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Medea

BY EURIPIDES



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Map Activity

Objective: Exploring the setting of the play by identifying major locations in ancient Greece

Activity

While the action of the play takes place in one location—Corinth—other locations are mentioned throughout the play to provide historical or mythological context. We have supplied the place names. Using the chart provided, record the line number. Then, use your own knowledge, an atlas, the Internet, a geography textbook, or resources in your school library to learn what and where these places are. Describe each one on the chart, and place them in their proper place on the map provided. The first one has been done for you.

GREEK GEOGRAPHY CHART

Place	Line Number	Brief Description
Corinth	12	home of Medea and Jason; located in southern Greece, southwest of Athens, near the Saronic Gulf
Colchis		
Mt. Pelion		
Iolcus		
Symplegades		
Athens		
Pontus		
Black Sea		
Delphi		
Pieria		
Olympus		

Name: _____

Date: _____

During Reading: Entire Play**Plot Summation****Objective:** Interpreting and summarizing events in a literary work.**Activity**

A summary is a brief restatement of key events and ideas in your own words. It can be a useful tool in preventing you from getting lost in unimportant details, thus helping you to see the big picture. Keep this sheet safely in a notebook or folder as you read *Medea*, and after each part of the play (indicated below) record two to three sentences that reveal the key events and ideas for that section.

PLOT SUMMATION OF MEDEA

Lines 1 – 219: _____

Lines 220 – 470: _____

Lines 471 – 691: _____

Lines 692 – 878: _____

Lines 879 – 1325: _____

Lines 1326 – 1459: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

During Reading

Understanding Allusions

Objective: Understanding mythological references in the play

Activity

Throughout the play, references, or allusions, are made to important gods, goddesses, and other figures of Greek mythology or history. The purpose of any allusion is to make a comparison that will help the reader or audience understand an aspect of the work more clearly. For example, if a character is compared to Hercules, the audience would understand that the character is strong or courageous. However, if the reader is unfamiliar with the story of Hercules, then the allusion is useless.

To be sure you understand the comparisons being made in the play through the use of allusions, you will use the Internet or library resources to provide a brief description of each of the following Greek characters, indicated in bold. Then you will analyze the use of the allusion. A chart has been provided on the following page for you. The first one has been done for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

During Reading: Lines 471 – 878**Making Masks**

Objective: Making masks in the tradition of Greek theater

Activity

A major convention of Greek theater was that actors wore masks with attached wigs and somewhat elaborate costumes. In addition to the chorus, there were only three actors—all men—who had to play all the roles in the play. In terms of *Medea*, this means that three men played a total of seven characters; other actors played the roles of the chorus members, often numbering between twelve and fifteen.

For this activity, you will work in a small group to create masks for each of the characters you've encountered to this point in the play. Remember that each mask should have an attached wig. Be sure to let each mask reflect some characteristic of the character, like Medea's anger, for example. Additionally, you will draw on drawing paper, using colored pencils or markers, what you believe would be a suitable costume for each character. Be prepared to present your work to your classmates.

Make one mask and draw the costume for each of these characters:

- Medea
- Jason
- Nurse
- Tutor
- Aegeus
- Creon

Name: _____

Date: _____

During Reading**Character Motivation**

Objective: Understanding characters' feeling by responding in one's own words

Activity

In line 471, Jason enters the scene and accuses Medea of deliberately getting herself exiled. If she had just kept her comments about Creon to herself, Jason says, she would have been able to remain in Corinth. Medea, however, feels justified in expressing her anger because she has been so deeply betrayed.

To understand Medea's anger, you must know not only that her husband has been unfaithful, but also the sacrifices she made to be with Jason in the first place. In lines 493 – 550 Medea explains these sacrifices. Jason then explains his actions in lines 553 – 610. The argument continues back and forth between them through line 661.

In the chart on the next page, record each of the missing arguments in your own words. Several arguments for each character have been provided for you; fill in the blank portions of the chart as if you were answering the character's assertions.

Name: _____

Date: _____

During Reading**Verse Analysis**

Objective: Understanding and interpreting dramatic fiction through contextual clues

Activity

A number of lines from lines 879 – 1459 are given below, accompanied by a question directed toward comprehending and interpreting the passage. Use the verse to answer each question in the space provided. A chart has been provided for you on the next page. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Name: _____

Date: _____

During Reading

Group Research

Objectives: Researching different religious traditions about death
Presenting research findings

Activity

Any Greek tragedy will contain at least one death, usually more. Medea kills four people: her two children, Creon, and Creon's daughter. Other than a few lines at the end of the play, the reader gets no information about death rituals in ancient Greece. Medea says about her children:

“I myself will bury them with this very hand. I will take them to the temple of Hera on the mountain, so that none of my enemies can dig up the tomb and insult them; and I enjoin upon this land of Sisyphus a solemn festival and rites for all time in expiation of this impious murder.” (1412 – 1418)

From this passage we can infer that the dead are buried, perhaps in a tomb or some sort of structure, and a festival or some kind of ritual takes place. In this activity you will take a closer look at the funeral traditions of ancient Greece and other cultures.

In small groups, choose one religion from the list below. Using the Internet or resources in your school library, find out what Greeks and other cultural groups do to prepare the body before burial, what the funerals of different cultures are like, and what each culture believes about the afterlife. Record your findings in the chart provided on the next page.

Choose from these religions:

- Ancient Greek
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism