

## Test #1 Preparation

## Part A

**Medea**

Medea is the main character in the play Medea. It is a Greek tragedy which was first performed in Great Dionysia in 431 BC. It was a presentation of Euripides version of the legend. It tells the legend of Jason and Medea and how Medea kills their two children as revenge on Jason for betraying her and marrying another woman. Medea is the Princess of Colchis, the daughter of King Aeëtes, and was the wife of Jason. She met Jason while he was on a quest for Golden Fleece, and she fell in love with him, sacrificing everything to return with him and be together. Medea can be represented by the Greek term Physis, which refers to irrationality, natural laws, chaos, instinct, and destruction. It is a term generally used to describe women. The fact that she murdered her own two children shows that she is irrational and destructive. The story of Medea displays Nomos versus Physis; the rational argument versus the irrational one.

**Physis**

Physis is a Greek term which describes natural laws, instinct, chaos, irrationality, and destruction. It is a term that describes the traits of women and how they are irrational creatures. This term can be depicted by Medea in Euripides' Greek tragedy. It is significant because it supports the male argument that women can not be in power because they are irrational and are guided by instincts instead of rational thought.

**Nomos**

Nomos is a Greek term which describes man-made laws, order, civilization control, stability, and power. It is a term that describes the traits of men they hold the power. Men are typically head of the household and have the authority to make decisions. An example of the use of this term can be how Zeus decided to marry his daughter Persephone to Hades without consulting with her mother Demeter. Zeus held the power and authority and therefore did not need reason to inform Demeter of his decision. Another example is Jason in Medea. Jason is seen as rational because he is marrying the princess of Corinth for more power, whereas Medea is seen as irrational. It is significant because it illustrates the deeply patriarchal power and order in Greek mythology.

**Creon**

Creon is a character in Euripides' play Medea. Medea is a Greek tragedy which was first performed in Great Dionysia in 431 BC. It was a presentation of Euripides version of the legend. It tells the legend of Jason and Medea and how Medea kills their two children as revenge on Jason for betraying her and marrying another woman. Creon is the King of Corinth and banishes Medea from his land after his daughter marries Jason. This is because he fears Medea and is afraid of her retaliating, he exiles her from his territory. He dies by poison which is transferred to him from his daughter who Medea killed by gifting her a poisoned robe and crown.

**Aegus**

Aegus is a character in Euripides' play Medea. Medea is a Greek tragedy which was first performed in Great Dionysia in 431 BC. It was a presentation of Euripides version of the legend. It tells the legend of Jason and Medea and how Medea kills their two children as revenge on Jason for betraying her and marrying another woman. Creon is the King of Athens and a friend of Medea. He promises Medea sanctuary if she can make her own way to Athens because she promised him medicine in order to cure him of his inability to have children.

**Jason**

Jason is a character in Euripides' play Medea. Medea is a Greek tragedy which was first performed in Great Dionysia in 431 BC. It was a presentation of Euripides version of the legend. It tells the legend of Jason and Medea and how Medea kills their two children as revenge on Jason for betraying her and marrying another woman. Jason is the son of Aeson and the former king of Iolcus. He was the husband of Medea and betrayed her by marrying another woman. Jason can be represented by the Greek term Nomos, which refers to man-made laws, order, civilization control, stability, and power. This can be shown by how he marries the Princess of Corinth and betrays Medea because it meant garnering a lot more power and reputation.

**Chorus**

The chorus reacts to the events of the play as they happen. They are extremely important because they provide the audience with insight and background information which is critical to understanding the play. Their reactions can be lessons in how the audience should or should not interpret what is happening. The chorus will differ according to which play.

**Corinth****Thebes****Messenger****Oedipus**

Oedipus the main character in Oedipus the King written by Sophocles in 429 BC. It is a tragedy. He is the king of Thebes and the son of Laius and Jocasta though he is not aware of it until much later in the play. Oedipus became the king by solving the riddle of the Sphinx and saving the city of Thebes. When he was a child Laius and Jocasta heard a prophecy that a child of theirs would kill Laius, so they pinned the child's ankles together and had a shepherd put him in the wilderness to avoid the prophecy. He also hears a prophecy that he will bed his mother and kill his father so he leaves Corinth in hopes of avoiding it. Instead he ends up fulfilling it. This play is significant because it illustrates moira and how their determined fate was inevitable. Oedipus' name also means 'swollen foot'. His feet are scarred from when he was a child and the scars symbolize the crippling fate destined to him from his birth. It is also discusses incest.

