textual evidence.

Check Your Understanding

Choose a character from your independent reading and describe how the author uses both direct and indirect characterization to develop the character.

Learning Targets

- Use vocal delivery and close reading skills to analyze a scene from a play.
- Using a thematic concept of justice, write a character sketch using indirect or direct characterization.

Before Reading

1. A requirement for effective oral performance is strong vocal delivery. Review the elements of vocal delivery and explain why each one is critical to an oral performance.
 - Tone
 - Pitch

 - Volume
 - Pace

 - Pause
 - Articulation

 - Pronunciation
2. Your teacher will provide you with a scenario and a line of dialogue. Study your assigned scenario to decide what emotion would be appropriate in that context. During your performance, you can speak only the line of dialogue provided. In order to convey your scenario, rehearse your vocal and visual delivery (gestures, pantomime, and facial expressions).
3. As an audience member, try to make inferences about each scenario by observing the actor's vocal and visual delivery. Use the graphic organizer on the next page to reflect on your observations and inferences.

During Reading

4. Two families—the Montagues and the Capulets—are enemies. Romeo, a Montague, has killed Tybalt, a Capulet, after Tybalt killed Romeo's friend, Mercutio. Both sides appeal to the Prince, who just so happens to be Mercutio's uncle, for **justice**. Benvolio pleads for the Montagues, while Lady Capulet speaks for her family. As you read, consider each character's point of view on an issue of justice that leads to the Prince's decree.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Drama Games, Role Playing, Rehearsing, Discussion Groups, Visualizing, Graphic Organizer

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
Justice is the quality of being reasonable and fair in the administration of the law.

My Notes

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What kind of justice do the Capulets ask for and why do they think that would be a just decision?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What aspects of the fighting and deaths does Benvolio emphasize?

WORD CONNECTIONS

Word Meanings

Shakespeare uses the word “fair” in line 13 of Benvolio’s speech. Among the many meanings of *fair* are attractive in appearance, impartial, and a public show. The word may be used as an adjective, a noun, a verb, or an adverb. Research other meanings and use context clues to determine Shakespeare’s meaning for the word *fair*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is considered one of the most perceptive writers in the English language. He pursued a career in London as an actor but found more success as a playwright and poet, producing more than three dozen plays and many sonnets that are still performed and read today. His strength as a writer was in his ability to portray basic human emotions and situations in memorable, often heart-breaking, verse.

Drama

Excerpt from *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*

by William Shakespeare

ACT III, SCENE 1:

PRINCE

Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

BENVOLIO

O noble prince, I can discover all
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl:
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
5 That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

LADY CAPULET

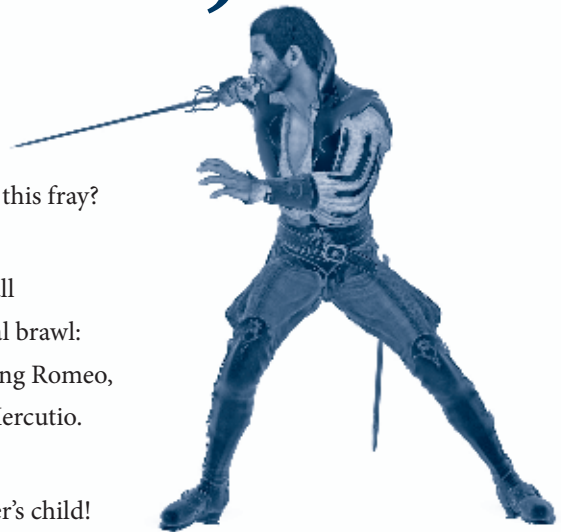
Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother’s child!
O prince! O cousin! husband! O, the blood is spilt
Of my dear kinsman! Prince, as thou art true,
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.
10 O cousin, cousin!

PRINCE

Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo’s did slay;
Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal
15 Your high displeasure: all this uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow’d,
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio’s breast,



- 20 Who all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
Cold death aside, and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity,
Retorts it: Romeo he cries aloud,
- 25 'Hold, friends! friends, part!' and, swifter than
his tongue,
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
- 30 Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled;
But by and by comes back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertain'd revenge,
And to 't they go like lightning, for, ere I
Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain.
- 35 And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

LADY CAPULET

He is a kinsman to the Montague;
Affection makes him false; he speaks not true:
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
And all those twenty could but kill one life.

- 40 I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give;
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

PRINCE

Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio;
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

MONTAGUE

Not Romeo, prince, he was Mercutio's friend;

- 45 His fault concludes but what the law should end,
The life of Tybalt.

PRINCE

And for that offence
Immediately we do exile him hence:
I have an interest in your hate's proceeding,

- 50 My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;
But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine
That you shall all repent the loss of mine:
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;
Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses:

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What do the Montagues ask for and why do they believe that would be a just decision?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What makes the Prince a complex character in this scene?



WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

Conclude contains the root *-clud-*, from the Latin word *claudere*, meaning “to shut or close.” This root also appears in *include*, *preclude*, and *recluse*. The prefix *con-* means “with or together.”

Voices from Literature

My Notes

Literary Terms

A **character sketch** is a brief description of a literary character. The sketch might use one or more methods of characterization to illustrate the character.

55 Therefore use none: let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence this body and attend our will:
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.

After Reading

5. What message about life does Shakespeare's scene reveal?

6. Use the elements of vocal delivery to present this scene as though it's played in a TV courtroom drama. Consider the following as you rehearse.

- a. Who is being accused of a crime?
- b. What is the crime?
- c. Who is the judge?
- d. Who provides eyewitness testimony?
- e. What is the sentence?

Oral Interpretation

7. Choose a character from the previous scene and write a **character sketch**. Rehearse an oral reading of your character's lines, using your character sketch as a guide for your vocal delivery. In your group, perform an oral reading of your character sketch.

As you watch and listen to the other presentations, identify the method of characterization and make inferences from the character sketch.

Performance Reflection		
Visual Delivery (gestures, posture, movement, eye contact)	Vocal Delivery (pitch, volume, pace, rate, pauses, vocal variety, pronunciation/articulation)	What inferences can you make regarding this scenario?

Check Your Understanding

Writing Prompt: In literature, complex characters have multiple or conflicting motivations that affect their decisions and choices. Choose at least one type of indirect characterization method from the graphic organizer in Activity 4.2. Determine your intended effect and purpose—what character traits do you want to convey? Write a brief character sketch of a real or imagined character struggling with an internal conflict or conflicting motivation related to justice. Be sure to:

- Convey conflicting motivations of a complex character.
- Display indirect characterization.
- Use narrative techniques to develop your character.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Close Reading, Drafting, Revising

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze a monologue from a work of literature outside the United States.
- Write an original monologue that conveys tone and characterization.

Before Reading

1. **Quickwrite:** Often in dramatic texts, a character delivers an extended speech known as a **monologue**. What might be the author’s purpose for including a monologue? How could a monologue convey characterization?

During Reading

2. Use the SOAPStone strategy to analyze and annotate the following monologue. In this text, Aunt Olga tries to explain to Hillela, an orphaned niece, why she must live with another member of the family.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nadine Gordimer (1923–) was born in South Africa and has lived her entire life there. She has written numerous works of fiction, both novels and short stories, along with several nonfiction works. Her work is widely read around the world, and she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991. The novel *A Sport of Nature* is one of her primary works.

Novel

Excerpt from **A Sport of Nature**

by Nadine Gordimer

I wish I knew what I did wrong—what I didn’t do for you, darling Hilly. But I never understood Ruthie—I adored her but I couldn’t ... I just never ... And now I’ve let my sister down again, I know it. It’s not your fault, I don’t blame you for anything, please believe that, I blame myself, you are like my own child, but sometimes you can’t do the right thing even for your own—you see that with lots of parents. There must be something I should have done, something I didn’t understand. But I just have to face the fact that maybe we’re not right for you ... You know your Aunt Pauline and I don’t have much to do with each other—not because we don’t love each other, we do, we do!—and anyway we both still love our sister whatever anyone says about her—but maybe, well, we agree perhaps you’ll fit in better with Pauline’s family. Pauline doesn’t like Arthur,

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Aunt Olga mentions different people during her monologue. What can you infer about the relationships of these people to the speaker and her intended audience?

or our kind of friends or this house—you must have sensed it, even in the few times the whole family has been brought together. She thinks (a cough of laughter among the tears)—she says what you need is ‘a breath of air’, the kind we don’t breathe here. So you see how it is. Maybe you’ll have more to occupy your interests. Keep your mind busy. Pauline leads a more varied life—oh yes, I’m the first to admit it. My temperament is different. In that way, she and Ruthie were alike—adventurous. But of course with Pauline, I mean Pauline’s serious minded ... Anyway—it’s out of the question you should be in the care of someone like Billie—

After Reading

- 3. Write an original monologue on an issue of interest to you that reveals characterization, an internal conflict, or perhaps an issue of fairness or justice. Be sure to:
 - Include a summary statement of the scenario before the monologue.
 - Describe the speaker’s feelings on an internal conflict to convey theme.
 - Use diction, detail, sentence structure, and punctuation for effect.

- 4. Trade monologues with a partner. Rehearse and conduct an oral reading of your partner’s monologue with appropriate vocal and visual delivery.

Check Your Understanding

- To what extent did your partner interpret the monologue with the characterization and tone you intended?
- Discuss ways to refine your monologue to make your intentions clearer and revise it accordingly.

My Notes

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Oral Interpretation,
Rehearsing, Discussion Groups

My Notes

Literary Terms

Oral interpretation is planned oral reading that expresses the meaning of a written text.

Learning Targets

- Display oral interpretation skills when presenting a monologue.
- Evaluate an oral interpretation of a monologue.

Oral Interpretation and Dramatic Monologue

1. Use the space below to describe the relationship between a monologue and an oral interpretation. How does one inform the other?
2. What are some of the tools actors use in a dramatic production that are not available to a performer of an oral interpretation?
3. How do performers of an oral interpretation make up for the lack of these resources?

Evaluating Oral Interpretation

4. Use the space below to create a class rubric to evaluate oral interpretations. You may want to consult previous activities in this unit and the scoring guide for Embedded Assessment 1 for ideas. Be sure to include specific criteria for vocal delivery and audience engagement.

Oral Interpretation Rubric

Emerging	Proficient	Mastery

Delivering and Responding to Oral Interpretations

5. Return to the monologue that you wrote in Activity 4.4. Prepare and rehearse an oral interpretation of this monologue with appropriate vocal and visual delivery to convey characterization and tone. Include a brief introduction to establish context.

6. Deliver your oral interpretation to a group of your peers. After each performance, use the rubric you created to provide feedback on strengths presented and make suggestions for improvement. Be sure to refer to specific **criteria** for vocal delivery and audience engagement.

Check Your Understanding

Writing Prompt: Use feedback from your group to help you reflect on your oral interpretation of your monologue. Evaluate your performance. What worked well and what do you need to change to improve your performance? Be sure to:

- Explain how you prepared for and rehearsed your monologue.
- Evaluate the strengths and challenges of your performance.
- Set goals to improve your performance skills.

My Notes

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
Criteria are standards that can be used to evaluate or judge the success of something.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Skimming/Scanning, SMELL,
Discussion Groups

Learning Targets

- Analyze a text using the SMELL strategy.
- Present an oral interpretation of a dramatic text.

Before Reading

1. Skim/scan the five monologues on the following pages. Read the scenarios and three to five lines of each. Which speaker do you think is the most interesting character, and why?

During Reading

2. Use the SMELL strategy to help you analyze your monologue.

CLOSE ANALYSIS	RESPONSE & TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
<p>Sender-Receiver Relationship—Who are the senders and receivers of the message, and what is their relationship (consider what different audiences the text may be addressing)?</p>	
<p>Message—What is a literal summary of the content? What is the meaning or significance of this information?</p>	
<p>Emotional Strategies—What emotional appeals (pathos) are included? What seems to be their desired effects?</p>	
<p>Logical Strategies—What logical arguments/appeals (logos) are included? What is their effect?</p>	
<p>Language—What specific language is used to support the message? How does it affect the text’s effectiveness? Consider both images and actual words.</p>	

Dramatic Monologue

From ACT III, SCENE 2, The Tragedy of Julius Caesar

by William Shakespeare

Passage 1

Marc Antony, who has not been part of the plot to kill Caesar, speaks to the crowd at Caesar's funeral.

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is often interred with their bones.

5 So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—

10 For Brutus is an honorable man
So are they all, all honorable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;
But Brutus says he was ambitious,

15 And Brutus is an honorable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers¹ fill.
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;

20 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal²
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,

25 Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And sure he is an honorable man.



GRAMMAR & USAGE
Semicolon

In lines 3 and 4, the writer uses a semicolon to join two independent clauses to set up contrasting ideas expressed in parallel structure.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS
What effect does repetition have on the speech?

WORD CONNECTIONS

Word Patterns

Notice in lines 7 and 8 the words *grievous* and *grievously*. *Grievous* is an adjective, while *grievously* is an adverb. The noun *grief* and the verb *grieved* are also part of this word pattern. In lines 19 and 21, the words *ambitious* and *ambition* also are related.

My Notes

Handwritten notes area with horizontal lines.

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¹ **coffers:** treasury
² **Lupercal:** an ancient Roman festival

My Notes



WORD CONNECTIONS

Multiple Meaning Words

Diffuse the meanings of the word “rent.” Which is the best definition of this word as Antony uses it in Line 7 of Passage 2? Also consider the meanings of “mark.” Which is the best definition of this word as Antony uses it in Line 10? What are the multiple meanings that Antony gives the word “fall” in Lines 21-23?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

According to Antony, Caesar died in more than one way. In addition to being stabbed, what else led to Caesar’s death?



WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

Ingratitude contains the root *-grat-*, from the Latin word *gratus*, meaning “pleasing.” This root also appears in *grateful*, *ingrate*, *gratify*, and *congratulate*. The prefix *in-* means “not.”

I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.

- 30 You all did love him once, not without cause
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! Thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
- 35 And I must pause till it come back to me. [*He weeps.*]

Passage 2

Marc Antony continues to speak to the Romans.

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle. I remember
The first time ever Caesar put it on;
’Twas on a summer’s evening, in his tent,

- 5 That day he overcame the Nervii.
Look, in this place ran Cassius’ dagger through.
See what a rent the envious Casca made.
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed,
And as he plucked his cursed steel away,
- 10 Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,
As rushing out of doors to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knocked or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar’s angel.
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!
- 15 This was the most unkindest cut of all.
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors’ arms,
Quite vanquished him. Then burst his mighty heart,
And in his mantle muffling up his face,
- 20 Even at the base of Pompey’s statue,
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourished over us.

- 25 O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity. These are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.
- 30 [Antony lifts Caesar's cloak.]

Dramatic Monologue

From *Les Misérables*

by Victor Hugo

Passage 3

Fantine begs for mercy and justice from Monsieur Javert, a policeman who is about to arrest her.

