

CTC is committed to creating extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire. It is our hope that by presenting significant themes that affect the lives of young people throughout our community we will foster dialogue and active participation in the arenas that affect their lives. It is with this in mind that we offer...



2006-2007 Season
proudly sponsored
by Target.



An experience in theatre can be a gateway into a greater understanding of who we are; it can enhance our understanding of life. You may come to **ANTIGONE** thinking that it is fun to break routine and get out of the school building, but you will walk away changed. You will have glimpsed a significant truth about the world and how each of us lives in it. So, while it is crucial to take the time to process the experience by talking and exploring the excitement of the theatrical experience itself, the time spent in the theatre can also serve as a springboard into many areas of your curriculum.

WHAT ARE THE BIG IDEAS?

It takes guts to stand up to a king.
Especially when you're 15.
Antigone has guts. And she's a woman.

- Roles of men and women
- What makes a just leader?
- Society vs. the individual
- Family loyalty and dynamics

This is an intense, passionate, contemporary performance. You will experience **ANTIGONE** while you quite literally stand with actors and musicians all around you.

It's more than being on the edge of your seat, it's never sitting down! It's a whole new way to do theatre – it takes guts.



Soon you and your class...
will see **ANTIGONE** at CTC, and we want your experience in the theatre to support your curriculum and classroom life. This Study Guide is designed to cover a broad range of needs, so please choose what is most useful in your own classroom.

NOTE: the vertical section identifiers along the left edge of each page will help you navigate the Guide.



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Minnesota Academic Standards Addressed:

Reading and Literature: Students will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic, and nonfiction texts and traditional, classical and contemporary works of literary merit from civilizations and countries around the world.

World History: The student will demonstrate knowledge of ancient Greek civilization and its influence throughout Eurasia, Africa and the Mediterranean.

Arts - Theatre: The student will experience, analyze, and evaluate diverse and/or historic styles of dramatic production and understand and use artistic processes to create, perform, and interpret art works in theater.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT PROCEDURE OR EXACT RUNNING TIME?
CALL THE CTC BOX OFFICE AT 612-874-0400.**



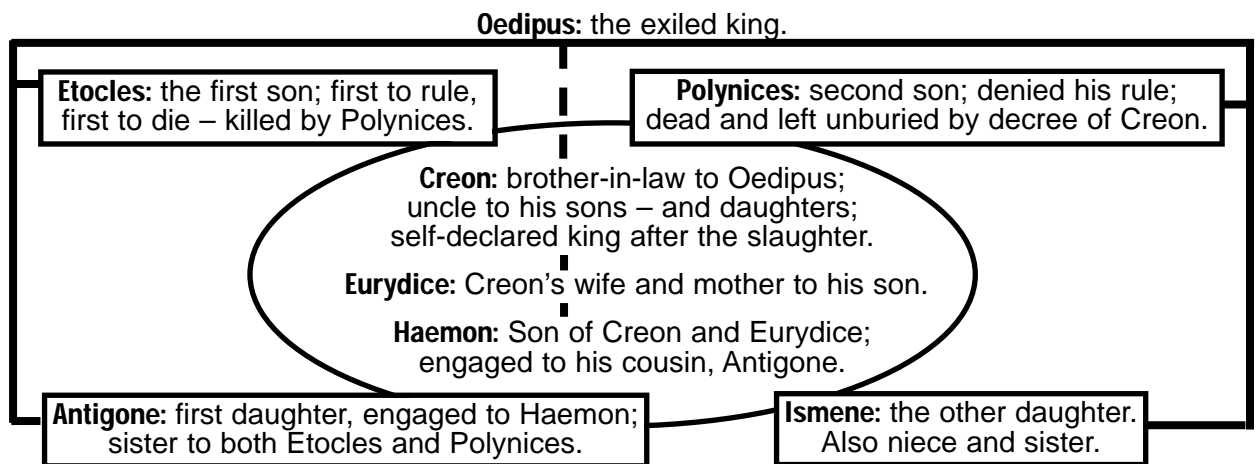
WHAT HAPPENS: a synopsis of ANTIGONE

Antigone is the only character in the play who walks into her fate with her eyes wide open.

Antigone knows the sentence is death, but her brother's body must be buried or his soul will never rest. King Creon has ruled that Polynices was a traitor, and his body is to be left unburied, food for dogs – a disgraceful death. Anyone who defies the ruling will be killed. Antigone is undaunted. She goes to Ismene for help, but her sister is afraid to defy the king. So Antigone alone covers Polynices' body with earth, is caught and brought before Creon. He coaxes her to lie; he has the power to implement a cover up. After all, his son, Haemon, is engaged to the girl, and Creon doesn't want a scandal. Antigone says no, she'd rather die than lie. And she refuses to let her brother lie unburied. Both Creon and Antigone believe what they are doing is right and nothing will change their course. They are at a stand off.

Antigone descends from a cursed family tree. The daughter of Oedipus – the king of Thebes who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother – she was left behind when he was exiled. Oedipus decreed that Antigone's brother Eteocles would rule and then, after a set time, turn over the kingship to his younger brother. But, when Polynices' sought his turn to rule, Eteocles would not step down. There was a war, and the two brothers killed each other in combat. Now the new king, Antigone's uncle, Creon, has declared that Eteocles died a valiant death, but Polynices was a traitor. His body will rot unburied.

Antigone will not accept it; she demands to bury her brother. Enraged, Creon orders Antigone to be sealed in a stone cave to die. Haemon reasons with his father to change his mind, but to no avail. Then the blind seer, Tiresias, comes to Creon and successfully convinces him to reverse his decision: "It is not right to kill and kill again." Creon rushes to the cave to free Antigone but he is too late. She has hanged herself, and Haemon, discovering her body, has impaled himself on his sword. Creon is stunned and grief stricken. Then a messenger comes with the final blow: Creon's wife, on hearing her son is dead, has slain herself. Creon's pride has cost him everything. If only he had listened to a fifteen year old voice.



Tiresius: the blind soothsayer who sees it all before it comes to pass.

The gods: Unseen; unappeased; unamused. Or are they laughing?

PROMENADE STYLE: Up Close



Sonja Parks as ANTIGONE, CTC 06

The promenade style in which Antigone is done keeps the play “in your face.” It keeps it real. It happens. Although the style is much more contemporary than the formal staging Sophocles would have envisioned, the immediacy is exactly what he intended when he wrote it almost 2,500 years ago. After all, think of this: the action of Sophocles’ play begins at dawn, the morning after the battle that kills Oedipus’ sons. He wrote it that way knowing that in Greek theater the first performance began precisely at dawn. In other words, the action of the play was exactly the action in the surrounding world.

In promenade style theater the intention is the same. The audience does not sit down, but rather witnesses the action while standing in an open space so that the players move through and among them. The audience adjusts position to accommodate scenes that happen in their midst. There is no way to distance yourself from the events which occur literally right in front of you. It is bound to make you wonder in a very really way, “If that was me, what would I do?”

Perennial Issues:

Another way the play seems close to us is because of the issues involved. Even though Sophocles first wrote ANTIGONE on the other side of the world (Athens, Greece) in 442 B.C.E., ANTIGONE is a powerful play that still rings true. It shouts with the voice of a rebel demanding justice despite the status quo. It asks us to examine where we personally stand on essential issues such as:

Pride: In both Greek culture and our own pride is regarded as dangerous. “Pride goes before a fall,” we say. We also say, “Stand tall; be proud of who you are.” Both Antigone and Creon are proud. When do you consider pride a good quality? When and/or how does it go bad?

Individual Conscience and Social Law: You’ve heard the phrase, “Some laws were meant to be broken.” What does that mean? Is it true? ANTIGONE is a potent text of resistance against a corrupt power. How might that apply in our own time?

Sexism: Antigone breaks a fundamental cultural rule; she – a female – refuses to be passive. Worse yet she disobeys. Creon’s identity is at stake in their conflict, not just as king, but also as a man. Identify a modern conflict where you believe the stakes are raised by gender difference.

Ageism: Antigone is “only” fifteen years old. “Children should be seen and not heard.” Right? Wrong!! There are a great many disparities between the rights - and responsibilities - of adults and young people. History has improved this condition, but discuss how you have felt discounted simply because of your age. (Have you ever done the same to someone younger than yourself?)

**Is it ever wrong to do the right thing? Is it every right to do the wrong thing?
How do you decide where you stand?**



OEDIPUS: THE PREQUEL

Oedipus was born in Thebes to king Laius and queen Jocasta. When he was just a bouncing baby boy, an oracle told his parents that Oedipus was destined to kill his father and marry his mother. Not what royal parents wanted to hear! So, they had a servant take the baby outside the city walls with orders to leave Oedipus there to die. Secretly, though, the servant gave baby Oedipus to a shepherd from Corinth - who in turn gave him to the Corinthian king and queen whose child had died. Oedipus had new parents, who never told him where he had come from.

Oedipus didn't know that he had not been born to Corinthian royalty until he was eighteen. Then, at a dinner party one night a "friend" began to taunt him saying that he was not who he thought he was. The parents who raised him admitted he had not been born to them, but honestly did not know his origins. Trying to get to the bottom of things, he asked an oracle, who told him only that he was (you've heard it before) destined to kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus refused to believe it! He loved his parents. Still he took no chances. He left immediately, putting miles between himself and Corinth. He was determined to defy destiny! But at a strange crossroads where three portentous roads intersected he met a stranger. They fought, and Oedipus killed the man. The stranger was – you guessed it – Laius.

