

## Antigone Questions

### Prologue 165-168

1. For pronunciation of proper names in this cast of characters, go back and search through the summary of the Oedipus myth (p. 689). For which names are pronunciations provided?
2. Notice that the Prophet Teiresias is blind. How important might this detail turn out to be to the story.
3. What contrasts between Antigone and Ismene appear in the first dozen lines of the play? How do differences between them show up even in their speaking styles? (lines 1-12)
4. The Greeks believed that the spirit of a dead person could enter Hades (the abode of the dead) only after the body had been purified and buried. If these rites were not carried out, the person hovered at the gate of Hades, neither alive nor completely dead. How does knowing about these beliefs increase the horror of Creon's decree?
5. What do lines 36-52 reveal about Ismene's character?
6. What do lines 65-69 reveal about Ismene's feelings for her sister? How does Antigone take Ismene's words and twist them (77-81)?

### Parados 168-170

1. Which words and phrases in lines 10-13 extend the metaphor of Polyneices as a fierce, warlike eagle?
2. How does Sophocles personify the spears of Polyneices' forces? Whose "jaws" are hungry for the blood of the people of Thebes? What fierce beast is the city of Thebes itself compared to?
3. Rephrase lines 35-38 to state exactly what happened.
4. How does the final antistrophe remind the audience of physical and emotional setting?

### Scene 1 170-175

1. What is the “Ship of State”? What are the “recent storms” that threatened it?
2. How does the end of Creon’s speech differ in tone from the beginning?
3. How does the Choragos feel about Creon’s command? How do you know this?
4. What do lines 63-64 reveal about Creon’s attitudes or mind set?
5. How does the Sentry’s arrival diffuse the tension of the scene?
6. Someone has directly violated Creon’s decree. How? Who?
7. List the sequence of events described between lines 90 and 112.
8. True feelings sometimes emerge when one is angry. From Creon’s speech (lines 114-125) how do you think he really feels about the elders? Provide proof.
9. What might the audience have considered Creon’s human defects?
10. What is Creon threatening to do to the Sentry if “the man” is not found (lines 135-141). What does Creon mean when he says, “Do you understand me? / A fortune won is often misfortune.
11. Where did you hear line 148 before? Did it surprise you that the Sentry speaks the line?

### Scene 2 177-184

1. From his initial reaction to Antigone, what can you deduce about Creon’s relationship with her?
2. In II. 45-49, what can you deduce about the Sentry’s motivation? Is he only too happy to bring in a traitorous princess, or is he driven by something else?
3. What reason does Antigone give for violating Creon’s decree? What theme of the play does her reasoning express?

4. The Choragos uses a kind of psychological shorthand in the phrase “like father, like daughter.” Who is Antigone’s father?
5. How do you feel about Creon’s accusing Ismene of a crime?
6. Do you think that Antigone reads the hidden motives of the Theban elders correctly (99-102)? Why or why not?
7. What is the central difference in the moral thinking of Creon versus that of Antigone?
8. In II. 121-127, the Choragos and Creon each apply an image to Ismene. What are the two images? How do these images reveal the different viewpoints of the Choragos and of Creon?
9. Considering everything you know about Ismene so far, why do you think she desires death? What is her motivation?
10. How can Antigone’s rejection of Ismene be seen as matter of pride (143-145)?

### Scene 3 185-191

1. What is your first impression of Haimon’s attitude toward his father?
2. What is ironic about Creon’s giving Haimon advice about Antigone?
3. What words are sometimes used to name the kind of leader Creon describes in lines 35-36?
4. Why do you think lines 47-48 are in a quote box?
5. State Haimon’s key arguments to spare Antigone.
6. What two analogies does Haimon use to argue with his father?
7. Why do you think the Choragos avoids taking sides in the argument?
8. What character flaws in Creon are revealed in the question in lines 94-95?

9. Whose view—Creon’s or Haimon’s better expresses the Greek ideal of democracy? Why?
10. What two possibilities are there for the other death Haimon mentions in line 119?
11. How does Haimon’s attitude toward his father change from the beginning of the scene?
12. Whose life is saved by the Choragos?
13. How is Antigone supposed to die?
14. Is Creon a good ruler or a poor one? Why?

#### Scene 4 191-196

1. As the play moves toward its climax, what dramatic action is about to occur?
2. What change do you notice in Antigone’s manner in lines 5-10?
3. What two things does she ask the elders of Thebes? (25-32)
4. Why does Antigone bring up the family curse again? (35-44)
5. What is Antigone’s view of the Underworld? (58-68)
6. What curse does she pronounce on Creon?

#### Scene 5

1. What does Creon’s reaction to Teiresias’ warnings in lines 25-40 show about his character?
2. Why does Teiresias see Creon as a person who is “sick”? Do you think he has an illness? Explain.
3. Why does Teiresias say to Creon, “You are a king because of me.”
4. Based on Teiresias’ prophecy, who do you think will be the “Dead, denied the grave”? What does this prophecy mean?

5. What reason does Creon give for finally giving in? How does he give in?
6. Who says, “The laws of the gods are mighty, and a man must serve them/To the last day of his life!”? Why is this so ironic?

### Exodos

1. Why does the messenger say Creon has become, “a walking dead man”?
2. How did Haimon, Antigone, and Eurydice die?
3. Why would what Haimon does to Creon before killing himself have made his death even more painful for Creon?
4. How would Eurydice’s final words compound his pain?
5. Why do you think neither Creon nor Oedipus dies at the end of the plays?