FANTINE: Monsieur Javert, I beseech your mercy. I assure you that I was not in the wrong. If you had seen the beginning, you would have seen. I swear to you by the good God that I was not to blame! That gentleman, the bourgeois, whom I do not know, put snow in my back. Has any one the right to put snow down our backs when we are walking along peaceably, and doing no harm to any one? I am rather ill, as you see. And then, he had been saying impertinent things to me for a long time: "You are ugly! You have no teeth!" I know well that I have no longer those teeth. I did nothing; I said to myself, "The gentleman is amusing himself." I was honest with him; I did not speak to him. It was at that moment that he put the snow down my back. Monsieur Javert, good Monsieur Inspector! is there not some person here who saw it and can tell you that this is quite true? Perhaps I did wrong to get angry. You know that one is not master of one's self at the first moment. One gives way to vivacity; and then, when someone puts something cold down your back just when you are not expecting it! I did wrong to spoil that gentleman's hat.

Why did he go away? I would ask his pardon. Oh, my God! It makes no difference to me whether I ask his pardon. Do me the favor to-day, for this once, Monsieur Javert. You know that in prison one can earn only seven sous a day; it is not the government's fault, but seven sous is one's earnings; and just fancy, I must pay one hundred francs, or my little girl will be sent to me. Oh, my God! I cannot have her with me. What I do is so vile! Oh, my Cosette! Oh, my little angel of the Holy Virgin! what will become of her, poor creature? I will tell you: it is the Thenardiens, inn-keepers, peasants; and such people are unreasonable. They want money. Don't put me in prison! You see, there is a little girl who will be turned out into the street to get along as best she may, in the very heart of the winter; and you must have pity on such a being, my good Monsieur Javert. If she were older, she might earn her living; but it cannot be done at that age. I am not a bad woman at bottom. It is not cowardliness and gluttony that have made me what I am. If I have drunk brandy, it was out of misery. I do not love it; but it benumbs the senses. When I was happy, it was only necessary to glance into my closets, and it would have been evident that I was not a coquettish and untidy woman. I had linen, a great deal of linen. Have pity on me, Monsieur Javert!

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Colon

The **colon** often precedes an important item of information. The colon in Line 6 of the *Les Misérables* passage introduces a quotation.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What rhetorical appeals does Fantine use to speak to Javert's sense of justice?

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Sentence Variety

To achieve variety in sentence structure, length, and rhythm, writers begin sentences in different ways. Notice these examples from *Les Misérables*:

"If you had seen the beginning, ..." (conditional sentence, past perfect verb tense)

"Perhaps I did wrong to get angry." (starts with an adverb)

"Why did he go away?" (rhetorical question)

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the decree that Oedipus gives the city of Thebes?

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Colon

The colons in Lines 3 and 13 indicate a pause as the speaker prepares to deliver significant, important information to his audience.

Dramatic Monologue

From *Oedipus Rex*

by Sophocles

Passage 4

Oedipus, the king, speaks to the citizens of Thebes. They have received news from the Oracle of Delphi that the plague on the city is a punishment from the gods for harboring a murderer in the city. Oedipus is unaware that he is himself the murderer.

But now, my friends,

As one who became a citizen after the murder,

I make this proclamation to Thebes:

If any man knows by whose hands Laios¹, son of Labdakos,

5 Met his death, I direct that man to tell me everything,

No matter what he fears for having so long withheld it.

Let it stand as promised that no further trouble

Will come to him, but he may leave the land in safety.

Moreover: If anyone knows the murderer to be foreign,

10 Let him not keep silent: he shall have his reward from me.

However, if he does conceal it; if any man

Fearing for his friend or for himself disobeys this edict,

Hear what I propose to do:

I solemnly forbid the people of this country,

15 Where power and throne are mind, ever to receive that man

Or speak to him, no matter who he is, or let him

Join in sacrifice, lustration, or in prayer.

I decree that he be driven from every house,

Being, as he is, corruption itself to us: the Delphic²

20 Voice of Apollo has pronounced this revelation.

Thus I associate myself with the oracle

And take the side of the murdered king.

As for the criminal, I pray to God—

Whether it be a lurking thief, or one of a number—

¹ **Laios**: the murdered king of Thebes

² **Delphic**: prophets who received sacred messages

25 I pray that that man's life be consumed in evil and wretchedness.

And as for me, this curse applies no less

If it should turn out that the culprit is my guest here,

Sharing my hearth.

After Reading

- Review the effective practices for vocal delivery that you studied in Activity 4.3: pitch, volume, pace, pause, articulation, and pronunciation. Mark the text of your monologue to prepare for oral interpretation:
 - Write phonetic pronunciations of new names or words in the margin.
 - Circle key punctuation marks that indicate pacing and pauses.
 - Highlight sentences or phrases that need increase in volume.
 - Underline sentences or phrases that need decrease in volume.
- Write an introduction that will establish a context for your monologue. In your introduction, cite the source and the author. Place the monologue in context of the text as a whole. Conduct research as needed to establish context for the audience.
- Rehearse until you are comfortable enough to make eye contact with the audience, referring to the text as needed. Review the evaluation you established in the last activity. Be sure to practice your pronunciation, volume, pace, and accuracy.
- Present your oral interpretation to a group and provide feedback to your group members on their oral interpretations.

Language and Writer's Craft: Semicolons and Colons

Writers often use a **semicolon** to join two independent clauses that are closely related in thought.

Example: Send me a reminder tomorrow; I will pick up the items needed when I go shopping.

A semicolon is also preferred before introductory words (*for example, however, namely, etc.*) that introduce complete sentences.

Example: You will need to pack several things for your trip; for example, the trip will be more comfortable with hiking boots, bottled water, a windbreaker, and sunscreen.

Use a semicolon to separate items in a series when one or more of the items contains a comma.

Example: My family and I visited four cities this summer: Cincinnati, Ohio; Lexington, Kentucky; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Charleston, South Carolina.

Notice also the **colon** in the preceding sentence. A colon often precedes an important item of information or a list of items. A colon can also signal a slight pause during an oral presentation. Note also the use in item 3 above when the colon is used for a list and for complete sentences in a bulleted list.

Check Your Understanding

How does preparing an oral interpretation help you understand a text?

My Notes

Presenting an Oral Interpretation of Literature

My Notes

Assignment

Your assignment is to research, analyze, and present an oral interpretation of a monologue. Your monologue should represent a point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States. You will need to use vocal and visual delivery to convey a complex character's voice. You will write a character sketch of the character you are portraying. You will also evaluate your own and other students' performances and write a reflection on your oral interpretation.

Planning: Take time to make a plan for your oral interpretation.

- How will you select a monologue from your independent readings, research, or class readings that conveys a complex character?
- What strategies will you use (such as SMELL) to analyze the speaker's character, tone, and motivations?
- How will you mark the text to indicate vocal and visual delivery?

Drafting: Write an introduction to your monologue.

- What research will you need to do to find more information about your source text, such as the title and author?
- How will your introduction place this monologue in context of the play as a whole?
- How will you describe the motivations and complexities of your character in your character sketch?

Rehearsing: Practice the delivery of your oral interpretation.

- How many times do you need to read your monologue aloud to grow comfortable with the pacing, volume, and pronunciation?
- How can you record your reading or use peer responding to help you revise your oral interpretation?

Presenting and Listening: Deliver your oral interpretations within a group.

- How will you engage with your audience during the oral interpretation by using eye contact as well as vocal and visual delivery?
- What note-taking strategy will you use to respond to other students' oral interpretation skills and to record notes about the characters and texts?

Reflection

Write a reflection evaluating your overall performance.

- What steps did you take to help you understand the text and plan your delivery?
- What were the strengths and challenges of your overall performance?
- What did you learn about oral interpretation and characterization from your own and your peers' performances?

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a thorough written explanation of steps taken to plan the interpretation writes a reflection that accurately evaluates strengths and weaknesses of the performance includes an insightful analysis of what has been learned about characterization and oral interpretation. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a written explanation of steps taken to plan the oral interpretation writes a reflection that evaluates strengths and weaknesses of the performance includes an analysis of what has been learned about characterization and oral interpretation. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides some explanation of steps taken to plan the oral interpretation writes an inadequate reflection that does not evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the performance provides an insufficient analysis of what has been learned about characterization and oral interpretation. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides no written explanation of steps taken to plan the oral interpretation does not write a reflection on strengths and weaknesses of the performance provides a confused analysis of what has been learned about characterization and oral interpretation.
Structure	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selects a passage of strong literary merit that conveys a complex character introduces the oral interpretation in an engaging manner provides well-researched information to place the passage in the context of the work. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selects a passage that conveys a complex character introduces the oral interpretation by citing source and author provides sufficient information in the introduction to place the passage in the context of the work. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selects a passage for interpretation that does not convey a complex character does not cite the source and/or author of the passage provides insufficient information in the introduction to place the passage in the context of the work. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selects a passage with a simple character does not cite the source and/or author of the passage provides no information in the introduction to place the passage in the context of the work.
Use of Language	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses effective vocal and visual delivery strategies to orally interpret a text engages the audience with eye contact, rarely referring to notes demonstrates active listening by taking detailed notes and responding thoughtfully to other performances. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses adequate vocal and visual delivery strategies to interpret a text orally engages the audience with eye contact while referring to notes as needed demonstrates active listening by taking notes and responding to other performances. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses inadequate vocal and visual delivery strategies to interpret the text mostly reads directly from notes and rarely makes eye contact with the audience listens to other performances but takes no notes. 	<p>The performer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses inadequate vocal and visual delivery strategies to interpret the text reads directly from notes without making eye contact with the audience disrupts or distracts from other performances and takes no notes.

Previewing Embedded Assessment 2 and Introducing Greek Drama

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
QHT, Graphic Organizer,
Predicting

My Notes

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

The verb **advance** means to move or push forward and can be used in reference to an idea or, as in this case, the plot of a story.

Learning Targets

- Identify the knowledge and skills necessary to complete Embedded Assessment 2 successfully.
- Reflect on understanding of vocabulary, essential questions, and character relationships.

Making Connections

In this part of the unit, you will learn about Greek drama by reading *Antigone* (pronounced “An-tig-o-knee”). As you read the play, you will examine the major characters and analyze their interactions with one another. You will also explore the concept of the tragic hero and how the play develops this theme.

Essential Questions

Based on your study of the first part of this unit, how would you answer the questions now?

1. How can one communicate a speaker’s voice through oral interpretation?
2. How do complex characters **advance** the plot and develop the themes of a drama?

Developing Vocabulary

Think about the Academic Vocabulary and Literary Terms you have studied so far in this unit. Which words/terms can you now move to a new category on a QHT chart? Which could you now teach to others that you were unfamiliar with at the beginning of the unit?

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 2

Read the assignment for Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Literary Analysis Essay on Characterization and Theme.

Your assignment is to write an analytical essay about the effect of character interaction in the play *Antigone*. Choose a character whose words, actions, or ideas contrast with Creon’s character. Explain how these conflicting motivations contribute to Creon’s development as a tragic hero and how the character interactions advance the plot or develop themes of the play.

In your own words, summarize what you will need to know to complete this assessment successfully. With your class, create a graphic organizer to represent the skills and knowledge you will need to complete the tasks identified in the Embedded Assessment.

Introduction to Greek Drama

3. With your group, mark the text of one of the topics below by highlighting key information.

Greek Theater

- Tragedies were produced as part of a religious festival every year in Athens.
- Awards were given to the playwright who presented the best series of three dramas.
- Plays were performed in vast outdoor amphitheaters that could seat 40,000.
- All actors were men. The Greek word for actor is *hypokrites*. They wore masks with built-in megaphones so they could be heard; they also wore platform shoes for added height.
- The stage was a slightly raised platform. Actors’ movements were bold and definite.
- The Chorus—a group of actors who moved and sang together—acted as one character and spoke in unison during the Choral Odes, which separated the scenes of the drama.
- The Chorus set the mood, summarized the action, represented a point of view, sided with various characters, or warned of disaster.
- Greek theater incorporated unities of time, place, and action, which meant that there were no scene changes, and no complicated subplots; the plays took place in one day and in one place and focused on one event.
- Violent action took place offstage; messengers told the audience what happened.
- The audience knew the story ahead of time. The emotion of the characters is what they came to see.

Sophocles

- Was one of three great Greek tragic playwrights (with Aeschylus and Euripides); wrote during the “Golden Age” of ancient Greece
- Born in 496 BC—lived for 90 years
- Wrote over 100 plays—only seven remain
- Served his city of Colonus, near Athens, in various capacities
- Entered his plays in contests—won his first at age 28
- Defeated Aeschylus in that competition
- Awarded first prize about 20 times and second place prizes all other times
- Added the third actor to the cast of his plays—before this, all dramas were played with only two characters other than the Chorus



WORD CONNECTIONS

Word Meanings

Does the Greek word for actor—*hypokrites*—remind you of an English word? It is close to our modern word *hypocrite*, which is someone who claims certain beliefs but acts in a way that is contrary to those beliefs. In playing a role, an actor might say or do things that he or she does not actually believe.

My Notes

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A Tragic Family

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Discussion Groups, Graphic Organizer, Marking the Text

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS
Which of the characters have the strongest conflicting motivations?

Learning Targets

- Make inferences and predictions about how characters, conflicting motivations, and character relationships will advance a plot.
- Preview the play by understanding background information about tragedy and Sophocles’ Theban plays.

Analyzing Character Motivations

1. Read the brief character sketches from the plot of the tragedy *Antigone*. Work with a small group to analyze the motivations of three different characters by filling out the corresponding rows in the chart on the next page. Then, join with another group to analyze the remaining characters and complete the chart.

Creon (kree-on)

Your nephews have killed each other in a battle over who should be king. You are now king and decree that one brother can be buried according to the customs of your land but the other cannot. You find out that someone has defied your rule.

Antigone (an-tig-o-knee)

You are the niece of Creon, the new king. Your brother has been killed in battle. The king has decreed that no one should bury him. You refuse to follow Creon’s decree, and bury your brother.

Ismene (is-may-nay)

You are Antigone’s sister. Your sister has committed a serious offense against the new king, something you would never do. One of your brothers has been buried lawfully; the other has not.

Haemon (Hay-mon)

You are engaged to marry Antigone. Your fiancée has buried her brother, which she has been forbidden to do by your father, King Creon.

The Chorus

The king has made a law. Someone you respect has broken that law for reasons you think are justifiable.

The Guard

Your job is to guard a corpse to make sure no one buries it. Someone buries the body, and you must report it to the king. Later, during a dust storm, you catch someone burying the body again. You take the person to the king.

Character	Three Adjectives to Describe How You Feel	Why do you feel this way?	What will you do?	Why do you think this is a <i>just</i> response?
Creon				
Antigone				
Ismene				
Haemon				
The Chorus				
The Guard				

A Tragic Family

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Based on the scenarios you read, how does *Antigone* meet the definition of a Greek tragedy?

Writing Prompt: Select one of the characters from the chart on the previous page and consider his or her point of view. Based on the information in the scenarios, write an introduction to your character. Be sure to:

- Include background information from the character’s scenario.
- Provide an explanation that describes the character.
- Predict how the character’s motivations might conflict with those of other characters.