Oedipus then defeated the Sphinx, a monster that had been decimating the area, feeding on it's plumpest virgins and so forth, so that he entered the nearest city, Thebes, as a hero. He met Jocasta (now a widow). and married her without the true story of his battle on the road being told. It was only after four children and several natural catastrophes that the couple learned the truth. The prophecy had been fulfilled – all the efforts to thwart destiny had instead brought it to fruition. In grief, rage and horror Oedipus gouged out his own eyes and left Thebes, exiled, never to return. He left behind, among others...a daughter, Antigone.



A Greek Tragedy

Cycles of tragic events that seemed to have no other explanation than disgruntled gods are common in classic Greek plays. A famine in the land, for example, was attributed to a ruler - almost always a king - who had displeased a god. Restoring order was an elaborate process worked out over generations. Because of this way of looking at the world, Sophocles would never have thought to write a play about a common person (whose life was considered inconsequential to the well being of the nation/state). The fact that he wrote the story of a young woman is radical in itself.

Discussion:

How does the way we see the world change the stories we tell?

Activity:

Research Ancient Greece and write a travel narrative about it.

Have students research life in the ancient Greece, when Sophocles wrote ANTIGONE. What social structures were in place, which Sophocles might have been trying to comment on through his plays? Have the students write a travel narrative, in that they are journalists visiting ancient Greece. Perhaps they encounter historical figures along the way. Do they get to see ANTIGONE performed? Do they get to listen to a lecture by Plato? Make sure they research details about Greek drama in particular. How might ANTIGONE have been performed back then as opposed to the version they saw at CTC? As an extension exercise, have students try their hand at writing their own short scene or play using Greek theatre techniques, in particular a chorus of narrators. They could use as their basis a Greek myth that they have studied in class or an item from contemporary news that is worthy of the treatment.

RELATED RESOURCES

Anthem, by Ayn Rand. *In a future world a young man and a young woman rediscover what it is to have a personal identity when they escape the status quo.* (young adult)

Antigone, by Sophocles. (Greek Tragedy in New Translations) Oxford U. *Antigone defies her uncle, Creon, the new ruler, who prohibited the burial of her dead brother; they enact a primal conflict.* (ages 12 and up)

Feed, by M.T. Anderson. *In a future where most people have computer implants in their heads to control their environment, a boy meets an unusual girl who is in serious trouble.* (ages 12 to 18)

Soul Surfer: A True Story of Faith, Family, and Fighting to Get Back on the Board, by Bethany Hamilton. *Loss of her arm can't keep a teenage girl from surfing, after a shark attack.* (ages 12 and up)

To Kill a Mockingbird, by Harper Lee. *The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence, and hypocrisy is pricked by the quiet heroism of one man's struggle for justice.* (ages 12 and up)

A Google search for "Antigone" will result in over 300,000 hits. Most of them concern the classic itself - although you will also find a female rock band called Antigone Rising (discussion topic: Why would a contemporary "girl group" give itself that name?).

A readable, yet accessible summary of the original which retains some of the feel of the language: <http://www.theatrehistory.com/ancient/bates017.html>

NOTE: The exercise on page 6 is inspired by: **Rethinking Globalization: Teaching for Justice in an Unjust World**, edited by Bob Peterson. An excellent resource full of teaching tools for any age groups. www.rethinkingschools.org



Examples of Research Topics:

- Find and study a person who has taken a stand against injustice at any period in history
- Make a report on the life and work of Sophocles
- Study Greek theater: the unities, or staging a play
- Design costumes for a production of Antigone
- Create Antigone's Family tree for three generations
- Compare the war in Thebes to a modern civil war
- Investigate burial rituals in the ancient world
- Find out about the Ancient Greek concept of the gods and their relationship with people
- Discover who was the first playwright to write about ordinary people rather than elevated characters

DISCUSSION / WRITING / ACTIVITIES

• Activity: Organize a debate around a key question in ANTIGONE.

The themes in ANTIGONE provide opportunities for rich debate that is relevant to contemporary issues. Here are some questions, which might spark such a debate:

- Is it ever justifiable to openly defy the law?
- Does a leader have the right to make sweeping judgments, and if so what are some valid reasons. What about a decision without reason?
- Which is more important, individual liberty or societal responsibility?
- Should young people defer to their elders' wishes? Are there exceptions?
- Have the roles of women changed since Ancient Greek times?
- Is Antigone noble or foolish? What do you think about the way she went about accomplishing her goals?
- Is there another choice Antigone might have made once Creon's sentence is enacted? How might another choice have changed the consequences?

Have students work in teams to research and defend one side or the other of an issue. You may wish to have them choose a side or draw one out of a hat. Be sure to encourage them to incorporate modern day examples, which touch upon the issue.