## Test #1 Preparation

**Laius**

Laius a character in Oedipus the King written by Sophocles in 429 BC. It is a tragedy. He is the son of Labdacus and the father of Oedipus. He was the previous King of Thebes, and was the husband of Jocasta. He was prophesied to be killed by his child, so he bound his son's feet and sent him away to prevent it. His death was inevitable however for he ends up being killed by his son Oedipus and the prophecy is fulfilled. This play is significant because it illustrates moira and how their determined fate was inevitable.

**Labdacus****Jocasta****Sphinx**

The Sphinx is features in the tragedy Oedipus the King written by Sophocles in 429 BC. She was the daughter of Echidna and Typhon and is a monster with the face of a woman, body of a lion, and the wings of a bird. She was sent as a curse to the city of Thebes by the goddess Hera. The Sphinx guarded the city and asked all who wished to pass a riddle. Those who failed to answer correctly were eaten. The riddle was, "who walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening?". The correct answer was a man. When Oedipus gave the correct answer the Sphinx jumped off a cliff and died. This is significant because this event enabled Oedipus to become King of Thebes, and marry Jocasta, which helped fulfill the tragic destiny moira because the queen was his mother.

**Moira**

Moira is the Greek term for fate. The fates, assign every human their fate or their share. This fare is inevitable and can be seen as their destiny or their doom. No matter what they will 'receive their share'. This is significant because it means every human has a predestined fate which is unchangeable. Moira can be seen in Oedipus and the King because it was foretold that he would kill his father and marry his mother. It can also be seen in Agamemnon because although Cassandra knew that Clytaemnestra would kill her and Agamemnon it was inevitable because Agamemnon did not believe her, and she had no where to go.

**Oikos**

Oikos is the Greek term for household and family duty. Women are usually associated with the term. Women will take charge of the household in the absence of the patriarchal head. In Agamemnon written by Aeschylus, Clytaemnestra assumed the role of ruling, protecting, and maintaining the castle in Agamemnon's absence while he was away at war. The term is significant because the Oikos only exists inside Polis. It displays how women have no real power. The true power is solely held by the men.

**Polis**

Polis is the Greek term for city and states. Men are usually associated with the term. Related closely to the Greek term nomos because men ruled the territories. Polis can be seen when Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to gain the favour of the Gods to help win the war. He did this for the benefit of the state and for his territory to gain more power.

**Oedipal Complex**

The oedipal complex is the Freudian theory that illustrates the formative age where individual psychosexual development occurs, and how the child will transfer his object of love from the breast to his mother. It states that the child desires the mother and represents the father. Jocasta even states that, 'many men have dreams of sleeping with their mothers'. This theory is not limited by time and place. It is still debated today. This is significant because it is a lens through which we can analyze Oedipus and the King.

**Agamemnon**

Agamemnon is a tragedy written by Aeschylus in the 5th century. It tells the story of after Agamemnon's victorious return from Troy after the 10 year wars. Agamemnon is the king of Argos and son of Atreus. He is the husband of Clytaemnestra and the father of Iphigenia. Agamemnon can be represented by the Greek term hubris, which means excessive main pride. He is an excessively proud man, an the play he is symbolized a lion which can be seen as the 'king of the jungle'. His hubris is also displayed when he brings Cassandra back as a slave girl even though his wife Clytaemnestra has been waiting for his return. Agamemnon is killed by his wife after his return as revenge for sacrificing their daughter. He had sacrificed his daughter for good winds to win the Trojan War. It also discusses canibalism.