Meet the Family

2. Mark the text of the topics below to build your background knowledge of the Cadmus family and their tragic past. Review this information and the information about Greek Theater and Sophocles from the previous activity in preparation for a trivia game.

Tragedy and the Tragic Hero

- Tragedy is a difficult and rewarding form of drama, which was made into an art by the Greeks.
- Tragedy involves the downfall of a hero, usually ending with his or her destruction or death.
- From *Aristotle’s Poetics*:
 - Tragedy arouses the emotions of pity and fear, wonder and awe.
 - The main character is a tragic hero who must be a man or woman capable of great suffering.
 - The downfall of the hero usually ends with his or her destruction or death.
 - The plot involves intense emotion, with a horrible truth that leads to release or *catharsis*, or purification.
 - The drama does not leave the audience in depression, but with a deeper understanding of life.
- *Aristotle’s Poetics* on the tragic hero:
 - The tragic hero is a man [or woman] of noble stature.
 - The tragic hero is a good person who is brought down by an “act of injustice” (hamartia) because he [she] knows no better or believes that a greater good will be served by his [her] actions.
 - The hero has a weakness, a tragic flaw such as pride, quickness to anger, or misjudgment.
 - The hero has free choice that makes his [her] downfall his [her] own fault, but experiences misfortune that is not entirely deserved.
 - The hero gains self-knowledge or understanding before the downfall, and therefore experiences redemption.

Antigone and Her Family Background

- *Antigone* is a complete play, but it is part of a cycle of three plays, including *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, written by Sophocles about the generations of the Cadmus family.
- The plays deal with the curse placed upon the family for a crime committed against the gods. The curse begins with a prophecy to King Laius and Queen Jocasta of Thebes that their son, Oedipus, will kill his father and marry his own mother.
- To avoid fulfillment of the prophecy, the baby Oedipus is left in the mountains to die of exposure, but was found and raised by the king and queen of Corinth, not knowing his birth parents.
- Later Oedipus unknowingly kills his father and wins the hand of Jocasta, the widowed queen, thus fulfilling the prophecy. They have four children, Antigone, Ismene, Eteocles, and Polyneices.
- When Jocasta discovers the truth, she hangs herself. When Oedipus discovers the truth, he blinds and exiles himself. He leaves his brother-in-law, Creon, to look after his children.
- Before he dies, Oedipus leaves orders that his two sons share the kingship; however, Eteocles, the first to reign, refuses to step down. Polyneices, his brother, attacks the city and his brother. They kill each other in battle.
- Creon becomes king and orders Eteocles buried with religious rites and honors. He orders that Polyneices be left unburied and uncovered for birds and animals to feed on his body. According to Greek beliefs, his soul could thus never rest. Antigone buries her brother against the order of her uncle. Thus begins the play's action.

Pronunciation Guide

Refer to online resources for explanations and examples of correct pronunciation of Greek names, such as the following helpful instructions:

- Final “e” is always pronounced: Athene = a-THEE-neh.
- “Ch” is pronounced like “k,” never as in “church.”
- “C” is pronounced soft (like “s”) before “e” and “i” sounds: otherwise it is pronounced hard (like “k”): Polyneices = poly-NI-ses.
- The same applies to “g”; soft (as in “giant”) before “e” and “i” sounds, hard (as in “gate”) otherwise.
- “Th” is always smooth, as in “thigh,” never rough, as in “they”: Athene = a-THEE-neh.
- You can pronounce the vowels as in English, but you will be a little closer to the ancient pronunciation if you pronounce them as in Romance languages (Italian, Spanish, etc.).
- “Ae” and “oe” can be pronounced like “e.”
- General rules of accent:
 - If a name has two syllables, accent the first.
 - If a name has three or more syllables, then accent the second-to-last syllable. If a name is long, accent the third-to-last syllable.

Examples: Aeschylus = ES-kih-lus or EE-skih-lus, Aphrodite = ah-froh-DI-tee, Herodotus = heh-RAH-do-tus, Thermopylae = ther-MO-pih-lee, Thucydides = thoo-SIH-di-des

My Notes

A Tragic Family

Trivia Game

About the Author	It's a Tragedy	Greek Theater	Antigone and Her Family
<p>\$200</p> <p>He was the author of <i>Oedipus Rex</i>, <i>Oedipus at Colonus</i> and <i>Antigone</i>.</p>	<p>\$200</p> <p>This civilization made tragedy into an art.</p>	<p>\$200</p> <p>This city was where tragedies were produced as part of a religious festival.</p>	<p>\$200</p> <p>The other two plays in the series with <i>Antigone</i></p>
<p>\$400</p> <p>This is the number of Sophocles' plays that exist today out of a total of more than 100.</p>	<p>\$400</p> <p>Downfall, usually ending with destruction or death</p>	<p>\$400</p> <p>The part of a Greek play usually chanted (or sung) in unison</p>	<p>\$400</p> <p>The King and Queen of Thebes</p>
<p>\$600</p> <p>It was the "Golden Age" in ancient Greece.</p>	<p>\$600</p> <p>Pity and fear, wonder and awe</p>	<p>\$600</p> <p>Masks with built-in megaphones and platform shoes</p>	<p>\$600</p> <p>"Your son will kill his father and marry his own mother."</p>
<p>\$800</p> <p>This was Sophocles' age when he won his first drama competition.</p>	<p>\$800</p> <p>A single flaw in character, or hamartia</p>	<p>\$800</p> <p>A group of actors that moved and sang together, acting as one character</p>	<p>\$800</p> <p>Both mother and wife of Oedipus</p>
<p>\$1,000</p> <p>This was the number of actors Sophocles had in the cast of his plays.</p>	<p>\$1,000</p> <p>Horrible truth that leads to release</p>	<p>\$1,000</p> <p>The Greek word for actor</p>	<p>\$1,000</p> <p>The decree of Creon that begins the action of the play</p>

Learning Targets

- Infer character motive and compare characters from *Antigone*.
- Analyze a classic Greek drama and examine its text features.

Stage Directions

Stage directions are often placed within parentheses and printed in italics. When reading a play script, use this text feature to help you visualize the story’s setting and characters’ movement. Note: “Left” and “right” directions are from the actor’s point of view as he or she faces the audience.

Before Reading

1. Skim/scan the text of the opening scene of *Antigone* on the following pages. What key information is provided by the **stage directions**?

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Discussion Groups, Graphic Organizer, Marking the Text, Oral Reading

Literary Terms

Stage directions are instructions written into the script of a play that indicate stage actions, movements of performers, or production requirements.

During Reading

2. Read the opening scene between Antigone and Ismene. As you read, focus on the dramatic, emotional nature of the dialogue and each character’s motivation or intent. Take notes on the two sisters in the graphic organizer. Be sure to cite line numbers when noting textual evidence.

Character Analysis in the Opening Scene

Character	Indirect Characterization That Defines Each Character	Quotations that Show Character Intent or Emotion	Adjectives to Describe the Character (Include Textual Evidence)
Antigone		“You’re too rash. Has Creon not expressly banned that act?” (Lines 59–60)	
Ismene			

Soul Sisters

GRAMMAR & USAGE Parallel Structure

In lines 5 and 6, Sophocles uses **parallel structure**, giving equal importance to ideas. The use of “no” followed by nouns emphasizes the equally significant qualities of Antigone’s experiences.

My Notes

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Few records exist that can tell the story of the life of Sophocles (c. 496 B.C. – 406 B.C.), one of the great playwrights of the golden age of ancient Greece. He spent his life in the historically and politically important city-state of Athens, where he benefited from family wealth, good social connections, an excellent education, a winning personality, and a talent for writing plays that perfectly captured the spirit of his time and place. He wrote over 100 plays, but only seven remain. Sophocles, along with Aeschylus and Euripides, is considered a master of Greek tragedy. During his time, ancient Greece was known to be in its “Golden Age” of art and forward thinking. Sophocles is credited with several innovations to the dramatic form. Increasing the number of characters in a play, for example, allowed him to make the plots more complex and interesting to audiences. By focusing on characters’ fatal flaws, poor decisions, and moral dilemmas, he created suspenseful plays that also evoked audiences’ sympathies.

Drama

Antigone

by Sophocles

ANTIGONE: daughter of Oedipus

ISMENE: daughter of Oedipus, sister of Antigone

CREON: king of Thebes

EURYDICE: wife of Creon

HAEMON: son of Creon and Eurydice, engaged to Antigone

TEIRESIAS: an old blind prophet

BOY: a young lad guiding Teiresias

GUARD: a soldier serving Creon

MESSENGER

CHORUS: Theban Elders

ATTENDANTS

[Thebes¹, in front of the palace, which stands in the background, its main doors facing the audience. Enter Antigone leading Ismene away from the palace]

ANTIGONE Now, dear Ismene, my own blood sister,
do you have any sense of all the troubles
Zeus keeps bringing on the two of us,
as long as we’re alive? All that misery
which stems from Oedipus? There’s no suffering,
no shame, no ruin—not one dishonour—
which I have not seen in all the troubles
you and I go through. What’s this they’re saying now,
something our general has had proclaimed
throughout the city? Do you know of it?
Have you heard? Or have you just missed the news?

10

¹ **Thebes:** capital city of ancient Egypt

- Dishonours which better fit our enemies
are now being piled up on the ones we love.
- ISMENE I've had no word at all, Antigone,
nothing good or bad about our family,
not since we two lost both our brothers,
killed on the same day by a double blow.
And since the Argive² army, just last night,
has gone away, I don't know any more
if I've been lucky or face total ruin.
- 20 ANTIGONE I know that. That's why I brought you here,
outside the gates, so only you can hear.
- ISMENE What is it? The way you look makes it seem
you're thinking of some dark and gloomy news.
- ANTIGONE Look—what's Creon doing with our two brothers?
He's honouring one with a full funeral
and treating the other one disgracefully!
Eteocles, they say, has had his burial
according to our customary rites,
to win him honour with the dead below.
But as for Polyneices, who perished
so miserably, an order has gone out
throughout the city—that's what people say.
He's to have no funeral or lament,
but to be left unburied and unwept,
a sweet treasure³ for the birds to look at,
for them to feed on to their heart's content.
That's what people say the noble Creon
has announced to you and me—I mean to me—
and now he's coming to proclaim the fact,
to state it clearly to those who have not heard.
For Creon this matter's really serious.
Anyone who acts against the order
will be stoned to death before the city.
Now you know, and you'll quickly demonstrate
whether you are nobly born, or else
a girl unworthy of her splendid ancestors.
- 30
- 40
- ISMENE Oh my poor sister, if that's what's happening,
what can I say that would be any help
to ease the situation or resolve it?
- 50 ANTIGONE Think whether you will work with me in this
and act together.
- ISMENE In what kind of work?
What do you mean?
- ANTIGONE Will you help these hands
take up Polyneices' corpse and bury it?

² **Argive army:** refers to the city of Argos, where Polyneices raised an army to fight his brother Eteocles for the throne

³ **sweet treasure:** refers to Polyneices' body left unburied, which birds and other creatures will gorge on

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS
Read Lines 25–47 carefully.
What does Antigone describe
as Creon's proclamation?
How will this ruling affect
her family?

Soul Sisters

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

In Lines 62–72, what is Ismene’s purpose in recounting her family’s history?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

The conflict between Antigone and Ismene becomes clearly stated in Lines 92–98. Explain this conflict.

- ISMENE What? You’re going to bury Polyneices, when that’s been made a crime for all in Thebes?
- ANTIGONE Yes. I’ll do my duty to my brother—and yours as well, if you’re not prepared to. I won’t be caught betraying him.
- 60 ISMENE You’re too rash.
Has Creon not expressly banned that act?
- ANTIGONE Yes. But he’s no right to keep me from what’s mine.
- ISMENE O dear. Think, Antigone. Consider how our father died, hated and disgraced, when those mistakes which his own search revealed forced him to turn his hand against himself and stab out both his eyes. Then that woman, his mother and his wife—her double role—destroyed her own life in a twisted noose. Then there’s our own two brothers, both butchered in a single day—that ill-fated pair with their own hands slaughtered one another and brought about their common doom. Now, the two of us are left here quite alone. Think how we’ll die far worse than all the rest, if we defy the law and move against the king’s decree⁴, against his royal power. We must remember that by birth we’re women, and, as such, we shouldn’t fight with men. Since those who rule are much more powerful, we must obey in this and in events which bring us even harsher agonies. So I’ll ask those underground for pardon—since I’m being compelled, I will obey those in control. That’s what I’m forced to do. It makes no sense to try to do too much.
- 70
- 80 ANTIGONE I wouldn’t urge you to. No. Not even if you were keen to act. Doing this with you would bring me no joy. So be what you want. I’ll still bury him. It would be fine to die while doing that. I’ll lie there with him, with a man I love, pure and innocent, for all my crime. My honours for the dead must last much longer than for those up here. I’ll lie down there forever. As for you, well, if you wish, you can show contempt for those laws the gods all hold in honour.
- 90 ISMENE I’m not disrespecting them. But I can’t act against the state. That’s not in my nature.
- 100 ANTIGONE Let that be your excuse. I’m going now to make a burial mound for my dear brother.

⁴ king’s decree: a rule or edict issued by the king

- ISMENE Oh poor Antigone, I'm so afraid for you.
- ANTIGONE Don't fear for me. Set your own fate in order.
- ISMENE Make sure you don't reveal to anyone what you intend. Keep it closely hidden. I'll do the same.
- ANTIGONE No, no. Announce the fact— if you don't let everybody know, I'll despise your silence even more.
- ISMENE Your heart is hot to do cold deeds.
- ANTIGONE But I know, I'll please the ones I'm duty bound to please.
- 110 ISMENE Yes, if you can. But you're after something which you're incapable of carrying out.
- ANTIGONE Well, when my strength is gone, then I'll give up.
- ISMENE A vain attempt should not be made at all.
- ANTIGONE I'll hate you if you're going to talk that way. And you'll rightly earn the loathing of the dead. So leave me and my foolishness alone—we'll get through this fearful thing. I won't suffer anything as bad as a disgraceful death.
- 120 ISMENE All right then, go, if that's what you think right. But remember this—even though your mission makes no sense, your friends do truly love you.

[Exit Antigone and Ismene. Enter the Chorus of Theban elders]

After Reading

3. With a partner, choose a section of the text and rehearse with appropriate vocal delivery. In this opening scene, Antigone and Ismene quickly build tension and conflict between their characters with their rapid speech, or **stichomythia**. Practice this convention as you read and incorporate appropriate gestures.

Check Your Understanding

- What key information about the Cadmus family is revealed in the opening scene?
- What are the sisters' conflicting motivations?
- How does Sophocles use the sisters' interaction to advance the plot?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What effect does the juxtaposition of the terms “hate” and “love” have in Lines 114 and 121? What do they say about each sister?

Literary Terms

In drama, **stichomythia** is the delivery of dialogue in a rapid, fast-paced manner, with actors speaking emotionally and leaving very little time between between speakers.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Discussion Groups, Oral Reading, Paraphrasing

My Notes

Literary Terms

An **ode** is a lyric poem expressing the feelings or thoughts of a speaker, often celebrating a person, an event, or a thing.

