

Test #3 on *Antigone* and *Electra*: Sample Answers

The answers below are examples from various students' responses to the questions. These responses illustrate good answers to the questions.

Part 1

1. Question: Is Antigone guilty of too much pride?

Sample answer #1: Antigone is not guilty of too much pride. I would say she is passionate and devoted to her brother and more importantly her families respect. She is full of pride and no shame at her actions because she is completely confident that she has done the right thing. She knew before doing so that there will be a punishment. I think that her woman instincts are at play here in that she is merciful and caring to her brother even though, in the eyes of everyone he might've done something wrong. It's like when a child writes on the wall and everyone is yelling at him, including his mother but eventually, she takes him in, gives him a hug because it's her child. Similarly, Polynieces is still her brother and there's an unconditional love over here. She's not full of pride, she's full of dedication.

Sample answer #2: In the parentheses of having too much pride Creon adds "for a woman." Orestes in *Electra* has just as much pride in his family, so much so that he murders his own father, and he is never accused of too much pride. He is respected for trying to restore honor to his family. Neither is Etocles or Polyneices accused of being too prideful-tyrants, yes, but not pride. And so Antigone's crime is having the furor expected of men. It is almost expected of Creon to refuse to give way to Antigone's pleas, because she is a woman. Yet, when Haemon pleads with Creon, Creon's response is to ridicule him for listening to a woman, not to argue with his logic, weakly saying that subordination will not be praised.

Sample answer #3: She is guilty of a lot of pride. When she is caught attempting to bury her brother's body, she goads Creon by calling him a fool ("Think me a fool, if you like; but it may well be that a fool convicts me of folly".) and saying how his law isn't above those of the gods, and even mocks how a lot of his support comes from people who fear him rather than actually respect his ideals and mocks him by saying how they would agree with her. She's very prideful and believes what she is doing is right and it ultimately leads to her being sentenced to death as she says it would be an honor to die for her brother.

2. Question: How does Sophocles' depiction of the gods differ from that of Homer?

Sample answer #1: Sophocles portrays the gods as not divine rulers because the idea of the law influencing what the people do is introduced. There is a democracy noted in Sophocles plays that we did not see in Homers plays, alluding to the idea that the people can create laws, not just the Gods. In Homeric plays, the Gods are the divine rulers. Citizens look to the Gods for help and they influence how events play out because they are the supreme rulers (so to speak).

Sample answer #2: Sophocles portrays the gods as actually sympathetic to Antigone and her brother and they seem to be sort of an all-powerful being that wasn't to be messed with. While in the Iliad, the gods are portrayed more of as imperfect and they have personalities.

Sample answer #3: Sophocles portrays the gods as just and beings who must be obeyed. Antigone's actions could be defended as following the wishes of the gods because they have decreed just laws. However, in Homer's Iliad, the Gods are portrayed as conflicting and flawed beings. They're not always in a unified front like in Antigone, and even Zeus is portrayed as having an easily angered temper.

2. What does Electra feel ashamed about?

Sample answer #1: Electra is ashamed about being obligated to her mother. She has no say regardless of how she feels because she knows she has to do whatever it takes to avenge her father. "Compulsion forces me to act like this. Forgive me!" Electra admitting that compulsion forces her to commit her actions and her asking for forgiveness tells us that she is ashamed of her being obligated.

Sample answer #2: Her mother's expectations of submissiveness did this to Electra. Because her mother refused to acknowledge the pain that Electra went through and continues to go through. Electra feels shame for becoming "less of a woman". She is a woman of noble birth and circumstance so for her not to be married or have children of her own is shameful and the reason she cannot have a family of her own is because of her mother's abuse. Clytemnestra uses Electra as a scapegoat for all the anger and sadness she feels due to having a life that is always out of her control. Clytemnestra expects Electra to swallow the murder of her father and to accept her new reality as her sister did.

Sample answer #3: Electra's refusal to move on from her father's death and her laments and cries and dressing in rags are shameful to her, she knows she should not be acting in this way, yet she is the only one who lamented her father's death, not seeing anyone else mourn him (line 102). She feels a duty to avenge her father's death, and if acting shamefully and continuing to grieve even ten years after her father dies with justice having not been served is the way she has to act in order to do that, then she will do it, even though she is ashamed of her actions and knows they make her seem pathetic, and do not garner too much sympathy anymore.

Sample answer #4: Her mother believes that Electra has no sense of shame because of her actions, however Electra says she does have shame because she knows that she does wrong in the eyes of others but she is different in the way she thinks, not following society but instead having her own opinion and sticking up for her father who was murdered. And because of her mother, she is forced to act as she does and will refuse to act like murder is okay. So her mother is basically saying you don't care what you do and that is how Antigone comes off as disgraceful in her eyes, however Antigone does feel shame that she does not show to others because they just don't understand, much like her sister when she asked to help her get revenge on her mother she told Antigone she will not come with her.

