

Name: _____ Period: _____
English 10/Hammond

***Antigone* Close Reading Questions: Prologue & Parodos**

Directions: Answer each question THOROUGHLY and in **complete sentences**.

1. Given these introductory scenes, how are Antigone and Ismene portrayed as **character foils**?
2. In lines 46-47, Ismene says, “We are only women, / We cannot fight with men, Antigone!” What does this reveal about gender status in ancient Greece? Is this statement about women still true today? Explain.
3. In line 54, Antigone says to Ismene, “You have made your choice, you can be what you want to be.” What does this reveal about Antigone’s beliefs regarding fate versus free will?
4. Explain Antigone’s **motivation** to defy Creon and see that Polyneices receives a proper burial.
5. Explain Ismene’s **motivation** to respect Creon’s decree.
6. How does the information you already know about this family’s history, as well as the discussion between Antigone and Ismene, **characterize** Creon?
7. Discuss the **conflicts** (both **internal** and **external**) developing so far in the story.
8. At the end of the Parodos, what hopes for the future does the Chorus express? Do you think their hopes will be fulfilled? Why or why not?

Antigone Close Reading Questions:: Scene 1 and Ode 1

Directions: Answer each question THOROUGHLY and in **complete sentences**.

1. What reasons does Creon give for not allowing Polyneices to be buried? Provide a quote from the play.
2. How does the Choragos react to Creon's decision?
3. What news is the Sentry reluctant to deliver to Creon?
4. What attitude toward human beings does the Chorus express in Ode 1?
5. What is your impression of Creon as a leader? Does he appear to be concerned with the common good or do you think he is simply a clever politician scheming to maintain his power? Provide a quote from the play.
6. In Line 113, the Choragos asks Creon, "...can it be that the gods have done this?" Why does this suggestion enrage Creon? What does the suggestion imply?
7. How is **dramatic irony** at work during this scene?
8. What law does Creon champion in this scene, and who supports his view here?

Antigone Close Reading Questions: Scene 2 and Ode 2

Directions: Answer each question THOROUGHLY and in **complete sentences**.

1. What would you say is the greatest force motivating Antigone in this scene – pride, love, or principle? Provide a quote from the play.
2. There is usually only one stage setting in a Greek drama, and important actions often take place offstage. In Scene 2, the Sentry describes a crucial event that we do not witness. What does he compare Antigone to when she discovers that Polyneices' corpse has been unburied? How does this **simile** make you feel about Antigone?
3. In lines 75-76, the Choragos accuses Antigone of being “headstrong, deaf to reason,” and unyielding. Later, Creon calls her behavior “barefaced anarchy.” Could either accusation apply to Creon himself? Who is right, Creon or Antigone?
4. How does Antigone think the citizens of Thebes feel about Creon as a leader? Provide a quote from the play.
5. Why do you think Ismene changes her mind about her brother's burial? Is Antigone justified in rejecting Ismene's support, or is she being too hard on her sister?
6. In Ode 2, the Chorus makes an **allusion**, or reference, to the Oedipus myth that you read before the play. Why does “God's vengeance” loom over the House of Oedipus? What human fault does the Chorus say is responsible for this “curse of heaven”?

Antigone Close Reading Questions: Scene 3 and Ode 3

Directions: Answer each question THOROUGHLY and in **complete sentences**.

1. What is your first impression of Haimon? How does your view of him change as the scene progresses?
2. Describe Haimon's **rhetorical style**. What tools does he use in his attempt to sway Creon's thinking?
3. What **metaphors** does Haimon use to argue that Creon should be more flexible?
4. How do Creon's attitudes towards women seem to influence his decision about Antigone? Provide a quote from the play that displays his attitude.
5. What do you think **motivates** Creon to change his mind about Antigone's punishment?
6. In Ode 3, the Chorus claims that love is Haimon's **motive** in defending Antigone. Can you suggest another motive for his actions? Provide a quote from the play.

Antigone Close Reading Questions: Scene 4 and Ode 4

Directions: Answer each question THOROUGHLY and in **complete sentences**.

1. How does Antigone's **tone** in this scene differ from her tone in earlier scenes? Provide a quote from the play.
2. Has Antigone's **character** changed since the beginning of the play, or is her new tone simply a result of her current circumstances? Explain.
3. Do you agree or disagree with the Chorus's opinion that Antigone is responsible for her own death? Explain.
4. In line 69, Antigone asks that Creon's punishment equal her own. What do you **predict** will happen to Creon? Explain.
5. What does Antigone ask the gods to remember? What **motives** might she have for making this public request?
6. What does Antigone have in common with Danae, Lycurgos, and Cleopatra? Is Sophocles using this ode to condemn Antigone for her pride or to praise her courage? Explain.

Antigone Close Reading Questions: Scene 5, Paean & Exodos

Directions: Answer each question THOROUGHLY and in **complete sentences**.

Scene 5

1. Why is it **ironic** that the prophet Teresias is blind?
2. What mistake does Teresias say Creon has made?
3. What does the prophet **predict** will happen to Creon in lines 70-84?
4. Why do you think Creon finally agrees to free Antigone and bury Polyneices? Provide a quote from the play that reveals his true **motives**.

Paean

5. What is the **Paean** in a Greek play?
6. The Paean is recited AFTER Creon has changed his mind but BEFORE the plot is resolved. At this point in the play, why is it appropriate for the Chorus to call on the god Dionysos to “come with clement feet”? What is the Chorus asking this god to heal?

Exodos

7. What is the **Exodus** in a Greek play?
8. What important comment on **fate vs. free will** is the messenger making in lines 1-15?

9. Who is Eurydice? Why does she say, “Grief and I are no strangers” (line 32)?
10. In lines 32-76 of the Exodos, the Messenger says that Creon buried Polyneices first and then went to free Antigone. How might the events have turned out if Creon had reversed the order of his tasks?
11. The **plot**’s violent **resolution** takes place offstage. What does the Messenger report about Antigone, Haimon, and Eurydice?
12. At the end of this **tragedy**, Eurydice blames Creon for the disastrous turn of events. Creon accepts her curse, saying, “I alone am guilty” (line 121). Is Creon entirely to blame for the play’s outcome? Explain.
13. **Summarize** the Choragos’ point in lines 139-142.
14. How would you describe the central **conflict** in *Antigone*? Is the conflict a clear-cut case of good vs. evil or rather a struggle between opposing views of what is “good”? What position does Sophocles, the author, seem to take regarding the previous question?
15. What is the main **theme** of the play? What does it reveal about human life? Provide a theme statement and quotes from the play (from any section) to support your theme.
16. Why is *Antigone* considered a **tragedy**? Who is the play’s **tragic hero**? What is this character’s **tragic flaw**? Use specifics from the play to support your response.