

Greek Drama

I. Origin of Tragedy

A. Religious festivals in honor of Dionysus

1. City of Dionysia—religious festival held in spring
2. Dithyramb (dith'ī ram)—hymn sung in honor of the god
3. Chorus—group of about 50 who sang and danced

B. Thespiis (thes'pīs)—"Father of Drama" (6th Century B.C.)

1. Won prize for tragedy in 535 B.C.
2. Said to have introduced first actor and, thus, dialogue

C. Aeschylus (ēs'kī lūs)—(525–426 B.C.)

1. Added second actor
2. Wrote trilogies on unified themes

D. Sophocles (sōf'ō klēz)—(496–406 B.C.)

1. Added third actor
2. Fixed number of Chorus to fifteen
3. Introduced painted scenery
4. Made each play of the trilogy separate in nature

E. Euripides (ū rīp'ī dēz)—(486–406 B.C.)

1. Reduced participation of Chorus in main action
2. Relied on heavy prologues and *deus ex machina* endings

II. Structure of Theater

A. Theatron (thē'a trōn)—*seeing place* where audience sat

B. Orchestra (or kēēs tra)—circular dancing place where actors and Chorus performed

C. Thymele (thimē lē)—altar to Dionysus in center of orchestra

D. Skene (skē'nē)—building used as dressing room

E. Proskenion (prōs kā'nī ōn)—facade of skene building which served as backdrop

F. Parodos (par'ō dos)—entrance to the theater used by Chorus

III. Actors and Acting

A. Hypocrites (hip'ō kri tēs)—*the answerer*—playing roles

1. Actor and dramatist originally the same—playwright took leading role
2. Never have more than three—changed characters
 - a. protagonist (prō tāg'ō nīst)
 - b. deuteragonist (dōō tāg'ō nīst) — part 2nd in importance
 - c. tritagonist (trī tāg'ō nīst) — part 3rd in importance
3. All male performers—played female roles also

B. Costumes and Masks

1. Long, flowing robes—colored symbolically
2. High boots, often with raised soles
3. Larger than life masks—made of linen, wood, cork
 - a. identified age, gender, emotion
 - b. exaggerated features—large eyes, open mouth

IV. Chorus

A. Music and Dance

1. Musical accompaniment for choral odes—flute, lyre, percussion
2. Dance defined as expressive rhythmical movement

B. Function

1. Sets overall mood and expresses theme
2. Adds beauty (theatrical effectiveness) through song and dance
3. Gives background information
4. Divides action and offers reflections on events
5. Questions, advises, expresses opinion—usually through Chorus leader

V. Conventions

A. Unities

1. Action—simple plot
2. Time—single day
3. Place—one scene throughout

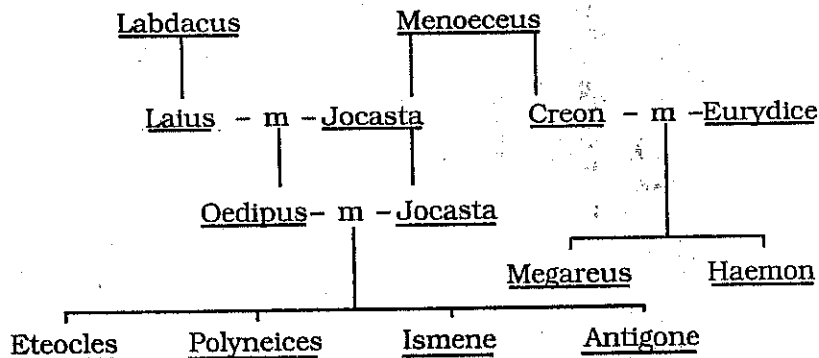
B. Messenger

1. Tells news happening away from scene
2. Reports acts of violence not allowed to be seen

C. Limitations of Theater

1. Continuous presence of Chorus
2. No intermissions; continuous flow of action and choral odes
3. No lighting; no curtains

Getting the Story Straight



(one suggested pronunciation guide)

Lăb dă cus

Lăy us

Jō kās tā

Ē dī pūs / Ēd ĭ pūs

Ē tē ō klēz

Pō lē nī sēz

Īz mē nē

Ān tī gō nē

Crē ōn

Yū rī dī sē

Mē gā rē ūs

Hē mōn

Mēn ē kē ūs

Important character in play

(not on family chart)

Tī rē sē ās (Teiresias)

Summary Questions
MUST KNOW
Oedipus Story

The House of Thebes – Oedipus, Antigone, and The Seven Against Thebes

1. Answer the following questions about ~~Thebes~~ ^{Thebes}.

a. What is ~~Thebes~~ ^{Thebes}' ruling style?

b. What is ~~his~~ ^{Creon's} decision regarding the burial of the dead?