Sample answer #5: Electra sees her mother marrying the killer of her husband as shameful behavior; thus, Electra feels shameful because she also carries the shameful blood of her mother inside her. However, she doesn't feel shameful doing shameful things against her mother because she has her blood. Electra is saying because she has her mother's blood in her, she will also act shamefully like her.

3. Why does Creon listen to the Chorus as opposed to Teresias and Haemon?

Sample answer #1: Creon didn't listen to others rather than the Chorus because of his stubbornness and pride in his judgment but Creon follows Choragus's advice because he is representing some kind of divine advice as not to fight "destiny" or the law of heaven or he will suffer the consequences and Creon fear that.

4. Is justice equivalent to wisdom?

Sample answer #1: Justice does not equate to wisdom/punishment because if that's the case, Orestes killed his mother and Aegisthus. This would mean Orestes' death would be justice as well if someone wanted to take revenge for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus' death. The cycle would never end, and people would assume revenge would equate to justice, regardless of what they're killed for.

Sample answer #2: Justice may be the goal for the family, since they seek revenge for their father. However, it is not equivalent to wisdom for the family nor the city; revenge does not grant them any insight. For this may have soothed the soul of their father as well as relieved themselves of hatred, it does not benefit them anyway else. Their father Agamenon was a selfish ruler and it does not help that Electra and Orestes fail to see that.

Part 2: Question from the lectures on Sophocles

1. Question: Describe the role of the chorus, how they appeared on stage, what musical instrument accompanied their appearance, what is the meaning of "strophe" and "antistrophe"?

Sample answer #1: The instrument that accompanied the chorus is the lyre. The chorus' appears different from the characters in the play being that they all look the same and are all dressed the same. They do not look like characters, rather just figures that are completely isolated from the rest of the cast wearing masks. The chorus consisted of 3-5 men that all looked the same as they were supposed to act in unison. A strophe is a verse and antistrophe is a response to the strophe through odes. During the strophe the chorus moves from right to left and in the antistrophe the chorus moves from left to right, allowing them to return to their original position.

Sample answer #2: The chorus is meant to be seen as a presence with no bias. They have no stake in the events that occur, much like how Sophocles portrays the gods. They have no pride nor stance; they simply guide the audience and the characters to their place in the play. So, if the entity that's meant to be unbiased, can see how poorly Creon handled the situation, ("God moves swiftly to cancel the folly of stubborn men."), then he knows that he must have done something wrong for the Chorus to find fault. The chorus are like the messengers of Sophocle's Gods and if he doesn't listen to the gods, he will be punished accordingly.

The chorus is a neutral all knowing group that serves to give wisdom based on what other people will see. The chorus knows more and has seen more than any other character. They know not what is right or wrong, only what is just.

Metropolitan Museum of Art: Ancient Greek Sculpture

Extra-credit responses: the following submissions for the optional extra-credit assignment are notable in their attention to details on the sculptures and observations about what is and what is not visible in the sculptures from the ancient Greek art collection from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection. You can find the images of the sculptures in the link for the extra-credit assignment on Blackboard.

1. What changes do you notice from the earliest marble statue of the harp player to the funerary monuments of the sixth and fifth century?

Sample answer #1: What I notice from the earliest marble statue of the harp player is the evolution of naturalism in the figures. I realized that art has always built off from one another since nothing was a revolution from anything but is a constant evolution building off of previous styles to form one's own individuality. The harp player is among the first representations featuring a musician, a harpist. The harp player is a comparatively small sculpture with a man sitting on a chair playing a harp. For a prehistoric sculpture, there is not much intricate detail as we are given just the basic eyes, nose, ears, and lips. The face seems to lack distinctive features. But his head seems to be in contrast to his arm, stomach and to his very small ankles and feet. The concept of funerary art in the 6th century were statues of honorary figures and amphora found in graves. In the 5th century, the mood changed to gruesome scenes of war, such as the terracotta volute-krater. But showed great depths of emotion and detail to its figure like the Grave stele of a little girl. Which is an exquisite relief sculpture of a young girl holding two doves. The work and time put into these figures seems to point out that these figures were greatly valued.

2. **What differences do you notice between the *kouros*, the marble statue of a youth, (#2), and the funerary monument for the little girl, (#3)?** What do you think the rigidity of the *kouros* figure symbolizes?

