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

ACTIVITY 4.7

WORD CONNECTIONS

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.
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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Three Adjectives to Describe How You Feel</th>
<th>Why do you feel this way?</th>
<th>What will you do?</th>
<th>Why do you think this is a <em>just</em> response?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ismene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haemon</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chorus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS
Based on the scenarios you read, how does Antigone meet the definition of a Greek tragedy?
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 Polynices.
- 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. Polynices, 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 Polynices 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-nah.
- “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”): Polynices = poly-NI-seez.
- 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-nah.
- 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.
### Trivia Game

**About the Author**
- $200 He was the author of *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*.

**It’s a Tragedy**
- $200 This civilization made tragedy into an art.

**Greek Theater**
- $200 This city was where tragedies were produced as part of a religious festival.

**Antigone and Her Family**
- $200 The other two plays in the series with *Antigone*.

- $400 This is the number of Sophocles’ plays that exist today out of a total of more than 100.

- $400 Downfall, usually ending with destruction or death

- $400 The part of a Greek play usually chanted (or sung) in unison

- $400 The King and Queen of Thebes

- $600 It was the “Golden Age” in ancient Greece.

- $600 Pity and fear, wonder and awe

- $600 Masks with built-in megaphones and platform shoes

- $600 “Your son will kill his father and marry his own mother.”

- $800 This was Sophocles’ age when he won his first drama competition.

- $800 A single flaw in character, or hamartia

- $800 A group of actors that moved and sang together, acting as one character

- $800 Both mother and wife of Oedipus

- $1,000 This was the number of actors Sophocles had in the cast of his plays.

- $1,000 Horrible truth that leads to release

- $1,000 The Greek word for actor

- $1,000 The decree of Creon that begins the action of the play
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?

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

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

[Thebes', 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?

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 Argive army, just last night,
has gone away, I don't know any more
if I've been lucky or face total ruin.

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 treasure 1 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.

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?

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
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.

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 decree, 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.

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.

ISMENE   I’m not disrespecting them. But I can’t act against the state. That’s not in my nature.

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

**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.

**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.

**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?
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.)
CHORUS—Strophe 1a

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 Dirce, 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.

CHORUS—Antistrophe 1a

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 Hephaistos’ 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.

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.

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.
But things turned out not as he’d hoped. Great war god Ares\(^\text{10}\) 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 Zeus\(^\text{11}\) 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.

**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 Bacchus\(^\text{12}\) 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions, Actions</th>
<th>What Creon Says</th>
<th>What Creon Does</th>
<th>What Others Say About Creon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lines 322–382 (and following stage directions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions, Actions</th>
<th>What Creon Says</th>
<th>What Creon Does</th>
<th>What Others Say About Creon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Notes

The palace doors are thrown open and guards appear at the doors.

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

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. 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, 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. 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,
eager to wipe out in all-consuming fire
his ancestral city and its native gods,

230
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 acted well.

240
Anyone who's well disposed towards our state,
avive 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,
I'll say it nonetheless. For I've come here

13 contravene: oppose, or act contrary to
clinging to the hope that I'll not suffer anything that's not part of my destiny.

CREON  What's happening that's made you so upset?

GUARD  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 so much. Clearly you have news of something ominous.

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. 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.

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?

14 hedge: avoid giving a clear response
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.

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

CREON 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. 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. 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 profane 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—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.
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?
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.
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
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 unwearyed and immortal earth, the oldest of the gods, harassing her, as year by year his ploughs move back and forth.

Antistrophe 1
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.
Strophe 2  He’s taught himself speech and wind-swift thought, trained his feelings for communal civic life, learning to escape the icy shafts of frost, volleys of pelting rain in winter storms, the harsh life lived under the open sky.

That’s man—so resourceful in all he does. There’s no event his skill cannot confront—other than death—that alone he cannot shun, although for many baffling sicknesses he has discovered his own remedies.

Antistrophe 2  The qualities of his inventive skills bring arts beyond his dreams and lead him on, sometimes to evil and sometimes to good.

If he treats his country’s laws with due respect and honours justice by swearing on the gods, he wins high honours in his city.

But when he grows bold and turns to evil, then he has no city. A man like that—let him not share my home or know my mind.

After Reading
3. Summarize the main idea for each part of the Second Ode.