**Clytemnestra**

Clytaemnestra a character in the play Agamemnon. It is a tragedy written by Aeschylus in the 5th century. Clytaemnestra is the queen of Argos and the wife of Agamemnon. She is also the daughter of Tyndareus, and the mother if Iphigenia. Cassandra murders her husband Agamemnon by running him through with a sword three times as revenge for murdering their daughter Iphigenia. She represents physis because she irrationally murders her husband, who only sacrificed their daughter for the good of the Argos. She also represents Oikos because she ruled, protected, and cared for the castle and kingdom in Agamemnon's absence. She also had an affair with her husband's cousin Aegisthus. She also justifies her murder as dike.

**Cassandra**

Cassandra appears in the play Agamemnon, which is a tragedy written by Aeschylus in the 5th century. Cassandra is a Trojan princess and the daughter of Priam. She is also a prophet but no one believes her prophecies because she has been cursed by Apollo for no on to believe her. Apollo cursed her because she refused to be his lover. She is brought to Argos by Agamemnon after the war as a slave and concubine. This is significant because she has absolutely no choice but to obey which illustrates women's lack of freedom. She can be seen as the poor slave girl. She actually foresees her and Agamemnon's death but Agamemnon didn't believe her because he said that a woman's word could not be trusted. She is killed by Clytaemnestra with an ax.

**Test #1 Preparation****Apollo**

Apollo is the God of the sun, light, truth and prophecy, among other things. He is the son of Zeus and Leto and has a twin sister named Artemis. He is relevant in the play *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus because he is the God the cursed Cassandra when she refused to become his lover. He cursed her so that no one would believe her prophecies. This is significant because it led to her death after she told Agamemnon of their fate and he would not believe her on the belief that no woman's word could be trusted. It also reinforces the idea *Moira*; despite it being foreseen, it was inevitable.

**Aegisthus**

Aegisthus is the revenger in the play *Agamemnon*. It is a tragedy written by Aeschylus in the 5th century. Aegisthus is the cousin of Agamemnon. He is the son of Thyestes and is born from his father's thirst for revenge against his brother Atreus. Thyestes has an affair with Atreus' wife and as retaliation Atreus killed his children and served them to Thyestes. Thyestes then raped his daughter and bore Aegisthus. He was banished but while Agamemnon was away at war he became Clytemnestra's lover and encourages her to kill her husband. He is significant because he represents the major theme of revenge. Agamemnon's family can not escape never-ending cycle of revenge.

**Dike**

Dike is the Greek term for justice, but it can also be interpreted as vengeance. It carries the meaning of compensation for transgressing a limit which is set by the customs of the culture and time. According to the chorus of *Agamemnon*, the Gods are the guardians of dike. This term is significant because it is the driving action behind the actions of several characters. Clytemnestra murders Agamemnon and uses the word dike to refer to the opportunity for justice and vengeance to be carried out of her daughter Iphigenia's behalf. Medea in Euripides *Medea* also justifies the murder of her two children as revenge/vengeance on her husband Jason. The concept of dike is reiterated throughout the plays.

**Teiresias**

Teiresias is a character in *Oedipus the King*, a tragedy written by Sophocles in the 5th century. Teiresias is an old, blind prophet, and is in tune with the mind of Apollo who is the God of Prophecy. He tells Oedipus that he is the murderer he hunts but Oedipus refuses to believe him. He even tells him that the killer will be blind and will turn out to be both the son and the husband of his mother. He is then accused of treason by Oedipus. This character is significant because represents *moira* and how their *moira* is determined by fate and inevitable.

**Iphigenia**

Iphigenia a character in the play *Agamemnon*. It is a tragedy written by Aeschylus in the 5th century. She is the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. She is also the sister of Orestes, Chrysothemis, and Electra. She was sacrificed by her father Agamemnon in order to gain favour from the gods to win the war. This is significant because her being sacrificed was Clytemnestra's dike to murder Agamemnon.

**Mycenae**

Mycenae is ancient Greek city. It is the city in Aeschylus' tragedy *Agamemnon* in the 5th century. It is significant because Mycenae was ruled by Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Atreus, and Thyestes. The city represented the riches and power and a sense of grandeur because it was one of two large cities in Greece at the time.