Sample answer #1 (cont'd): The difference I noticed between the Kouros and the Little Girl is how the sculptures build off from one another since there is a considerable amount of artistic

advancement between its time. As we move forward towards the Archaic Period in Ancient Greece, we see how the geometric art moves from the Kouros toward naturalism in the Little Girl. We see a sense of movement and visual freedom in the Archaic Kouros sculpture which was a shift forward in Art into the archaic period. There are very sharp rigid, geometric lines and forms or rectangles for example that indicated the shape of his hair. Though the Kouros reflected Egyptian influence, the Kouros was a popular form of sculpture that represented a young standing male with noble rank. His psyche is still quite stoic and immobile. He is stepping forward which is a representation of movement which was quite significant during that time. Signifying a new beginning perhaps, the reopening of Greek Trade with Egypt. The reason for the rigidity of the Kouros figure signifies permanence in the afterlife but also to be remembered how powerful they were when they were alive. The Little Girl is a stone sculpture carved from marble found 1785 in Paros, in the Aegean Sea. It was created during the classical period in 450-440 B.C. During that time there was a huge shift in idealizing human bodies that were proportionate and Naturalistic. She stands in a very relaxed contrapposto stance holding two doves. With a very relaxed gaze at her doves. The complexity of the waves in her hair and clothes signified sculptors were now able to create delicate details due to their advancement in drills and artistic technique.

3. On the amphorae, (#'s 5 and 6), the images depict a scene involving several figures. How do the painters represent the relationships between the figures? How would you describe the differences between the images painted on each vase?

Sample answer #2: During the rise of Greek Culture in which there weren't many scenes of battle because in Greek mythology the focus was less on the moment of action and more on the tension in anticipation. The composition or the representations of the relationships between the figures is organized and divided into registers. We have some geometry on the base and on the handles. The narrative unfolds in front of us based on the interaction of the figures. However, there's a reliance on geometric patterns and a lot of variation of geometric bands and patterns all the way around the top register. A register is a band that organizes the composition into horizontal bands. For example, in number six, the narrative moves from left to right, bottom to top. Depicting actual war. In the second band it seems that the higher gods are fighting. With the weight of their shoulders scrunched up towards their ears you can feel the tension while in the back of the Krater they are trying to make peace. On the third band we see the warriors in battle as they have chariots and horses trampling over their opponents. The viewers can sense the tension as they are in battle with the weapons and guards in their hands. We read their bodies as deeply human who are physically engaged. In the Amphora or #5, the central image is a narrative scene, with geometric patterns on the borders. The Black and White figure painting on the red terracotta neck-amphora makes up the figures. The man and woman standing on top of the chariot indicate their dominance. Those below them are of lower rank. Details within their form especially the woman shows they are important. As they wear elaborately patterned cloaks rendered by means of delicate and meticulous incision. During the geometric period, vases were used as grave markers. In which one would come to the grave of their loved one and pour wine or liquid into the vase as a ceremonial offering. The slip which is the black ink makes up the figures themselves in #5. In the red figure, #6 the black ink denotes the negative space so they create the figures by outlining them and adding details. The red figure is the visible terracotta coming through the areas of negative space of the black slip. In the early and later classical periods their

craters were way smaller being a foot and half high in which they had bases. People would use them in their home, sometimes they'd be decorative and left empty or they would be filled with oils or liquids.

Sample answer #3

1) What changes do you notice from the earliest marble statue of the harp player to the funerary monuments of the sixth and fifth century?

A: The earliest marble statue of the harp player is a little less detailed than the 5th & 6th century statues. The harp doesn't have strings & is sculpted into the artist's body, seemingly going through the player's arm and lower right abdomen. The head of the earliest statue is a bit elongated, doesn't have hair, and its facial & body features aren't detailed enough to tell whether it was a man or woman. The chair is very low & the person's feet aren't touching the ground making the person who is sitting in it look small and it is true that people long ago were shorter on average than humans are today. The person also seems to have a band around their stomach which looks like it can be a skirt. The 5th & 6th century statues however, are more detailed. The man in the 6th century statue has a better sculpted face with the eyes more indented & realistic. His body also reveals that he was a man and his legs & torso are more detailed. He has hair which the earliest statue didn't and what looks like a necklace on his neck. One similarity between the 6th century & earliest statue however is that the 6th statue also has something sculpted into it. The man is seemingly holding something behind his back with both his hands unless just like the first figure had the harp sculpted into it. The 5th century statue is also substantially more detailed than the earliest statue. Starting from the top, the girl's hair was styled and it was displayed in the statue, her ear(s) were also shaped realistically while the earliest statue's was just a hole in the side of the head. The robe/clothes that the girl is wearing are very intricate. Compared to the earliest statue, you could almost imagine what the person from the 5th century looked like in real life.