Learning Targets

- Analyze the organization of ideas, meanings of images, and details in a text.
- Demonstrate understanding of an ode by paraphrasing succinctly.

The Greek Chorus

In Greek drama, the choral odes have many purposes. Even though the Chorus is composed of a number of individuals, it functions as one character.

One member of the Chorus serves as the Chorus Leader. That person participates in a dialogue between himself/herself and the rest of the Chorus, or represents the Chorus when speaking to another character.

Before Reading

1. Review the information regarding the chorus in Activity 4.9. Compare and contrast the purpose of a chorus in Greek theater with the purpose of a chorus in other contexts, such as in a song, a musical, or a Shakespearean play. Create a Venn diagram or another graphic organizer for your comparison.

During Reading

2. In the First Ode, the Chorus comments on events that happened before the play opens and that set the events of the play in motion. As you read the First Ode with your group, have one person act as the Chorus Leader while the rest of the group reads the Chorus lines. After you have read the text through once, add stage movement to your second reading. In a Greek play, the Chorus moves from right to left while chanting a **strophe** and from left to right while chanting the **antistrophe** as they dance across the stage. (Since the choral odes in Greek theater were usually accompanied by soft music, you may choose to have group members hum or beat out a soft rhythm with their hands as well.)

130 CHORUS—**Strophe 1**⁶

FIRST ODE⁵

O ray of sunlight,
most beautiful that ever shone
on Thebes, city of the seven gates,
you've appeared at last,
you glowing eye of golden day,
moving above the streams of Dirce⁷,
driving into headlong flight
the white-shield warrior from Argos,
who marched here fully armed,
now forced back by your sharper power.

CHORUS LEADER

Against our land he marched,
sent here by the warring claims
of Polyneices, with piercing screams,
an eagle flying above our land,
covered wings as white as snow,
and hordes of warriors in arms,
helmets topped with horsehair crests.

140 CHORUS—**Antistrophe 1**⁸

Standing above our homes,
he ranged around our seven gates,
with threats to swallow us
and spears thirsting to kill.
Before his jaws had had their fill
and gorged themselves on Theban blood,
before Hephaistos⁹ pine-torch flames
had seized our towers, our fortress crown,
he went back, driven in retreat.
Behind him rings the din of war—
his enemy, the Theban dragon-snake,
too difficult for him to overcome.

150 CHORUS LEADER

Zeus hates an arrogant boasting tongue.
Seeing them march here in a mighty stream,
in all their clanging golden pride,
he hurled his fire and struck the man,
up there, on our battlements, as he began
to scream aloud his victory.

160 CHORUS—**Strophe 2**

The man swung down, torch still in hand,
and smashed into unyielding earth—
the one who not so long ago attacked,
who launched his furious, enraged assault,
to blast us, breathing raging storms.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How do the Chorus and the Chorus Leader use imagery to establish different tones in Strophe 1?

⁵ **First Ode:** odes are choral songs chanted by the Chorus in a Greek tragedy

⁶ **Strophe 1:** part of the ode the Chorus chants while moving right to left across the stage

⁷ **streams of Dirce:** stream near Thebes

⁸ **Antistrophe 1:** part of the ode the Chorus chants while moving back across the stage from left to right

⁹ **Hephaistos:** blacksmith of the gods; he hammered out lightning bolts for Zeus

Chorus Lines

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How do the Chorus and the Chorus Leader use imagery to establish different tones in Strophe 2?

But things turned out not as he'd hoped.
Great war god Ares¹⁰ assisted us—
he smashed them down and doomed them all
to a very different fate.

CHORUS LEADER

Seven captains at seven gates
matched against seven equal warriors
paid Zeus¹¹ their full bronze tribute,
the god who turns the battle tide,
all but that pair of wretched men,
born of one father and one mother, too—
who set their conquering spears against each other
and then both shared a common death.

170

CHORUS—**Antistrophe 2**

Now victory with her glorious name
has come, bringing joy to well-armed Thebes.
The battle's done—let's strive now to forget
with songs and dancing all night long,
with Bacchus¹² leading us to make Thebes shake.

After Reading

3. Have each group member analyze a different section of the text for organization of ideas, meanings of images, and inclusion of details. Beginning with the person assigned Strophe 1, share your analysis.
4. Select either the Chorus' or the Chorus Leader's dialogue for Strophe 1, Antistrophe 1, Strophe 2, or Antistrophe 2 and write a paraphrase of the section.

Check Your Understanding

Compare your paraphrase with someone who rewrote the same passage. If you notice significant differences and agree with them, revise your work for accuracy and completeness.

¹⁰ **Ares:** god of war

¹¹ **Zeus:** supreme ruler of all the gods on Mount Olympus; also known as the weather god who controlled thunder, lightning, and rain

¹² **Bacchus:** Roman god of wine; equated to Dionysius, the Greek god of wine

Learning Targets

- Analyze a literary text to examine changes in a dynamic character.
- Write a compare/contrast response to a literary text.

Before Reading

1. Remember that one of the elements of Greek drama is the use of masks to portray a character's attitude or emotions. Characters who change and show different emotions throughout a narrative are **dynamic characters**. In contrast, **static characters** do not show significant changes in a narrative.

During Reading

2. As you continue reading *Antigone*, mark the text by highlighting evidence of Creon's attitude or emotions, especially as they change throughout the scene. Complete the graphic organizer.

Lines 184–321

Emotions, Actions	What Creon Says
What Creon Does	What Others Say About Creon

Lines 322–382 (and following stage directions)

Emotions, Actions	What Creon Says
What Creon Does	What Others Say About Creon

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, Visualizing,
Graphic Organizer,
Summarizing

Literary Terms

A **dynamic character** in literature is one who changes in response to the events of a narrative. A **static character** remains the same throughout the narrative.

My Notes

Enter the King

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What does Creon mean by the metaphorical phrase “after much tossing of our ship of state” in Line 185?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is Creon’s definition of an effective ruler?

[The palace doors are thrown open and guards appear at the doors]

180 CHORUS LEADER But here comes Creon, new king of our land, son of Menoikeos. Thanks to the gods, who’ve brought about our new good fortune. What plan of action does he have in mind? What’s made him hold this special meeting, with elders summoned by a general call?

[Enter Creon from the palace]

190 CREON Men, after much tossing of our ship of state, the gods have safely set things right again. Of all the citizens I’ve summoned you, because I know how well you showed respect for the eternal power of the throne, first with Laius and again with Oedipus, once he restored our city. When he died, you stood by his children, firm in loyalty. Now his sons have perished in a single day, killing each other with their own two hands, a double slaughter, stained with brother’s blood.

200 And so I have the throne, all royal power, for I’m the one most closely linked by blood to those who have been killed. It’s impossible to really know a man, to know his soul, his mind and will, before one witnesses his skill in governing and making laws. For me, a man who rules the entire state and does not take the best advice there is, but through fear keeps his mouth forever shut, such a man is the very worst of men—and always will be. And a man who thinks more highly of a friend than of his country, well, he means nothing to me. Let Zeus know, the god who always watches everything,

210 I would not stay silent if I saw disaster moving here against the citizens, a threat to their security. For anyone who acts against the state, its enemy, I’d never make my friend. For I know well our country is a ship which keeps us safe, and only when it sails its proper course do we make friends. These are the principles I’ll use in order to protect our state.

220 That’s why I’ve announced to all citizens my orders for the sons of Oedipus—Eteocles, who perished in the fight to save our city, the best and bravest of our spearmen, will have his burial, with all those purifying rituals which accompany the noblest corpses, as they move below. As for his brother—that Polyneices, who returned from exile,

230 eager to wipe out in all-consuming fire
his ancestral city and its native gods,
keen to seize upon his family's blood
and lead men into slavery—for him,
the proclamation in the state declares
he'll have no burial mound, no funeral rites,
and no lament. He'll be left unburied,
his body there for birds and dogs to eat,
a clear reminder of his shameful fate.
That's my decision. For I'll never act
to respect an evil man with honours
in preference to a man who's acted well.

240 Anyone who's well disposed towards our state,
alive or dead, that man I will respect.
CHORUS LEADER Son of Menoikeos, if that's your will
for this city's friends and enemies,
it seems to me you now control all laws
concerning those who've died and us as well—
the ones who are still living.

CREON See to it then, and act as guardians of what's been
proclaimed.

CHORUS Give that task to younger men to deal with.

CREON There are men assigned to oversee the corpse.

250 CHORUS LEADER Then what remains that you would have us do?
CREON Don't yield to those who contravene¹³ my orders.
CHORUS LEADER No one is such a fool that he loves death.
CREON Yes, that will be his full reward, indeed.
And yet men have often been destroyed
because they hoped to profit in some way.

[Enter a guard, coming towards the palace]

GUARD My lord, I can't say I've come out of breath
by running here, making my feet move fast.
Many times I stopped to think things over—
and then I'd turn around, retrace my steps.
260 My mind was saying many things to me,
"You fool, why go to where you know for sure
your punishment awaits?"—"And now, poor man,
why are you hesitating yet again?
If Creon finds this out from someone else,
how will you escape being hurt?" Such matters
kept my mind preoccupied. And so I went,
slowly and reluctantly, and thus made
a short road turn into a lengthy one.
But then the view that I should come to you
won out. If what I have to say is nothing,
270 I'll say it nonetheless. For I've come here

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What justification does Creon give for treating the brothers so differently after their deaths?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

In Line 253, Creon adds to the edict. What punishment should one expect if he or she were to defy Creon, and what does this say about Creon?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the guard's explanation for why it took him so long to report the news to Creon?

¹³ **contravene:** oppose, or act contrary to

Enter the King

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is suspicious and confusing about the corpse's burial?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Explain the hyperbole in Lines 306–307. What emotion does this exaggerated imagery imply?

	CREON	clinging to the hope that I'll not suffer anything that's not part of my destiny.
	GUARD	What's happening that's made you so upset?
	CREON	I want to tell you first about myself. I did not do it. And I didn't see the one who did. So it would be unjust if I should come to grief.
	CREON	You hedge ¹⁴ so much. Clearly you have news of something ominous.
280	GUARD	Yes. Strange things that make me pause a lot.
	CREON	Why not say it and then go—just leave.
	GUARD	All right, I'll tell you. It's about the corpse. Someone has buried it and disappeared, after spreading thirsty dust onto the flesh and undertaking all appropriate rites.
	CREON	What are you saying? What man would dare this?
	GUARD	I don't know. There was no sign of digging, no marks of any pick axe or a mattock. The ground was dry and hard and very smooth, without a wheel track. Whoever did it left no trace. When the first man on day watch revealed it to us, we were all amazed. The corpse was hidden, but not in a tomb. It was lightly covered up with dirt, as if someone wanted to avert a curse. There was no trace of a wild animal or dogs who'd come to rip the corpse apart. Then the words flew round among us all, with every guard accusing someone else.
290		We were about to fight, to come to blows—no one was there to put a stop to it. Every one of us was responsible, but none of us was clearly in the wrong. In our defence we pleaded ignorance. Then we each stated we were quite prepared to pick up red-hot iron, walk through flames, or swear by all the gods that we'd not done it, we'd no idea how the act was planned, or how it had been carried out. At last, when all our searching had proved useless, one man spoke up, and his words forced us all to drop our faces to the ground in fear. We couldn't see things working out for us, whether we agreed or disagreed with him. He said we must report this act to you—we must not hide it. And his view prevailed. I was the unlucky man who won the prize,
300		
310		

¹⁴ **hedge:** avoid giving a clear response

320

CHORUS LEADER

the luck of the draw. That's why I'm now here,
not of my own free will or by your choice.
I know that—for no one likes a messenger
who comes bearing unwelcome news with him.

CREON

My lord, I've been wondering for some time now—
could this act not be something from the gods?

330

Stop now—before what you're about to say
enrages me completely and reveals
that you're not only old but stupid, too.
No one can tolerate what you've just said,
when you claim gods might care about this corpse.

340

Would they pay extraordinary honours
and bury as a man who'd served them well,
someone who came to burn their offerings,
their pillared temples, to torch their lands
and scatter all its laws? Or do you see
gods paying respect to evil men? No, no.
For quite a while some people in the town
have secretly been muttering against me.
They don't agree with what I have decreed.
They shake their heads and have not kept their necks
under my yoke, as they are duty bound to do
if they were men who are content with me.
I well know that these guards were led astray—
such men urged them to carry out this act
for money. To foster evil actions,
to make them commonplace among all men,
nothing is as powerful as money.

350

It destroys cities, driving men from home.
Money trains and twists the minds in worthy men,
so they then undertake disgraceful acts.
Money teaches men to live as scoundrels,
familiar with every profane¹⁵ enterprise.
But those who carry out such acts for cash
sooner or later see how for their crimes
they pay the penalty. For if great Zeus
still has my respect, then understand this—

360

I swear to you on oath—unless you find
the one whose hands really buried him,
unless you bring him here before my eyes,
then death for you will never be enough.
No, not before you're hung up still alive
and you confess to this gross, violent act.
That way you'll understand in future days,
when there's a profit to be gained from theft,
you'll learn that it's not good to be in love
with every kind of monetary gain.
You'll know more men are ruined than are saved
when they earn profits from dishonest schemes.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Compare and contrast Creon's attitude towards the Chorus in Lines 324–340 to his previous speech at the start of this scene (Lines 189–212). How and why has his tone shifted?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is Creon saying in his speech about money (Lines 341–366)? How does this speech help develop his character?

¹⁵ **profane:** vulgar or improper

Enter the King

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Has the guard's tone or character changed at all since the beginning of the play? How would you describe his tone and character?

- GUARD Do I have your permission to speak now, or do I just turn around and go away?
- CREON But I find your voice so irritating—don't you realize that?
- 370 GUARD Where does it hurt? Is it in your ears or in your mind?
- CREON Why try to question where I feel my pain?
- GUARD The man who did it—he upsets your mind. I offend your ears.
- CREON My, my, it's clear to see it's natural for you to chatter on.
- GUARD Perhaps. But I never did this.
- CREON This and more—you sold your life for silver.
- GUARD How strange and sad when the one who sorts this out gets it all wrong.
- 280 CREON Well, enjoy your sophisticated views. But if you don't reveal to me who did this, you'll just confirm how much your treasonous gains have made you suffer.

[Exit Creon back into the palace. The doors close behind him]

- GUARD Well, I hope he's found. That would be best. But whether caught or not—and that's something sheer chance will bring about—you won't see me coming here again. This time, against all hope and expectation, I'm still unhurt. I owe the gods great thanks.

[Exit the Guard away from the palace]

SECOND ODE

- CHORUS—**Strophe 1**
- 390 There are many strange and wonderful things, but nothing more strangely wonderful than man. He moves across the white-capped ocean seas blasted by winter storms, carving his way under the surging waves engulfing him. With his teams of horses he wears down the unwearied and immortal earth, the oldest of the gods, harassing her, as year by year his ploughs move back and forth.
- Antistrophe 1**
- 400 He snares the light-winged flocks of birds, herds of wild beasts, creatures from deep seas, trapped in the fine mesh of his hunting nets. O resourceful man, whose skill can overcome ferocious beasts roaming mountain heights. He curbs the rough-haired horses with his bit and tames the inexhaustible mountain bulls, setting their savage necks beneath his yoke.

