

***Antigone Study/Discussion Questions***

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer these questions. Keep up as we read the play. Questions will be due 2 or 3 times as we read the play. All will be due at the end of the play.

*Line number is given in front of a question.*

**Prologue:** When Antigone and Ismene talk, 2<sup>nd</sup> column, page 10, this is known as \_\_\_\_\_.

**1<sup>st</sup> Ode (1<sup>st</sup> Ode is also called the Parode):**

112, What creature is Polyneices compared to? =IMAGE

132, Who is “He” who “struck them down”?

**Strophe 2**—Who has died?

150, Whom do they welcome? =PERSONIFICATION; APOSTROPHE

155, Whom do they praise?

**Antistrophe 2**—What is the TONE of the chorus?

**1<sup>st</sup> Episode:**

160+, Creon’s first speech—What is your impression of him as a leader?

174-77, How can we “spot” a good leader?

177-191, What is more important, city or friend?

How does this relate to loyalty?

192-6, Who is buried?

196-204, Who is unburied?

205-8, Why?

214, What do you learn about the Chorus?

\*220, For *what* does Creon think men would go against him?

221+. What is your impression of the Guard?

230-31, Explain.

236, What has the Guard omitted from his story?

238, Explain.

247, What wrong assumption does Creon make?

273-6, Why is it the *Guard* who comes to Creon?

277, NOTE: Greeks would sometimes kill the messenger who brought bad news!

278-9, How has the Chorus changed?

280, What is Creon's reaction to Chorus?

289-92, What does this show?

293-95+; 311-13, What is Creon concerned with in others? He blames *this* for criticism of him. Relate this to modern politics.

307, Who and what does he threaten?

314, What is the Guard's reaction and tone?

319, 321, Note the Guard's points, reactions.

323, Note Creon's mistaken assumption, again.

327, How is Guard like most people (non-heroes)?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Ode:** What is the main topic?

**Strophe 1:** \*332, 336, What two things can "that topic" (see above) do?

**Antistrophe 1:** What is the subtopic (about man) here? What two things can man *use*?

**Strophe 2:** What is the subtopic here? (What do "speech," "temper of mind/cities," "no rain" have in common?)

355: What can't man control?

357, What can he "control"?

**Antistrophe 2:** 363-4, Is the Chorus talking about one thing or two? Explain.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Episode:**

387-8, Why does the Guard return?

398-429, Notice Nature images. (Name some.)

427-29, What is important to the Guard?

438-59, Describe Antigone's speech (give TONE). What is *your* attitude?

438, 442, Give two reasons for her attitude.

453, How does she feel about death?

460-61, Is the Chorus criticizing or complimenting her?

463-5, Note: Sophocles' father was a blacksmith.

465-7, Explain the image.

470-72, Creon gives two reasons Antigone outrages him. What are they?

\*493-4, What important new information enters here?

497, What is "it"?

499, Why is Creon upset?

509-10, Explain the conflict.

514, How has Creon's argument changed?

525, How/why has Ismene changed? (Envy? She's learned Antigone is right? Or what?)

530, What is your reaction? Why does Antigone say this? Pride? Truth? Justice?

Note lines 536, 540, 544.

550-51, Note! Translate to a modern situation.

553, What fails, in a crisis? (What takes over then?)

\*557, What new, important element enters the plot? It will complicate things for Creon.

564, Explain. Is this true?

\*566, Important. What would the Greeks (or we) call this belief?

525-70, Explain the irony.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Ode:**

**Strophe 1:** Power of curse by gods

572, Whose house?

582, Explain how this is still true. (Modern examples)

586-89, Explain how this is still true. (Modern examples)

586-89, Explain the imagery. Death is personified as 2 things.

588, Who is the sapling?

**Antistrophe 1:** futility of trying to end a curse.

**Strophe 2:** power of Zeus; woe in life of man

600, What's the bad news? Is it true?

**Antistrophe 2:** Explain about Hope.

609-12, Whom does this refer to?

\*Note: The Haemon/Creon interchange is very powerful, but Sophocles does not keep Haemon around for other scenes--because of *Unity of Action*.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Episode:**

620-23, Explain and describe your first impression of Haemon. What does he say?  
Why?

626-7, What's important to Creon?

632, Why?

640-41, Is this true? How is "found" ironic?

644-61, 647-8, Do we believe this today, regarding leaders?

651-2, Explain "lawful authority."

657-661; 662. Is this true? (Examples)

664-6, How does this argument change?

667-8, Explain their attitude.

679-81, What important point is made?

690-92, What warning does Haemon give?

692-95, Explain.

698-700; 701-703, Explain the *Images*.

\*705-8, Explain who is the best leader/man, and who is second best.

709-10, What is the Chorus's reaction? What is yours?

