

Antigone Study Questions

Prologue and Parodos:

1. How are Antigone and Ismene related?
2. Who are the two brothers mentioned in the prologue?
3. How did the two brothers die?
4. What is King Creon's decree?
5. What does Antigone plan to do?
6. What is Ismene's decision regarding the King's decree?
7. What does the Choragos compare Polyneices to in the Parodos?
8. According to the Choragos, what does God hate?

Inference Questions:

1. Why does the play open with a mention of the tragedy of Oedipus?
2. Do Antigone's convictions about burying Polyneices mean that she disliked her other brother, Eteocles? Explain.
3. What are the main differences between Antigone and Ismene, in terms of personality?
4. How might Antigone's defiance be related to her former job – leading Oedipus around the world in his exile?

Scene 1 and Ode 1:

1. Who is the new King of Thebes?
2. What crime has Polyneices committed in the opinion of the king?
3. What news does the sentry bring to Creon?
4. How was it decided which of the sentries would bring the news about Polyneices to Creon?
5. How does Creon believe the act of burying Polyneices was carried out?
6. What does Creon demand that the sentry do?

Inference Questions:

1. Do you think Ismene feels the same way Antigone does about Polyneices, despite her reluctance to do anything? Support.
2. Why do you think Creon seems so preoccupied with revolt and strife? Support.
3. Why do you think the Sentry is afraid to tell Creon that Polyneices has been buried? Are his fears justified?
4. Why does Creon accuse the Sentry of the crime of burying Polyneices?
5. Creon was a very decent man who was not interested in being king in *Oedipus*, how has he changed?

Scene 2 and Ode 2:

1. Who has the sentry captured and brought before King Creon?
2. How did the guards manage to capture Antigone?
3. How did Antigone react to being captured by the sentries?
4. What reason does Antigone give for defying Creon's decree?
5. Who else does Creon have arrested in connection with the crime of burying Polyneices?
6. Why is Antigone angry with Ismene?
7. Besides being Antigone's uncle, how else were Creon and Antigone related?
8. What is to be Antigone's punishment for burying her brother?

Inference Questions:

1. The Sentry who comes to see Creon says, "A man should never be too sure of anything." What else might this statement mean, within the context of the play?
2. Why is Antigone not ashamed when she has to go before Creon and confess?
3. Is Creon's decision to also arrest Ismene a smart move against potential anarchy, or is it merely a vindictive act? Explain.
4. How does Creon say Antigone's act dishonors Eteocles? How does Antigone respond to this?
5. Why does Ismene attempt to assume guilt alongside Antigone? Why doesn't Antigone let her?

Scene 3 and Ode 3:

1. What is Haimon's initial response when his father asks how he feels about the king's decision to execute Antigone?
2. What does Creon say that men pray for?
3. Why is Creon intent on harshly punishing, even family members, all those who break the law?
4. What does Haimon claim is God's crowning gift to man?
5. What does Haimon tell King Creon about the people of Thebes' allegiance to him?
6. Whose point, King Creon's or Haimon's, does the Choragos support?
7. How does the city feel about Antigone's crime?
8. While Creon is ranting at his son, what does the king threaten to do?
9. Describe Creon's death sentence for Antigone.

Inference Questions:

1. According to Haimon, does the city agree with Creon's actions?
2. How does Haimon defend himself against Creon's verbal attack? How does Haimon gradually try to persuade his father?
3. What are the fundamental differences in Creon and Haimon's viewpoints?
4. How is their rift between Creon and Haimon similar to that between Creon and Antigone?

Scene 4 and Ode 4:

1. Whose fate does Antigone compare to her own?
2. What does Antigone beg the people of Thebes to bear witness to?
3. Who does Antigone blame for her terrible misfortune?
4. What does Creon sarcastically say would have man singing forever?

Inference Questions:

1. What is the chorus's attitude toward Antigone? How is this different from earlier in the play?
2. Antigone mentions the curse on her father. Why is it appropriate for her to allude to it at this point in the play?
3. Why do you think the Chorus seems to be siding with Creon in its dialogue with Antigone? Support.
4. What is the possible meaning or connections to other events of locking Antigone into a vault?

Scene 5:

1. What does Teiresias claim that he heard which frightened him?
2. What happened when the prophet began "the rites of burnt-offering at the altar"?

3. What does the prophet claim to be the cause of the gods' reaction to their offerings?
4. What does the prophet claim can be done to repair the evil performed against the gods?
5. What is King Creon's reaction to Teiresias' message?
6. What is it that Creon claims all prophets love?
7. What warning does Teiresias give to King Creon if he refuses to heed the prophecies?
8. What advice does the Choragos give King Creon once Teiresias leaves?
9. How does King Creon react to the advice of the Choragos?

Inference Questions:

1. According to Teiresias, what is the "new calamity" that Creon has brought to Thebes?
2. Creon appears to revere Teiresias the scene opens. How does this change?
3. Creon says of Teiresias, "The generation of prophets has always loved gold." Teiresias responds by saying, "The generation of kings has always loved brass." What does Teiresias's response mean? How does it especially apply to Creon?
4. What does Teiresias predict for Creon? What crime has Creon committed to deserve this?
5. What does the Choragus tell Creon that he must do to prevent this?
6. Why do you think Creon finally changes his mind?

Paeon and Exodos:

1. Who does the messenger claim is "a walking dead man"?
2. How has Teiresias' prophecy that Creon would pay to the gods "flesh of [his] own flesh" come true?
3. Who is Eurydice?
4. What were Creon and the messenger doing when they prayed to Hecate and Pluto?
5. What did King Creon and the messenger do as soon as they finished their tasks regarding Polyneices?
6. Describe what Creon saw when he looked through the crevice into Antigone's tomb.
7. Describe Haimon's reaction when Creon entered Antigone's tomb.
8. What happened after the messenger relayed the news about Haimon and Antigone to Eurydice?

Inference Questions:

1. What two people does the messenger say have died? How have they died? By the time Creon returns, who else has died?
2. What is Creon's attitude at the end of the play?
3. Judging by the final speeches of the play, what do you think is Creon's fatal flaw? What "wisdom" do you think Creon learns?
4. What events which occur in Exodos were foreshadowed earlier in the play?
5. Who do you think are other tragic figures in this play (in terms of Aristotle's definition)? Explain.
6. Specifically explain what the pity and the fear are supposed to be in the play.
7. Explain how fate and free will are conflicting issues in the play.