Conflicting Motivations

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Oral Reading, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Diffusing, Drafting

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze different characters’ conflicting motivations.
- Evaluate how the interaction of complex characters advances a plot or develops a theme.

Before Reading

1. Before you read the next section, use the graphic organizer below to review Antigone’s and Creon’s underlying motivations.

Antigone	Creon
Concern about the burial of Polyneices:	
Attitude about the power of the gods:	

2. Up to this point in the play, the drama’s two main characters have not been on stage at the same time. What is the effect of Sophocles’ choice to not have the two main characters interact on the stage at this point in the plot? Predict how you think the plot will unfold when Antigone and Creon are together on the stage.

3. Use your notes to draft a statement about how the conflict between Antigone and Creon conveys a theme related to justice.

4. Predict how the interaction of these two characters will advance the plot of the play.

During Reading

5. As you read the following scene, mark the text for evidence of each character’s motivations and beliefs. Work with your group to record and analyze your textual evidence in the graphic organizer below.

Textual Evidence: What the Character Says	Analysis: What Motivates the Character
<p>Guard: She just kept standing there, denying nothing. That made me happy—though it was painful, too. For it’s a joy escaping troubles which affect oneself, but painful to bring evil on one’s friends. But all that is of less concern to me than my own safety. (Lines 491–497)</p>	
<p>Creon:</p>	
<p>Antigone:</p>	
<p>Ismene:</p>	

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My Notes

Conflicting Motivations

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

In Lines 439–450, what are the Guard’s feelings about his return to speak to Creon? Why does he refer to himself as “the lucky man” in Line 447?

[Enter the Guard, with Antigone.]

425 CHORUS LEADER What’s this? I fear some omen from the gods.
I can’t deny what I see here so clearly—
that young girl there—it’s Antigone.
Oh you poor girl, daughter of Oedipus,
child of a such a father, so unfortunate,
430 what’s going on? Surely they’ve not brought you here
because you’ve disobeyed the royal laws,
because they’ve caught you acting foolishly?

GUARD This here’s the one who carried out the act.
We caught her as she was burying the corpse.
Where’s Creon?

[The palace doors open. Enter Creon with attendants]

CHORUS LEADER He’s coming from the house—and just in time.
CREON Why have I come “just in time”?
What’s happening? What is it?

GUARD My lord,
human beings should never take an oath
there’s something they’ll not do—for later thoughts
contradict what they first meant. I’d have sworn
440 I’d not soon venture here again. Back then,
the threats you made brought me a lot of grief.
But there’s no joy as great as what we pray for
against all hope. And so I have come back,
breaking that oath I swore. I bring this girl,
captured while she was honouring the grave.
This time we did not draw lots. No. This time
I was the lucky man, not someone else.
And now, my lord, take her for questioning.
Convict her. Do as you wish. As for me,
by rights I’m free and clear of all this trouble.

450 CREON This girl here—how did you catch her? And where?
GUARD She was burying that man. Now you know
all there is to know.

CREON Do you understand just what you’re saying? Are
your words the truth?

GUARD We saw this girl giving that dead man’s corpse
full burial rites—an act you’d made illegal.
Is what I say simple and clear enough?

CREON How did you see her, catch her in the act?

460 GUARD It happened this way. When we got there,
after hearing those awful threats from you,
we swept off all the dust covering the corpse,
so the damp body was completely bare.
Then we sat down on rising ground up wind,
to escape the body’s putrid rotting stench.
We traded insults just to stay awake,

470

in case someone was careless on the job.
That's how we spent the time right up 'til noon,
when the sun's bright circle in the sky
had moved half way and it was burning hot.
Then suddenly a swirling windstorm came,
whipping clouds of dust up from the ground,
filling the plain—some heaven-sent trouble.
In that level place the dirt storm damaged
all the forest growth, and the air around
was filled with dust for miles. We shut our mouths
and just endured this scourge sent from the gods.
A long time passed. The storm came to an end.
That's when we saw the girl. She was shrieking—
a distressing painful cry, just like a bird
who's seen an empty nest, its fledglings gone.
That's how she was when she saw the naked corpse.
She screamed out a lament, and then she swore,
calling evil curses down upon the ones
who'd done this. Then right away her hands
threw on the thirsty dust. She lifted up
a finely made bronze jug and then three times
poured out her tributes to the dead.
When we saw that, we rushed up right away
and grabbed her. She was not afraid at all.
We charged her with her previous offence
as well as this one. She just kept standing there,
denying nothing. That made me happy—
though it was painful, too. For it's a joy
escaping troubles which affect oneself,
but painful to bring evil on one's friends.
But all that is of less concern to me
than my own safety.

480

490

CREON

You there—you with your face
bent down towards the ground, what do you say?
Do you deny you did this or admit it?

500

ANTIGONE

I admit I did it. I won't deny that.

CREON *[to the Guard]*

You're dismissed—go where you want. You're free—
no serious charges made against you.

[Exit the Guard. Creon turns to interrogate Antigone]

Tell me briefly—not in some lengthy speech—
were you aware there was a proclamation
forbidding what you did?

ANTIGONE

I'd heard of it. How could I not? It was public
knowledge.

CREON

And yet you dared to break those very laws?

ANTIGONE

Yes. Zeus did not announce those laws to me.
And Justice living with the gods below

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Why is the windstorm significant in terms of the plot of the play? What explanation does the Guard give for its cause?

Conflicting Motivations

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

In Lines 508–518, Antigone clearly states her rationale for acting against Creon’s proclamation. What is her reasoning?

WORD CONNECTIONS

Multiple Meanings

The word “passionate” has several meanings relating to one idea: having or showing strong emotions. Diffuse the nuances, or variations in tone or meaning, of this word. Which meaning is most accurate for the context used in Line 535?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the meaning of the metaphors Creon uses in Lines 538–542? What do they say about Creon’s expectations as a ruler?

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

Contra- is a commonly used prefix, meaning “against.” A common root word is *venire* or *vene*, meaning “to come.” These two word parts together explain the meaning of “contravening” in Line 545.

510

sent no such laws for men. I did not think anything which you proclaimed strong enough to let a mortal override the gods and their unwritten and unchanging laws. They’re not just for today or yesterday, but exist forever, and no one knows where they first appeared. So I did not mean to let a fear of any human will lead to my punishment among the gods.

520

I know all too well I’m going to die—how could I not?—it makes no difference what you decree. And if I have to die before my time, well, I count that a gain. When someone has to live the way I do, surrounded by so many evil things, how can she fail to find a benefit in death? And so for me meeting this fate won’t bring any pain. But if I’d allowed my own mother’s dead son to just lie there, an unburied corpse, then I’d feel distress. What’s going on here does not hurt me at all. If you think what I’m doing now is stupid, perhaps I’m being charged with foolishness by someone who’s a fool.

530

CHORUS LEADER

It’s clear enough the spirit in this girl is passionate—her father was the same. She has no sense of compromise in times of trouble.

CREON [*to the Chorus Leader*]

540

But you should know the most obdurate¹⁶ wills are those most prone to break. The strongest iron tempered in the fire to make it really hard—that’s the kind you see most often shatter. I’m well aware the most tempestuous horses are tamed by one small bit. Pride has no place in anyone who is his neighbour’s slave. This girl here was already very insolent in contravening laws we had proclaimed. Here she again displays her proud contempt—having done the act, she now boasts of it. She laughs at what she’s done. Well, in this case, if she gets her way and goes unpunished, then she’s the man here, not me. No. She may be my sister’s child, closer to me by blood than anyone belonging to my house who worships Zeus Herkeios¹⁷ in my home, but she’ll not escape my harshest punishment—

550

¹⁶ **obdurate:** hardhearted or inflexible

¹⁷ **Zeus Herkeios:** refers to an altar where sacrifices and libations were offered to Zeus; Zeus was the Divine protector of the house and the fence surrounding it; *herkos* means fence in Greek

her sister, too, whom I accuse as well.
She had an equal part in all their plans
to do this burial. Go summon her here.
I saw her just now inside the palace,
her mind out of control, some kind of fit.

[Exit attendants into the palace to fetch Ismene]

560

When people hatch their mischief in the dark
their minds often convict them in advance,
betraying their treachery. How I despise
a person caught committing evil acts
who then desires to glorify the crime.

ANTIGONE

Take me and kill me—what more do you want?

CREON

Me? Nothing. With that I have everything.

ANTIGONE

Then why delay? There's nothing in your words
that I enjoy—may that always be the case!
And what I say displeases you as much.

570

But where could I gain greater glory
than setting my own brother in his grave?
All those here would confirm this pleases them
if their lips weren't sealed by fear—being king,
which offers all sorts of various benefits,
means you can talk and act just as you wish.

CREON

In all of Thebes, you're the only one
who looks at things that way.

ANTIGONE

They share my views, but they keep their mouths
shut just for you.

CREON

These views of yours—so different from the rest—
don't they bring you any sense of shame?

580

ANTIGONE

No—there's nothing shameful in honouring
my mother's children.

CREON

You had a brother killed fighting for the other side.

ANTIGONE

Yes—from the same mother and father, too.

CREON

Why then give tributes which insult his name?

ANTIGONE

But his dead corpse won't back up what you say.

CREON

Yes, he will, if you give equal honours
to a wicked man.

ANTIGONE

But the one who died was not some slave—it was
his own brother.

590

CREON

Who was destroying this country—the other one
went to his death defending it.

ANTIGONE

That may be, but Hades¹⁸ still desires equal rites
for both.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

In Lines 576–580, what key point do Creon and Antigone disagree on? Which one do you think is correct?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Consider the juxtaposition of Lines 597–598. What do these brief statements by Antigone and Creon reveal about why these two characters are in such strong opposition?

¹⁸ **Hades:** King of the Underworld and god of the dead

Conflicting Motivations

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How and why has Ismene's attitude changed since the beginning of the play?

	CREON	A good man does not wish what we give him to be the same an evil man receives.
	ANTIGONE	Who knows? In the world below perhaps such actions are no crime.
	CREON	An enemy can never be a friend, not even in death.
	ANTIGONE	But my nature is to love. I cannot hate.
600	CREON	Then go down to the dead. If you must love, love them. No woman's going to govern me—no, no—not while I'm still alive.
	<i>[Enter two attendants from the house bringing Ismene to Creon]</i>	
	CHORUS LEADER	Ismene's coming. There—right by the door. She's crying. How she must love her sister! From her forehead a cloud casts its shadow down across her darkly flushing face—and drops its rain onto her lovely cheeks.
610	CREON	You there—you snake lurking in my house, sucking out my life's blood so secretly. I'd no idea I was nurturing two pests, who aimed to rise against my throne. Come here. Tell me this—do you admit you played your part in this burial, or will you swear an oath you had no knowledge of it?
	ISMENE	I did it—I admit it, and she'll back me up. So I bear the guilt as well.
	ANTIGONE	No, no—justice will not allow you to say that. You didn't want to. I didn't work with you.
	ISMENE	But now you're in trouble, I'm not ashamed of suffering, too, as your companion.
620	ANTIGONE	Hades and the dead can say who did it—I don't love a friend whose love is only words.
	ISMENE	You're my sister. Don't dishonour me. Let me respect the dead and die with you.
	ANTIGONE	Don't try to share my death or make a claim to actions which you did not do. I'll die—and that will be enough.
	ISMENE	But if you're gone, what is there in life for me to love?
	ANTIGONE	Ask Creon. He's the one you care about.
	ISMENE	Why hurt me like this? It doesn't help you.
630	ANTIGONE	If I am mocking you, it pains me, too.
	ISMENE	Even now is there some way I can help?
	ANTIGONE	Save yourself. I won't envy your escape.
	ISMENE	I feel so wretched leaving you to die.

ANTIGONE But you chose life—it was my choice to die.

ISMENE But not before I'd said those words just now.

ANTIGONE Some people may approve of how you think—others will believe my judgment's good.

ISMENE But the mistake's the same for both of us.

640 ANTIGONE Be brave. You're alive. But my spirit died some time ago so I might help the dead.

CREON I'd say one of these girls has just revealed how mad she is—the other's been that way since she was born.

ISMENE My lord, whatever good sense people have by birth no longer stays with them once their lives go wrong—it abandons them.

CREON In your case, that's true, once you made your choice to act in evil ways with wicked people.

ISMENE How could I live alone, without her here?

CREON Don't speak of her being here. Her life is over.

650 ISMENE You're going to kill your own son's bride?

CREON Why not? There are other fields for him to plough.

ISMENE No one will make him a more loving wife than she will.

CREON I have no desire my son should have an evil wife.

ANTIGONE Dearest Haemon, how your father wrongs you.

CREON I've had enough of this—you and your marriage.

ISMENE You really want that? You're going to take her from him?

CREON No, not me. Hades is the one who'll stop the marriage.

CHORUS LEADER So she must die—that seems decided on.

660 CREON Yes—for you and me the matter's closed.

[Creon turns to address his attendants]

No more delay. You slaves, take them inside. From this point on they must act like women and have no liberty to wander off. Even bold men run when they see Hades coming close to them to snatch their lives.

[The attendants take Antigone and Ismene into the palace, leaving Creon and the Chorus on stage]

THIRD ODE

CHORUS—Strophe 1

Those who live without tasting evil

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What key information does Ismene reveal in Line 650, and how does Creon respond? Why?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

In the central metaphor of Strophe 1, what is represented by the ocean? The black sand? The cliffs?

Conflicting Motivations

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Whose side, Antigone's or Creon's, does Chorus seem to support in their argument?

670

have happy lives—for when the gods
shake a house to its foundations,
then inevitable disasters strike,

falling upon whole families,
just as a surging ocean swell
running before cruel Thracian winds
across the dark trench of the sea
churns up the deep black sand
and crashes headlong on the cliffs,
which scream in pain against the wind.

Antistrophe 1

680

I see this house's age-old sorrows,
the house of Labdakos¹⁹ children,
sorrows falling on the sorrows of the dead,
one generation bringing no relief
to generations after it—some god
strikes at them—on and on without an end.
For now the light which has been shining
over the last roots of Oedipus' house
is being cut down with a bloody knife
belonging to the gods below—
for foolish talk and frenzy in the soul.

Strophe 2

690

Oh Zeus, what human trespasses
can check your power? Even Sleep,
who casts his nets on everything,
cannot master that—nor can the months,
the tireless months the gods control.
A sovereign who cannot grow old,
you hold Olympus as your own,
in all its glittering magnificence.
From now on into all future time,
as in the past, your law holds firm.
It never enters lives of human beings
in its full force without disaster.

