

# Teacher notes - Context

## Antigone by Jean Anouilh

Antigone, is a modern adaption of Sophocles's play Antigone premiered in Paris in 1944, and reflects to some extent the anti-fascist French resistance.

The play is set in ancient Thebes in Greece. King Oedipus has died and left the kingdom of Thebes to his two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, who are to rule in turn. However, the two brothers clash in a civil war and kill each other. Creon has now become king so as to restore order in Thebes, proclaiming a state funeral for his former ally Eteocles while ordering the body of Polynices to be left to rot, unburied, outside. Antigone, the younger daughter of Oedipus defies Creon's edict by covering Polynices with earth, thus burying him. This action is punishable by death.

Antigone knows that she will die and breaks her engagement with Creon's son Haemon, She separates herself from her sister Ismène. Creon finds out who is responsible for burying Polynices as Antigone is caught by the guards. Créon tries to hide the crime but realises, in spite of his entreaties that Antigone will continue to defy his edict. Antigone is sentenced to be immured. Haemon kills himself as does Créon's wife and Créon is left to rule Thebes alone.

This is a play that has traditional classic Greek features such as a chorus, a unity of time, place, and an inevitable conclusion but which has many modern values and anachronistic context.

Activity	Skills covered	Ideas for use
<b>Activity 1</b>	Key words-mostly the characters in the play-were selected to help students to develop a context which they can use to talk and write about this play.	This activity is a simple hang-man "game" which students could play on their own, or do as a group activity (possibly as a whole class starter).
<b>Activity 2</b>	This activity helps students to develop their vocabulary and ideas when talking/reading etc., about Antigone. This moves from the word level in the first activity to sentence level.	There are ten key events which students have to put into the correct order. There is scope for individual, group or whole class work. In addition to on-screen work, printed cards can be made available to the students.

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<b>Activity 3</b>	Students have opportunities to develop their listening, creativity, understanding and writing skills.	For this exercise, a key event was chosen from a performance, available on YouTube of the play, Students need to watch the film clip and then write a newspaper report for a fictional newspaper "Thèbes-Soir". A mind map exercise with focussed questions is available to organise material before the actual article is to be written.
<b>Activity 4</b>	The statements were specifically designed to encourage close reading and understanding and the task follows a listening explanation.	This exercise needs to be done in conjunction with the short three minute explanation of the play given on YouTube by a teacher. After watching the embedded video summary, students need to select statements that are correct from a bank of statements. This task can thus be repeated by individuals, groups or a whole class. There is an added challenge of point scoring.
<b>Activity 5</b>	The "Events and their Significance" activity uses five key sound files from a performance of Antigone and is essentially a listening/ viewing assimilation and writing exercise. (Apart from the extract from an important speech by Creon -which was missing in the filmed performance-the voices are those of the actors in the filmed performance on YouTube.)	Students have to listen to the sound bites, identify the character speaking and then focus on why the sequence is important for the play. As these are extracts from the play, students can identify where these sound sequences can be found, can check the accuracy of their understanding
<b>Activity 6</b>	This three part activity will develop students' translation and summary skills as well as oral presentational skills. It is based on a review of the play.	