Discussion Questions: Antigone

The “Discussion Questions: Antigone” portion of this packet is taken directly from the classroom text

so that you can use them for study.

Source information: Adventures in Appreciation Heritage Edition. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. New York. 1980. 524

-526.

**Prologue:**

1.The action of the play begins immediately with a conflict between Antigone and Ismene. What is the

cause of the conflict?

2.Ismene and Antigone are strongly contrasted in this scene. What can you tell of Antigone’s

character? Of Ismene’s?

3.The speeches of the Chorus and choragus interrupt the action of the play to describe the battle to the

audience. What do these city elders look forward to in the future?

**Scene 1:**

1.What have we already learned about Creon before he appears on stage? What is revealed of Creon’s

character in this scene?

2.What reason does Creon give for his ruling concerning the bodies of Polyneices and Eteocles? How

does the Chorus react?

3.The Sentry is a very ordinary person, even somewhat humorous. What does he want Creon to think

about him?

**Ode 1:**

1.This ode presents a portrait of human existence –its wonders and its limitations. Restate its main idea in your own words.

2.How does the ode comment on the problem of the play as it has been developed so far?

**Scene 2:**

1.Since Greek dramas usually do not move from one setting to another, many of their important actions

take place offstage. What major event has taken place before this scene opens? How does Sophocles

help the audience picture what has happened?

2.How does Antigone defend her actions?

3.Look back at the comments of the Choragos in this scene. Does he seem to side with Antigone or

with Creon? Explain.

4.How has Ismene changed since we first saw her in the Prologue? How does Antigone treat her?

**Ode 2:**

1.What grave fears for Oedipus’ children does this ode express?

2.How would you explain the ancient wisdom in Line 28: “Man’s little pleasure is the spring of sorrow”?

**Scene 3:**

1.Haimon is caught in a conflict of loyalties in this scene. What methods and arguments does he use to try to persuade Creon to change his mind? For example, how does he appeal to his father’s self interest?

2.How does Creon react to Haimon’s arguments? What attitudes does Creon seem take toward women?

3.What function does the Choragos have in this scene? Whose side, if any, is he on?

**Ode 3:**

1.The first ode was about human strengths and limitations, the second was about fate and the vengeance

of the gods. What is the subject of this ode? Which lines allude to specific characters in the play?

**Scene 4:**

1.What comfort does the Chorus offer Antigone in this scene? Antigone thinks (in Line 25) that the Chorus is making fun of her. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

2.As Antigone faces her death, does she seem in any way changed from the wayshe has been in previous scenes? Explain your answer.

3.Antigone is not to be stoned to death as originally planned. Why does the form of her punishment suit Creon?

**Ode 4:**

1.In this ode the Chorus alludes to three Greek myths that were familiar to the ancient Greek audiences. How are the fates of the characters in these myths related to Antigone’s fears?

**Scene 5:**

1.Creon has refused to yield to the arguments of Antigone and Haimon, and at first he refuses to listen to Teiresias. Of what does he accuse Teiresias?

2.Teiresias tells Creon that the only crime is pride. How has Creon shown that he is guilty of pride?

3.Why does Creon finally give in? what part does the choragus play in Creon’s decision?

4.How has the character of the Chorus (or its leader, the choragus)changed throughout the play? Where

in the play do you think the Chorus speaks for Sophocles himself?

**Exodus:**

1.Violence is certainly a part of Greek drama, but it was never portrayed onstage. How does Sophocles tell us what happens to Antigone, Haimon, and Eurydice?

2.How is Teiresias’ prophecy from Scene 5 fulfilled in this scene?

3.How has Creon changed since the beginning of the play? What does he finally come to recognize?