700

Antistrophe 2

Hope ranging far and wide brings comfort
to many men—but then hope can deceive,
delusions born of volatile desire.
It comes upon the man who's ignorant
until his foot is seared in burning fire.
Someone's wisdom has revealed to us
this famous saying—sometimes the gods
lure a man's mind forward to disaster,
and he thinks evil's something good.
But then he lives only the briefest time
free of catastrophe.

¹⁹ Labdakos: father to Laius, grandfather to Oedipus

After Reading

6. Revisit your prediction about how the plot would unfold as Creon and Antigone confronted each other on stage. Describe the interaction between the two of them and their differing motivations.

Language and Writer’s Craft: Consulting a Style Manual

Careful writers not only learn the art of writing; they also learn the mechanics. One way to do that is to consult style manuals about questions of usage. Many different manuals exist. Following are a few that you may find helpful. Check with your teacher to see whether she or he has a preference for the style manual that you use.

- Chicago Manual of Style
- Elements of Style
- MLA Handbook
- MLA Style Manual
- New York Times Manual
- Oxford Guide to Style/New Hart’s Rules
- Turabian

In addition to this list, there are many online resources that are useful, including Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab. Research other possible online sources and bookmark them for future reference.

Check Your Understanding

Expository Writing Prompt: Identify two characters in the scene you read that have conflicting motivations and explain how their interactions advance the plot or develop a theme. Be sure to:

- Write a topic sentence that identifies two characters with conflicting motivations.
- Include textual evidence for both characters that illustrates each character’s motivation.
- Comment on the conflict between the two characters and how it advances the plot or develops a theme.
- Refer to a style manual to ensure that your writing and editing follow accepted guidelines.

My Notes

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Outlining, Marking the Text,
Drafting

My Notes

Literary Terms

A **foil** is a minor character whose actions or thoughts are juxtaposed with those of a major character in order to highlight key attributes of the major character.

Learning Targets

- Analyze how a minor character can serve as a foil to a major character.
- Create a working outline for an essay analyzing a character foil.

Before Reading

1. Consider the three characters who have interacted with Creon so far. How was each one different from Creon?

Guard:

Antigone:

Ismene:

2. Which of these characters do you think has served as the strongest **foil** for Creon? How did this foil help develop and highlight Creon's character?

During Reading

3. Use two different colors to mark the text as follows:

- Use one color to highlight evidence of Haemon's character as it is revealed by his words, thoughts, and actions.
- Use another color to highlight Creon's character traits that are revealed or emphasized through his interactions with Haemon.

[The palace doors open]

710 CHORUS LEADER

Here comes Haemon,
your only living son. Is he grieving
the fate of Antigone, his bride,
bitter that his marriage hopes are gone?

CREON

We'll soon find out—more accurately
than any prophet here could indicate.

[Enter Haemon from the palace]

My son, have you heard the sentence that's
been passed
upon your bride? And have you now come here
angry at your father? Or are you loyal to me,
on my side no matter what I do?

720 HAEMON

Father, I'm yours. For me your judgments
and the ways you act on them are good—
I shall follow them. I'll not consider
any marriage a greater benefit
than your fine leadership.

CREON

730

Indeed, my son,
that's how your heart should always be resolved,
to stand behind your father's judgment
on every issue. That's what men pray for—
obedient children growing up at home
who will pay back their father's enemies,
evil to them for evil done to him,
while honouring his friends as much as he does.
A man who fathers useless children—
what can one say of him except he's bred
troubles for himself, and much to laugh at
for those who fight against him? So, my son,
don't ever throw good sense aside for pleasure,
for some woman's sake. You understand
how such embraces can turn freezing cold
when an evil woman shares your life at home.

740

What greater wound is there than a false friend?
So spit this girl out—she's your enemy.
Let her marry someone else in Hades.
Since I caught her clearly disobeying,
the only culprit in the entire city,
I won't perjure myself before the state.
No—I'll kill her. And so let her appeal
to Zeus, the god of blood relationships.

750

If I foster any lack of full respect
in my own family, I surely do the same
with those who are not linked to me by blood.
The man who acts well with his household
will be found a just man in the city.
I'd trust such a man to govern wisely
or to be content with someone ruling him.

760

And in the thick of battle at his post
he'll stand firm beside his fellow soldier,
a loyal, brave man. But anyone who's proud
and violates our laws or thinks he'll tell
our leaders what to do, a man like that
wins no praise from me. No. We must obey
whatever man the city puts in charge,
no matter what the issue—great or small,
just or unjust. For there's no greater evil
than a lack of leadership. That destroys
whole cities, turns households into ruins,
and in war makes soldiers break and run away.
When men succeed, what keeps their lives secure
in almost every case is their obedience.
That's why they must support those in control,

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

From Lines 728–738,
summarize Creon's attitude
about children. What does
this say about him as a
father?

An Epic Foil

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Haemon delivers a well-organized and moving argument to Creon in defense of Antigone in Lines 776–819. Identify the rhetorical appeals of ethos, logos, and pathos that he includes in his argument.

770

and never let some woman beat us down.
If we must fall from power, let that come
at some man's hand—at least, we won't be called
inferior to any woman.

CHORUS LEADER

Unless we're being deceived by our old age,
what you've just said seems reasonable to us.

HAEMON

Father, the gods instill good sense in men—
the greatest of all the things which we possess.
I could not find your words somehow not right—
I hope that's something I never learn to do.

780

But other words might be good, as well.
Because of who you are, you can't perceive
all the things men say or do—or their complaints.
Your gaze makes citizens afraid—they can't
say anything you would not like to hear.
But in the darkness I can hear them talk—
the city is upset about the girl.

790

They say of all women here she least deserves
the worst of deaths for her most glorious act.
When in the slaughter her own brother died,
she did not just leave him there unburied,
to be ripped apart by carrion dogs or birds.
Surely she deserves some golden honour?
That's the dark secret rumour people speak.
For me, father, nothing is more valuable
than your well being. For any children,
what could be a greater honour to them
than their father's thriving reputation?
A father feels the same about his sons.

800

So don't let your mind dwell on just one thought,
that what you say is right and nothing else.

A man who thinks that only he is wise,
that he can speak and think like no one else,
when such men are exposed, then all can see
their emptiness inside. For any man,
even if he's wise, there's nothing shameful
in learning many things, staying flexible.
You notice how in winter floods the trees
which bend before the storm preserve their twigs.

810

The ones who stand against it are destroyed,
root and branch. In the same way, those sailors
who keep their sails stretched tight, never easing off,
make their ship capsize—and from that point on
sail with their rowing benches all submerged.
So end your anger. Permit yourself to change.
For if I, as a younger man, may state
my views, I'd say it would be for the best
if men by nature understood all things—
if not, and that is usually the case,
when men speak well, it good to learn from them.

820 CHORUS LEADER My lord, if what he’s said is relevant,
it seems appropriate to learn from him,
and you too, Haemon, listen to the king.
The things which you both said were excellent.

CREON And men my age—are we then going to school
to learn what’s wise from men as young as him?

HAEMON There’s nothing wrong in that. And if I’m young,
don’t think about my age—look at what I do.

CREON And what you do—does that include this,
honouring those who act against our laws?

830 HAEMON I would not encourage anyone
to show respect to evil men.

CREON And her—
is she not suffering from the same disease?

HAEMON The people here in Thebes all say the same—
they deny she is.

CREON So the city now
will instruct me how I am to govern?

HAEMON Now you’re talking like someone far too young.
Don’t you see that?

CREON Am I to rule this land
at someone else’s whim or by myself?

HAEMON A city which belongs to just one man
is no true city.

840 CREON According to our laws,
does not the ruler own the city?

HAEMON By yourself you’d make an excellent king
but in a desert.

CREON It seems as if this boy
is fighting on the woman’s side.

HAEMON That’s true—
if you’re the woman. I’m concerned for you.

CREON You’re the worst there is—you set your judgment up
against your father.

HAEMON No, not when I see
you making a mistake and being unjust.

CREON Is it a mistake to honour my own rule?

850 HAEMON You’re not honouring that by trampling on
the gods’ prerogatives.²⁰

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Creon shows a blindness that comes from his prejudices. What prejudices does Creon reveal here that contribute to his stubborn blindness?

²⁰ prerogatives: exclusive rights or privileges

An Epic Foil

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Whose death (besides Antigone's) do you think is foreshadowed with Line 859: "Then she'll die—and in her death kill someone else"?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

One of the characteristics of a tragic hero is "a good person who is brought down by an 'act of injustice.'" Explain why Creon's choice of death for Antigone is "an act of injustice."

	CREON	You foul creature— you're worse than any woman.
	HAEMON	You'll not catch me giving way to some disgrace.
	CREON	But your words all speak on her behalf.
	HAEMON	And yours and mine— and for the gods below.
	CREON	You woman's slave— don't try to win me over.
	HAEMON	What do you want— to speak and never hear someone reply?
	CREON	You'll never marry her while she's alive.
	HAEMON	Then she'll die—and in her death kill someone else.
860	CREON	Are you so insolent you threaten me?
	HAEMON	Where's the threat in challenging a bad decree?
	CREON	You'll regret parading what you think like this— you—a person with an empty brain!
	HAEMON	If you were not my father, I might say you were not thinking straight.
	CREON	Would you, indeed? Well, then, by Olympus, I'll have you know you'll be sorry for demeaning me with all these insults.
	<i>[Creon turns to his attendants]</i>	
870		Go bring her out— that hateful creature, so she can die right here, with him present, before her bridegroom's eyes.
	HAEMON	No. Don't ever hope for that. She'll not die with me just standing there. And as for you— your eyes will never see my face again. So let your rage charge on among your friends who want to stand by you in this.
	<i>[Exit Haemon, running back into the palace]</i>	
	CHORUS LEADER	My lord, Haemon left in such a hurry. He's angry—in a young man at his age the mind turns bitter when he's feeling hurt.
880	CREON	Let him dream up or carry out great deeds beyond the power of man, he'll not save these girls— their fate is sealed.

CHORUS LEADER Are you going to kill them both?

CREON No—not the one whose hands are clean. You're right.

CHORUS LEADER How do you plan to kill Antigone?

CREON I'll take her on a path no people use,
and hide her in a cavern in the rocks,
while still alive. I'll set out provisions,
as much as piety requires²¹, to make sure
the city is not totally corrupted.
Then she can speak her prayers to Hades,
the only god she worships, for success
avoiding death—or else, at least, she'll learn,
although too late, how it's a waste of time
to work to honour those whom Hades holds.

890

After Reading

4. Write a thesis statement about how Haemon acts as a character foil for Creon. Which of Creon's character traits are highlighted by his interactions with Haemon in this scene?
5. Use an outline to organize your ideas for an essay by identifying supporting ideas for your thesis. Draft an outline of an essay to support your thesis statement. Include the following in your outline:
 - Write topic sentences that support your thesis.
 - For each topic sentence, cite multiple pieces of textual evidence with quotation marks and line numbers.
 - Include commentary that shows how the evidence supports the topic sentence.

Outline of an Essay Analyzing Character Interaction

I. Thesis:

II. Topic Sentence 1:

Textual Evidence with Commentary:

My Notes

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²¹ piety: devotion to religion; fulfillment of religious obligations

An Epic Foil

My Notes

III. Topic Sentence 2:

Textual Evidence with Commentary:

Textual Evidence with Commentary:

Textual Evidence with Commentary:

IV. Topic Sentence 3:

Textual Evidence with Commentary:

Textual Evidence with Commentary:

Textual Evidence with Commentary:

V. Concluding Statement:

Learning Targets

- Analyze choral odes for author’s purpose, literary elements, and theme.
- Present well-reasoned ideas supported with textual evidence in discussion groups.

Before Reading

1. Review the Introduction to Greek Drama notes in Activity 4.7. List the various purposes of the choral odes.

2. Reflect on the first three odes that you have read previously. Complete the graphic organizer on page 291 to analyze the purpose of each ode.

During Reading

3. In this section of the play, the power of love (Eros) is juxtaposed against Antigone’s impending death. As you read the following passage, mark the text for the literary elements below and annotate in the margins with inferences exploring the ancient Greeks’ beliefs about love and death:
 - diction
 - allusions
 - figurative language

CHORUS—Strophe

900

Antistrophe

SECOND ODE

O Eros²², the conqueror in every fight,
Eros, who squanders all men’s wealth,
who sleeps at night on girls’ soft cheeks,
and roams across the ocean seas
and through the shepherd’s hut—
no immortal god escapes from you,
nor any man, who lives but for a day.
And the one whom you possess goes mad.

Even in good men you twist their minds,
perverting them to their own ruin.
You provoke these men to family strife.
The bride’s desire seen glittering in her eyes—
that conquers everything, its power
enthroned beside eternal laws, for there

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Oral Reading, Summarizing,
Marking the Text, Graphic
Organizer

My Notes

²² Eros: god of love and son of Aphrodite

Odes to Love and Death

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Choral Leader says that Antigone is “going to her bridal room” (Line 912). What is this a **euphemism** for, and what is the effect of this euphemism on the scene?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What does Antigone think is the public opinion of her fate? Is this accurate? Why does she have this impression?

the goddess Aphrodite works her will,
whose ways are irresistible.

[Antigone enters from the palace with attendants who are taking her away to her execution]

910 CHORAL LEADER When I look at her I forget my place.
I lose restraint and can't hold back my tears—
Antigone going to her bridal room
where all are laid to rest in death.

COMMOS

ANTIGONE—Strophe 1

920 Look at me, my native citizens,
as I go on my final journey,
as I gaze upon the sunlight one last time,
which I'll never see again—for Hades,
who brings all people to their final sleep,
leads me on, while I'm still living,
down to the shores of Acheron.²³
I've not yet had my bridal chant,
nor has any wedding song been sung—
for my marriage is to Acheron.

CHORUS

930 Surely you carry fame with you and praise,
as you move to the deep home of the dead.
You were not stricken by lethal disease
or paid your wages with a sword.
No. You were in charge of your own fate.
So of all living human beings, you alone
make your way down to Hades still alive.

ANTIGONE—Antistrophe 1

940 I've heard about a guest of ours,
daughter of Tantalus²⁴, from Phrygia—
she went to an excruciating death
in Sipylus²⁵, right on the mountain peak.
The stone there, just like clinging ivy,
wore her down, and now, so people say,
the snow and rain never leave her there,
as she laments. Below her weeping eyes
her neck is wet with tears. God brings me
to a final rest which most resembles hers.

CHORUS

But Niobe²⁶ was a goddess, born divine—
and we are human beings, a race which dies.
But still, it's a fine thing for a woman,

²³ **Acheron:** a river in Hades across which the dead were ferried

²⁴ **Tantalus:** son of Zeus who was punished by being “tantalized” by food and drink that were always just out of his reach

²⁵ **Sipylus:** mountain ruled by Tantalus; location of the weeping stone formation of Niobe

²⁶ **Niobe:** daughter of Tantalus; all her children were killed and she was turned to stone; her rock formation appears to weep tears for her children as it rains

once she's dead, to have it said she shared,
in life and death, the fate of demi-gods.