Contrast second column, p. 22, and second column, p. 23.

721-24, Note: Sophocles' audience was Athens. What was their form of government?

What was Creon's? (And what city is Creon's?)

726-742, Who has the best lines? Give some "best lines."

748, What does Haemon threaten?

\*In the section you just read, what is Creon like? Why? Does he care for Haemon? Does he take Haemon seriously?

\*757, Something new and important happens here. What? Why? (Because of Chorus, or Haemon, or what?)

759-762, What does Creon do here? Why?

**4<sup>th</sup> Ode:** Whose "love" is discussed? What is *said* about love (Chorus's opinion)?

784+, Note: Chorus is encouraging audience to become emotional

**Commos** (a lament in which one or more of the chief characters and the Chorus sing alternate parts)

**Strophe 1;** 796-800, What is Antigone's attitude now?

801-6, How does the Chorus respond?

**Antistrophe 1;** 807-17, Antigone compares herself to whom? How are they alike? (See footnote)

818-22, What is the Chorus's response?

**Strophe 2;** 823-31, Is her attitude the same?

832-35, Is the Chorus's attitude the same?

**Antistrophe 2;** 836+, What does she blame for her situation? How is that true for all of us?

**Epode,** 861-62, Who does Creon remind you of?

878-79, What does she mean?

881-85, Why would she say this? (Ask in class.)

892, What will she miss?

895-96, Is this a change? (Ask in class.)

905-6, What is the Chorus's attitude?

**\*5<sup>th</sup> ode:** Relate the subtle references (“subliminal cuts”) to Antigone's family.

(*Sophocles practiced psychosomatic medicine* — ask in class.)

What does each of the following make you think of, regarding Antigone, Oedipus, etc.

(things that relate to that family)? Connect☺

916, imprisoned

917, chamber/grave

918, darkness

919, ancient line

921, Fate

924, Nor...deliverance

926, denied his godhead

927, cavern

929, dungeon/So he learned...

930, blindness

932, offending

938, both her children/blinding wound

940, smote the open eyes

942, two sons

943, bewailed

944, children...mother...accursed

947, distant country

950, not even she/safe

951, Fates

**5<sup>th</sup> Episode:**

963, What is augury?

966-68, Who might these birds represent. (See 11.113-124)

977. Who is “him”?

985, Why “men,” not “a man”?

986-89, Who made these same two points earlier?

992, What does “slay the slain” mean? How could a Greek *hurt* another, dead Greek?

994+, In this speech Creon strikes out at Teiresias (like he did it at Haemon) like Oedipus did.

999; 1008, Creon thinks \_\_\_\_\_ is Teiresias’ motivation.

1012, How is this line a good one for democracy (Athens) to hear?

1017, Here Creon is preoccupied with \_\_\_\_\_ again. Why?

1018, Is this more to the point? How does it relate to the preceding line?

1022, As in most Greek plays, anger is about to make this happen! What specific things does Creon mean?

1027-29=

1030-32=

1033-35=

1043, Were Antigone and Haemon telling Creon the truth?

\*1044, What new, important information do we receive? (See footnote.) Why would this be so terrible? Why would Sophocles not tell you until near the end of the play?

1052-54, What two things should Creon learn?

1060-61, What point does he make? What has he learned?

\*1063, What change has occurred?

\*What does the play Antigone have to say about taking advice?

\*1069-70, Explain *Necessity*. How would the Greeks explain it? What might we call it?

1077, Explain “laws that are established.”

**6<sup>th</sup> Ode**—Chorus begs the gods for help, to guard and cleanse the city. Which god?

1102, What problem afflicts Thebes?

### **6<sup>th</sup> Episode:**

1113-17, What message does he bring to them? To us?

1126, What does man need? *Whose* unhappiness is it?

1139-48, Does Eurydice already know about Haemon's death?

1153, Which other play does this remind you of? (You have read it....)

1154-1193, What happens between Haemon and Creon in the cave? How does Antigone die? Haemon? What other couple does this remind you of?

1199-1210, How is suspense built here?

1213, Who is blamed for everything?

### **Epilogue:**

**Strophe 1**—1215, Whom does *Creon* blame? (Explain this line.)

1219, Whom does Creon blame here?

1223, Does “timing” matter? (in life?)

1232, How does Sophocles increase the impact?

### **Antistrophe 1:**

1237, What does implacable mean?

1253, Who is Megareus? (See footnote.) Why are we not told this until now?

### **Strophe 2 & Antistrophe 2:**

1260, Whom does Eurydice blame?

1265, Who takes the blame?

1269, 1274, 1277, What does Creon seem to request?

1275-76, What is given to him instead, and why?

1284-end, What should Creon, and we, learn from all this, according to Sophocles?