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Antigone
Sophocles



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Antigone

1. Actors in Ancient Greece typically wore masks to depict the character they were playing. The masks were personalized specifically for each character. Imagine you are a character in a Greek play. In a detailed paragraph, describe your mask. Include information on how it depicts your personality and whether your character would be in a tragedy or a comedy?
2. As you begin reading *Antigone*, the conflict of the play is immediately apparent. Creon has decreed to put to death anyone who tries to bury or mourn Polynices; however, Antigone states she will disobey the decree out of love for her brother, facing death if necessary.

Write a letter to a person who you would risk your life for. Give some specific reasons for making this choice.

3. Throughout the first part of the play, you meet most of the characters and learn about their relationships with Antigone, as well as their feelings about her actions. Keep a running list of all the characters you meet throughout the play; then next to each character's name, write that person's relationship to Antigone and that person's response toward her actions.
4. A play such as *Antigone* would most likely have been performed in a Greek amphitheater. Research to find out more about amphitheaters in ancient Greece. Imagine you are a tour guide in Athens in 450 B.C. Write a brochure full of the information you will share with visitors as you take them through a Greek amphitheater.

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13. Imagine you are either Antigone or Ismene; write a diary entry that shows the internal conflict arising from the argument the two have about Polynices' burial.
14. Ismene says to Antigone, "But things impossible/'Tis wrong to attempt at all." Think of one important invention (refrigeration, computers), movement (women's rights), law (speed limits), or idea (equality) and write a newspaper article about how different the world would be had that "thing" not been attempted. Include a catchy headline and keep your article brief and to the point.
15. The chorus plays a major part in *Antigone* and most other Greek plays. You have been selected to be a member of the chorus in your school's performance of *Antigone*. Write an article for the playbill describing the role of the chorus in this play and in other Greek plays.
16. Antigone's decision to choose her brother's burial over Creon's threat is similar to ones that many individuals, groups, and countries often face. Write an essay about a time in the last one hundred years when an individual, group, or country has been forced to choose between the law and human rights. What was the outcome of that choice, and how did it affect history?
17. Antigone chooses to disobey Creon's decree because of her own convictions. Write a journal entry about an instance when you had to choose between obedience to authority, or remaining true to what you believed to be right.
18. Does Antigone's choice to disobey Creon's order exhibit hubris (excessive pride) or does it demonstrate heroic loyalty? Choose one answer, then compose a speech that will be read in front of the community debating your opinion.

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49. By the end of the play, Antigone, Haemon, and Eurydice are dead. Imagine you are a newspaper reporter. Write the obituary of one of the deceased characters. If you need some help, look through the obituary section of your local newspaper for examples.
50. Creon is indirectly responsible for three suicides: Antigone's, Haemon's, and Eurydice's. Imagine that Creon has been charged with three counts of involuntary manslaughter, and you are either a prosecution or defense attorney. Write either an opening or a closing argument for the trial depending on which side you choose to represent.
51. Creon seems to have learned his lesson about how pride can easily overtake a person in power. He indicates that his life has changed because of his actions and their consequences. Write a detailed essay describing Creon's life ten years after the deaths of Antigone, Haemon, and Eurydice. How does he rule his kingdom now? Have any laws been changed? How have his views towards family changed?
52. Creon realizes he is responsible for the three deaths as he says, "Woe is me! to none else can they lay it,/This guilt, but to me!" Have you ever made a decision you thought was right at the time, but later you found out that it was a bad mistake? Perhaps you have been the recipient of someone else's wrongful decision. Describe this circumstance in a journal entry.

Antigone

Wrap Up

53. Throughout the play, we may tend to feel sorry for Antigone, since she is the one who is punished for her actions. Imagine you are a loyal servant of Creon who has seen the emotions Creon has gone through during these difficult times. Write a diary entry that describes Creon's suffering from a first-hand point of view.
54. Choose three adjectives that describe your impression of Antigone. Then write down your reasons for choosing those adjectives, using examples of her actions and words throughout the play.
55. Imagine you are Antigone. What you would have done differently in this situation. Include your response to your sister as well as to the king who ordered your death. Write your response in the form of a diary entry.
56. Antigone is a complex character whose pride leads to her death. Do you sympathize with her? Do you support her actions, or do you think she acted irrationally? In an essay, write down specific reasons for your response, using examples from the text.