4. Consider how Creon portrays two sides of his character at the beginning and at the end of this scene. Describe Creon’s character and cite textual evidence for your interpretation.

Check Your Understanding
Writing Prompt: Write a paragraph that compares and contrasts Creon’s character at the beginning and end of this scene. Is Creon a static or dynamic character? Who is the static character? Be sure to:
• Write a topic sentence that defines the main idea of your paragraph.
• Include textual evidence and commentary.
• Use compare/contrast transitions to link ideas.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antigone</th>
<th>Creon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern about the burial of Polynices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude about the power of the gods:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual Evidence: What the Character Says</th>
<th>Analysis: What Motivates the Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guard:</strong> 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)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creon:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antigone:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ismene:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 such a father, so unfortunate, 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 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.

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?

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,
in case someone was careless on the job. That's how we spent the time right up 'till 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.

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.

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...
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. I know all too well I'm going to die—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.

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]

But you should know the most obdurate\textsuperscript{16} 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 shattered. 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 insolent 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 Herkeios\textsuperscript{17} in my home, but she'll not escape my harshest punishment—

\textsuperscript{16} obdurate: hardhearted or inflexible

\textsuperscript{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.

CREON 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?

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.

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

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

18 Hades: King of the Underworld and god of the dead
CREON
A good man does not wish what we give him to be the same as 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.

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.

[Enter two attendants from the house bringing Ismene to Creon]

CHORUS LEADER
Ismene's coming. There—right by the door. She's crying. How she must love her sister!

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

[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
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

I see this house's age-old sorrows, the house of Labdakos' 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

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.

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
- 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.
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

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.

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.
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.
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,
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. 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. 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. 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. 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.
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?

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.

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?

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

20 prerogatives: exclusive rights or privileges
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.

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.

[Creon turns to his attendants]
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.

[Exit Haemon, running back into the palace]

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.

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.

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.”
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 requires\(^\text{21}\), 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.

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:

\(^{21}\) piety: devotion to religion; fulfillment of religious obligations
An Epic Foil

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

SECOND ODE

CHORUS—Strophe

O Eros, 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.

900

Antistrophe

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

---

22 Eros: god of love and son of Aphrodite
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

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. I've not yet had my bridal chant, nor has any wedding song been sung—for my marriage is to Acheron.

CHORUS 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

I've heard about a guest of ours, daughter of Tantalus, from Phrygia—she went to an excruciating death in Sipylus, 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 Niobe was a goddess, born divine—and we are human beings, a race which dies. But still, it's a fine thing for a woman,
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.

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.

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.

ANTIGONE—Epode

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

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

CREON

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.

ANTIGONE

Oh my tomb and bridal chamber—my eternal hollow dwelling place,
where I go to join my people. Most of them have perished—Persephone 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, Polynices, 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,

---

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.
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.

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

CHORUS—Strophe 1

In her brass-bound room fair Danaë29 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 Danaë: 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.
1070  closed up in the rocks by Dionysus, 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 Phineus, 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  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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ode</th>
<th>Summary of Content</th>
<th>Connection to the Previous Scene</th>
<th>Functional Purpose of the Ode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Polynice and his army tried to defeat Thebes at its seven gates; Eocles and Thebans defended it along with Zeus’ power, with brother killing brother.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>The scene serves as a bridge between Scene 1, in which Antigone and Ismene are introduced and leads to the entrance of Creon.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of the Tragic Hero</th>
<th>Where/When Has Creon Demonstrated These Qualities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A person of noble stature</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Has a weakness, a tragic flaw such as pride, quickness to anger, or misjudgment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has free choice that makes his downfall his own fault</td>
<td>Lines: 1190-1193 1410 1485-1490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiences misfortune that is not entirely deserved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gains self-knowledge or understanding before his downfall, and therefore experiences redemption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
[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.

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.

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.
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. 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.

1150 Learning can be pleasant when a man speaks well, especially when he seeks your benefit.

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 denigrate a prophet when I speak.

TEIRESIAS But that's what you are doing, when you claim my oracles are false.

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
CREON
1180 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.

1200 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.
[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

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

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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?
ACTIVITY 4.15 continued

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?

Above the double mountain peaks,
the torches flashing through the murky smoke
have seen you where Corcyrian 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.”