ANTIGONE—**Strophe 2**

Oh, you are mocking me! Why me—
by our fathers' gods—why do you all,
my own city and the richest men of Thebes,
insult me now right to my face,
without waiting for my death?
Well at least I have Dirce's springs,
the holy grounds of Thebes,
a city full of splendid chariots,
to witness how no friends lament for me
as I move on—you see the laws
which lead me to my rock-bound prison,
a tomb made just for me. Alas!
In my wretchedness I have no home,
not with human beings or corpses,
not with the living or the dead.

950

960

CHORUS

You pushed your daring to the limit, my child,
and tripped against Justice's high altar—
perhaps your agonies are paying back.
some compensation for your father.

ANTIGONE—**Antistrophe 2**

Now there you touch on my most painful thought—
my father's destiny—always on my mind,
along with that whole fate which sticks to us,
the splendid house of Labdakos—the curse
arising from a mother's marriage bed,
when she had sex with her own son, my father.
From what kind of parents was I born,
their wretched daughter? I go to them,
unmarried and accursed, an outcast.
Alas, too, for my brother Polyneices,
who made a fatal marriage and then died—
and with that death killed me while still alive.

970

CHORUS

To be piously devout shows reverence,
but powerful men, who in their persons
incorporate authority, cannot bear
anyone to break their rules. Hence, you die
because of your own selfish will.

980

ANTIGONE—**Epode**²⁷

Without lament, without a friend,
and with no marriage song, I'm being led
in this miserable state, along my final road.

My Notes

²⁷ **epode**: final stanza of the ode; follows the strophe and antistrophe

Odes to Love and Death

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What justification does Antigone give for burying Polyneices when she would not have done this for other family members?

990 CREON
So wretched that I no longer have the right to look upon the sun, that sacred eye. But my fate prompts no tears, and no friend mourns.

1000 ANTIGONE
Don't you know that no one faced with death would ever stop the singing and the groans, if that would help? Take her and shut her up, as I have ordered, in her tomb's embrace. And get it done as quickly as you can. Then leave her there alone, all by herself—she can sort out whether she wants suicide or remains alive, buried in a place like that. As far as she's concerned, we bear no guilt. But she's lost her place living here with us.

1010 ANTIGONE
Oh my tomb and bridal chamber—my eternal hollow dwelling place, where I go to join my people. Most of them have perished—Persephone²⁸ has welcomed them among the dead. I'm the last one, dying here the most evil death by far, as I move down before the time allotted for my life is done. But I go nourishing the vital hope my father will be pleased to see me come, and you, too, my mother, will welcome me, as well as you, my own dear brother. When you died, with my own hands I washed you. I arranged your corpse and at the grave mound poured out libations. But now, Polyneices, this is my reward for covering your corpse. However, for wise people I was right to honour you. I'd never have done it for children of my own, not as their mother, nor for a dead husband lying in decay—no, not in defiance of the citizens. What law do I appeal to, claiming this? If my husband died, there'd be another one, and if I were to lose a child of mine I'd have another with some other man. But since my father and my mother, too, are hidden away in Hades' house, I'll never have another living brother. That was the law I used to honour you. But Creon thought that I was in the wrong and acting recklessly for you, my brother. Now he seizes me by force and leads me here—no wedding and no bridal song, no share in married life or raising children. Instead I go in sorrow to my grave,

1020 ANTIGONE

1030 ANTIGONE

²⁸ **Persephone:** goddess of the underworld; she was abducted by Hades and forced to spend one third of each year there, which is the winter during which nothing blooms or grows

1040 without my friends, to die while still alive.
 What holy justice have I violated?
 In my wretchedness, why should I still look
 up to the gods? Which one can I invoke
 to bring me help, when for my reverence
 they charge me with impiety? Well, then,
 if this is something fine among the gods,
 I'll come to recognize that I've done wrong.
 But if these people here are being unjust
 may they endure no greater punishment
 than the injustices they're doing to me.

CHORUS LEADER The same storm blasts continue to attack
 the mind in this young girl.

CREON Then those escorting her
 will be sorry they're so slow.

ANTIGONE Alas, then,
 those words mean death is very near at hand.

CREON I won't encourage you or cheer you up,
 by saying the sentence won't be carried out.

1050 ANTIGONE O city of my fathers
 in this land of Thebes—
 and my ancestral gods,
 I am being led away.
 No more delaying for me.
 Look on me, you lords of Thebes,
 the last survivor of your royal house,
 see what I have to undergo,
 the kind of men who do this to me,
 for paying reverence to true piety.

[Antigone is led away under escort]

FIFTH ODE

1060 CHORUS—**Strophe 1**

In her brass-bound room fair Danae²⁹ as well
 endured her separation from the heaven's light,
 a prisoner hidden in a chamber like a tomb,
 although she, too, came from a noble line.
 And she, my child, had in her care
 the liquid streaming golden seed of Zeus.
 But the power of fate is full of mystery.
 There's no evading it, no, not with wealth,
 or war, or walls, or black sea-beaten ships.

Antistrophe 1 And the hot-tempered child of Dryas³⁰,
 king of the Edonians, was put in prison,

²⁹ Danae: daughter of a king; Zeus fell in love with her and they had a son, Perseus

³⁰ child of Dryas: Dryas' son, who objected to the worship of Dionysus, was imprisoned and driven mad; later he was blinded by Zeus as additional punishment.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

A martyr is someone who willingly suffers or dies rather than give up his or her causes or beliefs. Do you think that Antigone goes to her death as a martyr? Support your claim by citing textual evidence.

Odes to Love and Death

My Notes

1070

closed up in the rocks by Dionysus³¹,
for his angry mocking of the god.
There the dreadful flower of his rage
slowly withered, and he came to know
the god who in his frenzy he had mocked
with his own tongue. For he had tried
to hold in check women in that frenzy
inspired by the god, the Bacchanalian fire.
More than that—he'd made the Muses angry,
challenging the gods who love the flute.

1080 **Strophe 2**

Beside the black rocks where the twin seas meet,
by Thracian Salmydessos at the Bosphorus,
close to the place where Ares dwells,
the war god witnessed the unholy wounds
which blinded the two sons of Phineus³²,
inflicted by his savage wife—the sightless holes
cried out for someone to avenge those blows
made with her sharpened comb in blood-stained
hands.

Antistrophe 2

1090

In their misery they wept, lamenting
their wretched suffering, sons of a mother
whose marriage had gone wrong. And yet,
she was an offspring of an ancient family,
the race of Erechtheus, raised far away,
in caves surrounded by her father's winds,
Boreas' child, a girl who raced with horses
across steep hills—child of the gods.
But she, too, my child, suffered much
from the immortal Fates.

After Reading

4. After reading the fourth and fifth odes, turn to the graphic organizer on the next page to analyze the purpose of each ode.
5. Use the following questions to guide a group discussion of the ideas in this passage. Provide textual support for your opinions.
 - What attitudes and ideas about love and death are conveyed in this scene?
 - How are these ideas similar to or different from your culture's attitude toward love or death?
 - How do the different characters and their interactions help develop themes related to love and death?

³¹ **Dionysus:** Greek god of wine and son of Zeus

³² **Phineus:** King of Thrace, who imprisoned his first wife Cleopatra; his new wife blinded Cleopatra's two sons out of jealousy.

Purposes of the Choral Odes			
Ode	Summary of Content	Connection to the Previous Scene	Functional Purpose of the Ode
1	Polyneices and his army tried to defeat Thebes at its seven gates; Eteocles and Thebans defended it along with Zeus' power, with brother killing brother.	The ode provides a description of troubles that preceded the play's beginning and adds explanation of Antigone's and Ismene's descriptions of war.	The scene serves as a bridge between Scene 1, in which Antigone and Ismene are introduced and leads to the entrance of Creon.
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Graphic Organizer, Discussion Groups, Drafting

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze the development of a tragic hero over the course of a play.
- Write a character analysis incorporating textual support.

Before Reading

1. Review the characteristics of a tragic hero listed in Activity 4.8. Explain which character in the play so far could be considered a tragic hero. List at least three reasons why the character meets the definition.

2. Work with a partner or small group to complete the first three rows of the graphic organizer on the following page. Find textual evidence to support your analysis of Creon as a tragic hero.

During Reading

3. Work with your group to mark the text for evidence of the following:
 - Creon’s further development as a tragic hero.
 - Traits and actions that portray Teiresias as a foil for Creon.
 - Content and purpose of the Sixth Choral Ode.

Creon as a Tragic Hero	
Characteristics of the Tragic Hero	Where/When Has Creon Demonstrated These Qualities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person of noble stature 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good person who is brought down by an “act of injustice” (hamartia) because he knows no better or believes that a greater good will be served by his actions 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a weakness, a tragic flaw such as pride, quickness to anger, or misjudgment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has free choice that makes his downfall his own fault 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences misfortune that is not entirely deserved 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gains self-knowledge or understanding before his downfall, and therefore experiences redemption 	

My Notes

Tragic Hero

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Teiresias tells Creon that his “luck is once more on fate’s razor edge” (Line 1109). What metaphor does he use in this line, and what should it mean to Creon?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

As a prophet, Teiresias has the power to interpret messages from the gods. What signs has he interpreted, and what does he think they mean?

[Enter Teiresias, led by a young boy]

	TEIRESIAS	Lords of Thebes, we two have walked a common path, one person’s vision serving both of us. The blind require a guide to find their way.
1100	CREON	What news do you have, old Teiresias?
	TEIRESIAS	I’ll tell you—and you obey the prophet.
	CREON	I’ve not rejected your advice before.
	TEIRESIAS	That’s the reason why you’ve steered the city on its proper course.
	CREON	From my experience I can confirm the help you give.
	TEIRESIAS	Then know this— your luck is once more on fate’s razor edge.
1110	CREON	What? What you’ve just said makes me nervous.
	TEIRESIAS	You’ll know—once you hear the tokens of my art. As I was sitting in my ancient place receiving omens from the flights of birds who all come there where I can hear them, I note among those birds an unknown cry— evil, unintelligible, angry screaming. I knew that they were tearing at each other with murderous claws. The noisy wings revealed that all too well. I was afraid. So right away up on the blazing altar I set up burnt offerings. But Hephaestus failed to shine out from the sacrifice— dark slime poured out onto the embers, oozing from the thighs, which smoked and spat, bile was sprayed high up into the air, and the melting thighs lost all the fat which they’d been wrapped in. The rites had failed— there was no prophecy revealed in them. I learned that from this boy, who is my guide, as I guide other men. Our state is sick— your policies have done this. In the city our altars and our hearths have been defiled, all of them, with rotting flesh brought there by birds and dogs from Oedipus’ son, who lies there miserably dead. The gods no longer will accept our sacrifice, our prayers, our thigh bones burned in fire. No bird will shriek out a clear sign to us, for they have gorged themselves on fat and blood from a man who’s dead. Consider this, my son.
1120		
1130		

- 1140 All men make mistakes—that’s not uncommon. But when they do, they’re no longer foolish or subject to bad luck if they try to fix the evil into which they’ve fallen, once they give up their intransigence.³³ Men who put their stubbornness on show invite accusations of stupidity. Make concessions to the dead—don’t ever stab a man who’s just been killed. What’s the glory in killing a dead person one more time? I’ve been concerned for you. It’s good advice. Learning can be pleasant when a man speaks well, especially when he seeks your benefit.
- 1150 CREON Old man, you’re all like archers shooting at me— For you all I’ve now become your target— even prophets have been aiming at me. I’ve long been bought and sold as merchandise among that tribe. Well, go make your profits. If it’s what you want, then trade with Sardis for their golden-silver alloy—or for gold from India, but you’ll never hide that corpse in any grave. Even if Zeus’ eagles should choose to seize his festering body and take it up, right to the throne of Zeus, not even then would I, in trembling fear of some defilement, permit that corpse a burial. For I know well that no man has the power to pollute the gods. But, old Teiresias, among human beings the wisest suffer a disgraceful fall when, to promote themselves, they use fine words to spread around abusive insults.
- 1160 TEIRESIAS Alas, does any man know or think about . . .
- CREON [*interrupting*] Think what? What sort of pithy common thought are you about to utter?
- TEIRESIAS [*ignoring the interruption*] . . . how good advice is valuable—worth more than all possessions.
- CREON I think that’s true, as much as foolishness is what harms us most.
- TEIRESIAS Yet that’s the sickness now infecting you.
- CREON I have no desire to denigrate³⁴ a prophet when I speak.
- TEIRESIAS But that’s what you are doing, when you claim my oracles are false.

My Notes

GRAMMAR & USAGE
Syntax

Study the sentence structure of Lines 1140–1149. Notice the use of complex sentences, followed by the rhetorical question, ending with two short, declarative sentences. The effect of this syntax is to present Teiresias’ reasoned argument at length and then drive his point home with a rhetorical question and punctuated with simple declarations.

³³ **intransigence:** being unwilling to agree or compromise

³⁴ **denigrate:** slander, criticize

Tragic Hero

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What excuse does Creon give for refusing to listen to Teiresias's advice? When has he made this accusation before, and what does this pattern of behavior say about his character?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Creon introduces the metaphor of the archer and the target in Line 1152. How does Teiresias turn this metaphor against Creon, starting in Line 1213?

1180	CREON	The tribe of prophets— all of them—are fond of money.
	TEIRESIAS	And kings? Their tribe loves to benefit dishonestly.
	CREON	You know you're speaking of the man who rules you.
	TEIRESIAS	I know—thanks to me you saved the city and now are in control.
	CREON	You're a wise prophet, but you love doing wrong.
	TEIRESIAS	You'll force me to speak of secrets locked inside my heart.
	CREON	Do it—just don't speak to benefit yourself.
	TEIRESIAS	I don't think that I'll be doing that— not as far as you're concerned.
1190	CREON	You can be sure you won't change my mind to make yourself more rich.
	TEIRESIAS	Then understand this well—you will not see the sun race through its cycle many times before you lose a child of your own loins, a corpse in payment for these corpses. You've thrown down to those below someone from up above—in your arrogance you've moved a living soul into a grave, leaving here a body owned by gods below— unburied, dispossessed, unsanctified. That's no concern of yours or gods above. In this you violate the ones below. And so destroying avengers wait for you, Furies of Hades and the gods, who'll see you caught up in this very wickedness. Now see if I speak as someone who's been bribed. It won't be long before in your own house the men and women all cry out in sorrow, and cities rise in hate against you—all those whose mangled soldiers have had burial rites from dogs, wild animals, or flying birds who carry the unholy stench back home, to every city hearth. Like an archer, I shoot these arrows now into your heart because you have provoked me. I'm angry— so my aim is good. You'll not escape their pain. Boy, lead us home so he can vent his rage on younger men and keep a quieter tongue and a more temperate mind than he has now.
1200		
1210		

[Exit Teiresias, led by the young boy]

1220 CHORUS LEADER My lord, my lord, such dreadful prophecies—
and now he’s gone. Since my hair changed colour
from black to white, I know here in the city
he’s never uttered a false prophecy.

CREON I know that, too—and it disturbs my mind.
It’s dreadful to give way, but to resist
and let destruction hammer down my spirit—
that’s a fearful option, too.