• Activity: Conduct a mock trial of ANTIGONE.

Another dynamic way to get students thinking about the themes in ANTIGONE is by conducting a mock trial. Imagine that Antigone is caught trying to bury her brother. Instead of being sent to die in prison, she is put on trial. There is ample opportunity to role-play in this scenario. Perhaps Creon is the judge. Who would defend her? Who would accuse her? Will she have a team of lawyers? Will she defend herself? How would the larger Theban populace fit into the trial? Are there court reporters?

• Pre- and Post-Show Discussion

The play ANTIGONE offers many possibilities for in-depth discussions of its central themes intertwined with analysis of its main characters. There is also opportunity to introduce new vocabulary, or revisit it, in these discussions. The characters of Antigone and Creon, due to the polarity of their views, make for interesting analysis because they offer a chance to discuss things from two very different vantage points. For example, in analyzing Antigone, the words *martyr*, *defiant*, or *idealist* may be worth defining. Is she one of these, or perhaps all three? In analyzing Creon, students may be quick to judge him as a *tyrant*. However, it is useful to remind them that he is a leader taking over the reign of his country in a difficult time. In analyzing the play, the students may come to understand the complex nature of laws, relationships, and hopefully, the larger society.

• Poetry Writing:

Write a poem inspired by Antigone's death as if it had been authored by one of the characters in the play.





A MIRROR ON THE WORLD



QUESTIONS:

- Why would a theater choose to do ANTIGONE?
- Why might it be worthwhile to see this kind of play?
- Do you see the relationship between what was happening in the world that Sophocles captured in his play and anything that is going on in the world today?

The following exercise allows students to experience the importance of a just leader in a world in which there is dramatic inequality between nations and social classes within nations.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

6 nametags that say "LEADER"

6 nametags that say "negotiator"

Four sets of resources:

25 circles of brown paper = food

25 rectangles of green paper = wealth

25 triangles of blue paper = water

25 squares of red paper = housing

12 slips of paper on each of which is written one of these characteristics:

INCOMPETENT, STRONG, INTELLIGENT, WEAK, GENEROUS, GREEDY, CHARISMATIC, RUTHLESS, PEACE-LOVING, WAR-LIKE, WISE, SELFISH

SET UP:

Divide the class into 6 groups and explain that this exercise is based on the comparative resources in our world today. Name and number the groups accordingly, and pass out resources as follows based on a class of 25: (You may want to do a random drawing to determine the assignment of continents.)

Africa: 3 people, 1/2 of 1 of each resource

Asia: 15 people, 6 of each resource

Oceania: 1 person, 0 resource

Europe: 3 people, 9 of each resource

North America: 1 person, 8 of each resource

South America: 2 people, 1 of each resource

Distribute one "LEADER" and one "negotiator" nametag to each of the six groups. Once the groups containing more than one person designate a leader, ask that individual to draw 2 slips of paper containing characteristics (as listed above). The leader then takes on these qualities in order to determine the decisions he or she makes throughout the exercise.

TO PLAY:

Each continent gathers in a circle and discuss how they will distribute their resources among the people in the group. On what will they base their decisions? The LEADER has ultimate decision making power and is determined by the characteristics s/he has randomly chosen.

After 5 minutes, allow for trade. The negotiator is empowered to travel to other continents to trade for necessary resources.

Allow 10 minutes and then gather the groups once more to redistribute resources.

PROCESS:

Allow a significant amount of time for the group to process this experience. Allow each group to speak in turn before opening the floor for large group discussion.

How were resources distributed?

What was the impact of the leader on the process?

How does justice matter?

FEEDBACK your response is valuable as we seek to redesign our study materials. Thank you.

1. Did using this Study Guide add to your theater experience?
 Yes Some No
2. How much of the Study Guide did you read?
 Didn't have time About a quarter All
3. What do you think of what you read? Mark as many as apply.
 Useful Enjoyable
 Nothing new Not for my students because
4. Did you get the Study Guide in time to prepare to see the play?
 Yes No Comment _____
5. What sections of the Study Guide did you find most important?

6. How did the experience of preparing for and then seeing the play impact you students?

7. Did you spend more time working with the material BEFORE or AFTER the play?
 Before After About the Same
8. Which of the following best describes you?
I teach: middle school high school
 home school
 other _____

Comments: _____
(continue on separate page if desired)

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The Children's Theatre Company, awarded the 2003 Regional Tony Award for sustained artistic excellence, is nationally and internationally acclaimed as America's flagship theatre for young people and families. Each year, CTC's public performances, school matinees, regional tour performances, and Theatre Arts Training Programs serve nearly 330,000 people.

Peter Brosius, Artistic Director **Teresa Eyring**, Managing Director
Gregory Smith, Director of Education

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