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.

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.

[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.

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?

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]

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.

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 un lamented,
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
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.” 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. 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. 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 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.

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.

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.

1410 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.

CREON Aaiii . . . 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.
CREON—Antistrophe 1

Aaiii . . . 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

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.

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 solder who died in battle
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.

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.

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
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.
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.
Assignment
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.

Planning and Prewriting: Take time to make a plan for your essay.
- Which character will you choose to contrast with Creon?
- Which of Creon’s character traits were highlighted by his interactions with this character?
- How did this character help develop Creon as a tragic hero?
- How did Creon’s interactions with this character advance the plot or develop a theme?
- How can you draft a thesis that explains the significance of this character’s interactions with Creon?
- What textual support can you find for your thesis?
- How can you use an outline to plan the structure of your essay?

Drafting and Revising: Compose your analytical essay.
- How will you introduce your topic, organize your ideas, and provide a thoughtful concluding statement?
- How will you integrate textual evidence from the play with commentary about how the evidence supports your thesis and topic sentences?
- How will you demonstrate your understanding of literary terms such as *foil* and *tragic hero*?
- How can you use strategies such as peer responding to improve your draft?

Editing and Publishing: Prepare a final draft for publication.
- How will you proofread and edit your essay for proper conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar and usage?
- What tools are available for you to further polish and refine your work, such as a style guide, dictionary, thesaurus, spellcheck, or grammar check?
- How can the Scoring Guide help you evaluate how well you have met the requirements of the assignment?

Reflection
After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this task, and respond to the following:
- How can you apply the themes of *Antigone* to today’s world? Are there any laws today that you think citizens should feel justified in breaking? Why?
- Why are character interactions important in literature? In real life, what can you learn about yourself from other people?
## Writing a Literary Analysis Essay on Characterization and Theme

### SCORING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td>The essay thoroughly examines the effect of character interaction on plot or theme</td>
<td>The essay examines the effect of character interaction on plot or theme</td>
<td>The essay confuses the effect of character interaction on plot or theme</td>
<td>The essay does not examine the effect of character interaction on plot or theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• accurately analyzes characterization, including another character’s role (such as foil) in the development of a tragic hero</td>
<td>• adequately analyzes characterization, including another character’s role (such as foil) in the development of a tragic hero</td>
<td>• provides some analysis of characterization and other characters’ roles in the development of a tragic hero</td>
<td>• lacks analysis of characterization and other characters’ roles in the development of a tragic hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• smoothly integrates relevant textual evidence, including details, quotations, and examples.</td>
<td>• includes sufficient textual evidence, including details, quotations, and examples.</td>
<td>• provides insufficient textual evidence (e.g., details, quotations, examples).</td>
<td>• provides inaccurate or no textual evidence (e.g., details, quotations, examples).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>The essay uses an effective organizational structure with a logical progression of ideas</td>
<td>The essay uses an adequate organizational structure with a logical progression of ideas</td>
<td>The essay uses an inconsistent organizational structure</td>
<td>The essay does not follow an obvious organizational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• introduces the topic engagingly, links supporting ideas, and provides a thoughtful conclusion</td>
<td>• introduces the topic, links supporting ideas, and provides a conclusion</td>
<td>• does not introduce the topic, link supporting ideas, and/or provide a conclusion</td>
<td>• does not introduce the topic, link supporting ideas, and/or provide a conclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• uses appropriate and varied transitions.</td>
<td>• uses effective transitions.</td>
<td>• uses weak, repetitive, or insufficient transitions.</td>
<td>• uses few, if any, transitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Language</strong></td>
<td>The essay uses precise language and a variety of sentence structures</td>
<td>The essay uses some precise language and different sentence structures</td>
<td>The essay uses vague language and simple sentences</td>
<td>The essay uses inappropriate language and simple or incomplete sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• maintains an academic voice and objective tone</td>
<td>• generally maintains an academic voice and objective tone</td>
<td>• does not establish or maintain an academic voice</td>
<td>• does not use academic voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrates command of conventions with few errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
<td>• demonstrates adequate command of conventions; few errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>• demonstrates partial command of conventions; errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>• demonstrates little command of conventions; serious errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling confuse meaning.</td>
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