2) What differences do you notice between the *kouros*, the marble statue of a youth, (#2), and the funerary monument for the little girl, (#3)? What do you think the rigidity of the *kouros* figure symbolizes?

A: The differences between the statues from the 5th & 6th century statues are also very apparent. The 6th century statue has his hair flowing down with a headband on top while the 5th century girl had her hair styled and very intricately placed & held to make it look wavy. The face of the man was long and slim compared to the girls which looked like a baby face. The face of the 6th century statue also seems to have chunks & bits that fell off while the girl's face was smoother. The man had an accessory, a necklace with what seems like an animal tooth hanging from it while the girl didn't have any visible. The hands of the girl were a lot more detailed than the hands of the man. The girl had her fingernails & knuckles visible while the man did not. Both of the statues were barefoot & their body sizes were proportional to the people that we see today.

The man wasn't wearing clothes so you could see the detail on his body while girl had clothes on. The girl was also holding birds and seemingly cuddling them while the man wasn't holding anything.

3. On the amphorae, (#'s 5 and 6), the images depict a scene involving several figures. How do the painters represent the relationships between the figures? How would you describe the differences between the images painted on each vase?

A: The relationship between the figures in painting #5 seemed peaceful. There were two figures in the back, holding ropes connected to horses while the other two figures seemed to be attending to the horses & the people in charge of them. The men seem to be illustrated in black while the women were shown in white. There was also a man in the front of the horses, maybe looking out to make sure everything's going well. On the top of the vase however, there are people fighting. In image #6, most of the vase is people fighting. There are people on horses, with spears, weapons, helmets, and more. The only part of the vase where people seem to be a bit more civil is at the top of the vase on one side of it. There seems to be two people (maybe kings) opposing sides. Their facial expressions don't look happy but they are not fighting with each other. The vase in #6 compared to the one in #5 seems to be maybe during the beginning or the midst of the war while the vase in #5 is the end of it since it was made a century later. The vase made in the 6th century is also a bit more intricate than the one made in the 5th. Its designs are more symmetrical and the pottery seems to be finished a bit more smoothly. Both vases are painted in black, gold, and white and only the one made in the 6th century has a lid. The designs on the vase made in the 5th century also stop midway to the bottom while the 6th century has designs covering the whole vase whether it be people or patterns. Lastly, the 6th century vase has more patterns included in it than the 5th century one.

Sample answer #4

1. The "Marble Seated Harp Player" from the Early Bronze Age (2800-2700) differentiates from "Marble Grave Stele of a Little Girl" and "Marble Statue of a Kouros (youth)" because of the first depictions displayed of a musician. You can tell its importance by the precise and sensitive carvings of the arms while the facial features are somewhat nondescript but the puckering of lips may suggest singing. The harp player is being supported by a chair that allows the statue to sit up straight. The "Marble Statue of a Kouros (youth) from the 6th century presents the earliest human figure carving made of marble. Unlike the "Marble Seated Harp Player", the statue appears to be idealized, showing no signs of steatopygia and having made the body of the sculpture equalized. This statue was also created with no support but with advanced technological art that allowed the weight distribution to hold about two thousand pounds of marble using just his ankles. Much like the full rounded statues of the "Marble Seated Harp Player" and "Marble Statue of a Kouros" which displayed full rounded display which means it is three dimensional and freestanding, the "Marble Grave Stele of a Little Girl" gives us two dimensional space. It contains high relief that visually adds dark and light shadows concentrated by the light, and shows the body coming out from a side perspective. All of these sculptures have different weight distribution as well as are created from different side perspectives to be looked at.

2. The kouros and the funerary monument for the little girl differentiate themselves by the way death is displayed. Both were used for ancient grave markers, however the funerary monument for the little girl displayed innocent youth by saying goodbye to the doves as she kissed them goodbye. On the other hand, kouros shows a strong representation of an idealized archaic youth, presenting nobility as a dedication to the Greek gods. You can tell him athleticism by his archaic smile which signifies health. I think the rigidity of the statue symbolizes honor and standing up for your people.

3. In the artwork “ Terracotta neck-amphora (jar) with lid and knob (27.16)”, the several figures seem to be telling a story of what was normalized in 520 B.C as slaves were forced upon to do what the hierarchy asked them to do. The figures seem to look as if they are in the middle of a servant exchange. There is one servant leading the front as what seems to be protection, a servant in the back and one accompanying them by playing a kithara in the middle. However, in “ Terracotta volute-krater (bowl for mixing wine and water)” the relationship between the figures show that they are at war with weapons being thrown by youths and women. Most of the centaurs were illustrated dead, making the Greeks appear as legends. Both of these images appear of certain figures having more power and control over other figures just like Greek mythology.