CHORUS LEADER Son of Menoikeos,
you need to listen to some good advice.

CREON Tell me what to do. Speak up. I’ll do it.

1230 CHORUS LEADER Go and release the girl from her rock tomb.
Then prepare a grave for that unburied corpse.

CREON This is your advice? You think I should concede?

CHORUS LEADER Yes, my lord, as fast as possible.
Swift footed injuries sent from the gods
hack down those who act imprudently.

CREON Alas—it’s difficult. But I’ll give up.
I’ll not do what I’d set my heart upon.
It’s not right to fight against necessity.

CHORUS LEADER Go now and get this done. Don’t give the work
to other men to do.

1240 CREON I’ll go just as I am.
Come, you servants, each and every one of you.
Come on. Bring axes with you. Go there quickly—
up to the higher ground. I’ve changed my mind.
Since I’m the one who tied her up, I’ll go
and set her free myself. Now I’m afraid.
Until one dies the best thing well may be
to follow our established laws.

[Creon and his attendants hurry off stage]

SIXTH ODE

CHORUS—**Strophe 1**

1250 Oh you with many names,
you glory of that Theban bride,
and child of thundering Zeus,
you who cherish famous Italy,
and rule the welcoming valley lands
of Eleusian Deo—
O Bacchus—you who dwell
in the bacchants’ mother city Thebes,
beside Ismenus³⁵ flowing streams,
on land sown with the teeth
of that fierce dragon.

³⁵ **Ismenus:** river near Thebes, sacred to Apollo

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

The turning point for Creon begins in Lines 1224–1227. Trace the development of this change in his conversation with Chorus Leader. What characteristic of the tragic hero do these lines illustrate?

Tragic Hero

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Besides being the god of wine, Bacchus was in charge of communication between the dead and the living. He was also the grandson of Cadmus, the founder of Thebes. Why might the chorus address their plea to him on the Sixth Ode?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the Messenger's depiction of Creon fit with the definition of a tragic hero?

1260 Antistrophe 1

Above the double mountain peaks,
the torches flashing through the murky smoke
have seen you where Corcyian nymphs
move on as they worship you

by the Kastalian stream.
And from the ivy-covered slopes
of Nysa's hills, from the green shore
so rich in vines, you come to us,
visiting our Theban ways,
while deathless voices all cry out
in honour of your name, "Evoe."³⁶

1270 Strophe 2

You honour Thebes, our city,
above all others, you and your mother
blasted by that lightning strike.
And now when all our people here
are captive to a foul disease,
on your healing feet you come
across the moaning strait
or over the Parnassian hill.

1280 Antistrophe 2

You who lead the dance,
among the fire-breathing stars,
who guard the voices in the night,
child born of Zeus, oh my lord,
appear with your attendant Thyiads,
who dance in frenzy all night long,
for you their patron, Iacchus.³⁷

[Enter a Messenger]
MESSENGER

All you here who live beside the home
of Amphion and Cadmus—in human life
there's no set place which I would praise or blame.

The lucky and unlucky rise or fall
by chance day after day—and how these things
are fixed for men no one can prophesy.

For Creon, in my view, was once a man
we all looked up to. For he saved the state,
this land of Cadmus, from its enemies.

He took control and reigned as its sole king—
and prospered with the birth of noble children.
Now all is gone. For when a man has lost
what gives him pleasure, I don't include him
among the living—he's a breathing corpse.

Pile up a massive fortune in your home,
if that's what you want—live like a king.

If there's no pleasure in it, I'd not give
to any man a vapour's shadow for it,
not compared to human joy.

1290 CHORUS LEADER

Have you come with news of some fresh trouble
in our house of kings?

³⁶ **Evoe:** similar to hallelujah, a cry of joy shouted by worshipers at festivals

³⁷ **Iacchus:** another name for Dionysus

MESSENGER They're dead—
and those alive bear the responsibility
for those who've died.

CHORUS LEADER Who did the killing?
Who's lying dead? Tell us.

MESSENGER Haemon has been killed.
No stranger shed his blood.

CHORUS LEADER At his father's hand?
Or did he kill himself?

1310 MESSENGER By his own hand—
angry at his father for the murder.

CHORUS LEADER Teiresias, how your words have proven true!

MESSENGER That's how things stand. Consider what comes next.

CHORUS LEADER I see Creon's wife, poor Eurydice—
she's coming from the house—either by chance,
or else she's heard there's news about her son.

[Enter Eurydice from the palace with some attendants]

1320 EURYDICE Citizens of Thebes, I heard you talking,
as I was walking out, going off to pray,
to ask for help from goddess Pallas.
While I was unfastening the gate,
I heard someone speaking of bad news
about my family. I was terrified.
I collapsed, fainting back into the arms
of my attendants. So tell the news again—
I'll listen. I'm no stranger to misfortune.

1330 MESSENGER Dear lady, I'll speak of what I saw,
omitting not one detail of the truth.
Why should I ease your mind with a report
which turns out later to be incorrect?
The truth is always best. I went to the plain,
accompanying your husband as his guide.
Polyneices' corpse, still unlamented,
was lying there, the greatest distance off,
torn apart by dogs. We prayed to Pluto
and to Hecate, goddess of the road,
for their good will and to restrain their rage.
We gave the corpse a ritual wash, and burned
what was left of it on fresh-cut branches.
We piled up a high tomb of his native earth.
Then we moved to the young girl's rocky cave,
the hollow cavern of that bride of death.
From far away one man heard a voice
coming from the chamber where we'd put her

1340



KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What are the key events that the Messenger shares with Eurydice, Creon's wife?

My Notes

Tragic Hero

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Why do you think the Messenger includes such detail in describing these events to Eurydice?

1350

without a funeral—a piercing cry.
He went to tell our master Creon,
who, as he approached the place, heard the sound,
an unintelligible scream of sorrow.
He groaned and then spoke out these bitter words,
“Has misery made me a prophet now?
And am I travelling along a road
that takes me to the worst of all disasters?
I’ve just heard the voice of my own son.
You servants, go ahead—get up there fast.
Remove the stones piled in the entrance way,
then stand beside the tomb and look in there
to see if that was Haemon’s voice I heard,
or if the gods have been deceiving me.”

1360

Following what our desperate master asked,
we looked. In the furthest corner of the tomb
we saw Antigone hanging by the neck,
held up in a noose—fine woven linen.
Haemon had his arms around her waist—
he was embracing her and crying out
in sorrow for the loss of his own bride,
now among the dead, his father’s work,
and for his horrifying marriage bed.

1370

Creon saw him, let out a fearful groan,
then went inside and called out anxiously,
“You unhappy boy, what have you done?
What are you thinking? Have you lost your mind?
Come out, my child—I’m begging you—please come.”
But the boy just stared at him with savage eyes,
spat in his face and, without saying a word,
drew his two-edged sword. Creon moved away,
so the boy’s blow failed to strike his father.

1380

Angry at himself, the ill-fated lad
right then and there leaned into his own sword,
driving half the blade between his ribs.
While still conscious he embraced the girl
in his weak arms, and, as he breathed his last,
he coughed up streams of blood on her fair cheek.
Now he lies there, corpse on corpse, his marriage
has been fulfilled in chambers of the dead.
The unfortunate boy has shown all men
how, of all the evils which afflict mankind,
the most disastrous one is thoughtlessness.

[Eurydice turns and slowly returns into the palace]

CHORUS LEADER

What do you make of that? The queen’s gone back.
She left without a word, good or bad.

MESSENGER

1390

I’m surprised myself. It’s about her son—
she heard that terrible report. I hope
she’s gone because she doesn’t think it right
to mourn for him in public. In the home,
surrounded by her servants, she’ll arrange

a period of mourning for the house.
She's discreet and has experience—
she won't make mistakes.

CHORUS LEADER I'm not sure of that.
To me her staying silent was extreme—
it seems to point to something ominous,
just like a vain excess of grief.

1400 MESSENGER I'll go in.
We'll find out if she's hiding something secret,
deep within her passionate heart. You're right—
excessive silence can be dangerous.

[The Messenger goes up the stairs into the palace. Enter Creon from the side, with attendants. Creon is holding the body of Haemon]

CHORUS LEADER Here comes the king in person—carrying
in his arms, if it's right to speak of this,
a clear reminder that this evil comes
not from some stranger, but his own mistakes.

1410 CREON—Strophe 1 Aaiii—mistakes made by a foolish mind,
cruel mistakes that bring on death.
You see us here, all in one family—
the killer and the killed.
Oh the profanity of what I planned.
Alas, my son, you died so young—
a death before your time.
Aaiii . . . aaiii . . . you're dead . . . gone—
not your own foolishness but mine.

CHORUS LEADER Alas, it seems you've learned to see what's right—
but far too late.

1420 CREON Aaiiii . . . I've learned it in my pain.
Some god clutching a great weight struck my head,
then hurled me onto paths in wilderness,
throwing down and casting underfoot
what brought me joy.
So sad . . . so sad . . .
the wretched agony of human life.

[The Messenger reappears from the palace]

MESSENGER My lord, you come like one who stores up evil,
what you hold in your arms and what you'll see
before too long inside the house.

CREON What's that?
Is there something still more evil than all this?

MESSENGER Your wife is dead—blood mother of that corpse—
slaughtered with a sword—her wounds are very new,
poor lady.

My Notes



WORD CONNECTIONS

Multiple Meanings

The word “vain” has several nuances of meaning. Diffuse the word, and then decide which meaning best fits the context of Line 1398, “Just like a vain excess of grief.” Also, vain is a homonym. What are the differences between “vain” and “vein”? Think about meaning and part of speech.

Tragic Hero

My Notes

CREON—Antistrophe 1

1430

Aaiiii . . . a gathering place for death . . .
no sacrifice can bring this to an end.
Why are you destroying me? You there—
you bringer of this dreadful news, this agony,
what are you saying now? Aaiii . . .
You kill a man then kill him once again.
What are you saying, boy? What news?
A slaughter heaped on slaughter—
my wife, alas . . . she's dead?

MESSENGER

*[opening the palace doors, revealing the body
of Eurydice]*
Look here. No longer is she concealed inside.

CREON

1440

Alas, how miserable I feel—to look upon
this second horror. What remains for me,
what's fate still got in store? I've just held
my own son in my arms, and now I see
right here in front of me another corpse.
Alas for this suffering mother.
Alas, my son.

MESSENGER

Stabbed with a sharp sword at the altar,
she let her darkening eyesight fail,
once she had cried out in sorrow
for the glorious fate of Megareos,³⁸
who died some time ago, and then again
for Haemon, and then, with her last breath,
she called out evil things against you,
the killer of your sons.

1450

CREON—Strophe 2

Aaiii . . . My fear now makes me tremble.
Why won't someone now strike out at me,
pierce my heart with a double bladed sword?
How miserable I am . . . aaiii . . .
how full of misery and pain . . .

MESSENGER

By this woman who lies dead you stand charged
with the deaths of both your sons.

CREON

What about her?
How did she die so violently?

³⁸ **Megareos:** youngest son of Creon and Eurydice; an inexperienced soldier who died in battle

- 1460 MESSENGER She killed herself,
with her own hands she stabbed her belly,
once she heard her son’s unhappy fate.
- CREON Alas for me . . . the guilt for all of this is mine—
it can never be removed from me or passed
to any other mortal man. I, and I alone . . .
I murdered you . . . I speak the truth.
Servants—hurry and lead me off,
get me away from here, for now
what I am in life is nothing.
- 1470 CHORUS LEADER What you advise is good—if good can come
with all these evils. When we face such things
the less we say the better.
- CREON—**Antistrophe 2**
Let that day come, oh let it come,
the fairest of all destinies for me,
the one which brings on my last day.
Oh, let it come, so that I never see
another dawn.
- CHORUS LEADER That’s something for the times ahead.
Now we need to deal with what confronts us here.
1480 What’s yet to come is the concern of those
whose task it is to deal with it.
- CREON In that prayer
I included everything I most desire.
- CHORUS Pray for nothing.
There’s no release for mortal human beings,
not from events which destiny has set.
- CREON Then take this foolish man away from here.
I killed you, my son, without intending to,
and you, as well, my wife. How useless I am now.
I don’t know where to look or find support.
Everything I touch goes wrong, and on my head
1490 fate climbs up with its overwhelming load.
- [The Attendants help Creon move up the stairs into the palace, taking Haemon’s
body with them]*
- CHORUS The most important part of true success
is wisdom—not to act impiously
towards the gods, for boasts of arrogant men
bring on great blows of punishment—
so in old age men can discover wisdom.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What final message does the Chorus deliver, and how could you interpret this as a theme of the play?

Tragic Hero

My Notes

After Reading

4. Complete the graphic organizer at the beginning of the activity, as well as the graphic organizer analyzing odes in Activity 4.14.

Expository Writing Prompt: Consider how Teiresias acts as a foil to highlight Creon's tragic flaws, and how he helps Creon gain the self-knowledge necessary for redemption. Write a response explaining how Teiresias contributes to Creon's development as a tragic hero. Be sure to:

- Include a thesis explaining how Teiresias contributes to Creon's development as a tragic hero.
- Include relevant textual evidence from both characters to show their interaction.
- Provide commentary explaining how Teiresias acts as a foil and helps Creon gain self-knowledge.

Writing a Literary Analysis Essay on Characterization and Theme

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoroughly examines the effect of character interaction on plot or theme accurately analyzes characterization, including another character's role (such as foil) in the development of a tragic hero smoothly integrates relevant textual evidence, including details, quotations, and examples. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examines the effect of character interaction on plot or theme adequately analyzes characterization, including another character's role (such as foil) in the development of a tragic hero includes sufficient textual evidence, including details, quotations, and examples. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confuses the effect of character interaction on plot or theme provides some analysis of characterization and other characters' roles in the development of a tragic hero provides insufficient textual evidence (e.g., details, quotations, examples). 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not examine the effect of character interaction on plot or theme lacks analysis of characterization and other characters' roles in the development of a tragic hero provides inaccurate or no textual evidence (e.g., details, quotations, examples).
Structure	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an effective organizational structure with a logical progression of ideas introduces the topic engagingly, links supporting ideas, and provides a thoughtful conclusion uses appropriate and varied transitions. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate organizational structure with a logical progression of ideas introduces the topic, links supporting ideas, and provides a conclusion uses effective transitions. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an inconsistent organizational structure does not introduce the topic, link supporting ideas, and/or provide a conclusion uses weak, repetitive, or insufficient transitions. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not follow an obvious organizational structure does not introduce the topic, link supporting ideas, and/or provide a conclusion uses few, if any, transitions.
Use of Language	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses precise language and a variety of sentence structures maintains an academic voice and objective tone demonstrates command of conventions with few errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses some precise language and different sentence structures generally maintains an academic voice and objective tone demonstrates adequate command of conventions; few errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, or spelling. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vague language and simple sentences does not establish or maintain an academic voice demonstrates partial command of conventions; errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling interfere with meaning. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses inappropriate language and simple or incomplete sentences does not use academic voice demonstrates little command of conventions; serious errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling confuse meaning.