2. What happened during the infamous "Seven against Thebes"?

3. What happens to the children of Oedipus?

4. Recount the tragic story of Oedipus from its origins.

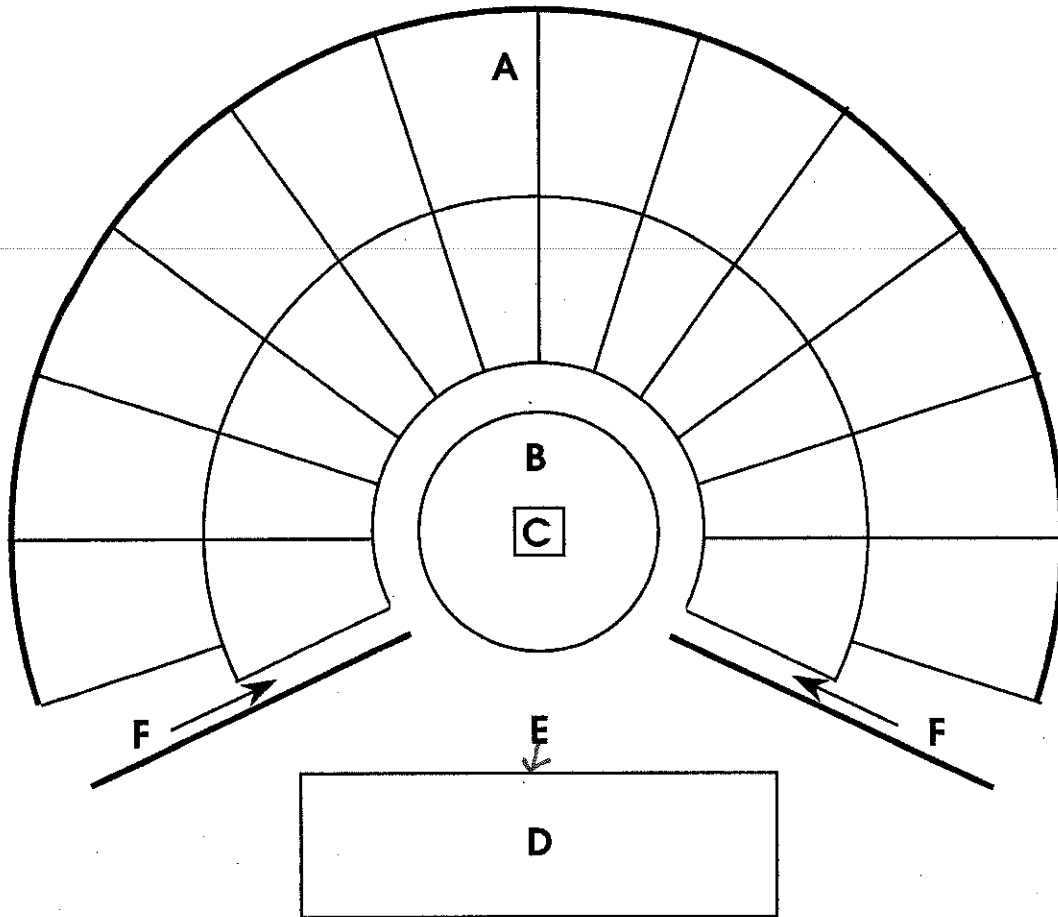
Are oracles still found today?

How much faith does modern humanity have in oracles?

Do people today see a person or family as "curses"?

Plan of a Typical Greek Theater

Directions: Label the lettered parts.



A _____
B _____
C _____

D _____
E _____
F _____

Pronunciation Guide For Proper Names

Achilles - (uh KIL eez)	Eurystheus - (u REEZ thee uhs)
Acrisius - (uh KREE see uhs)	Epimetheus - (ep i MEE thee uhs)
Aegisthus - (uh GEE thee uhs)	Hades - (HAE deez)
Aeschylus - (ES kuh luhs)	Hephaestus - (hi FES tuhs)
Aeneas - (i NEE uhs)	Hermes - (HER moez)
Agamemnon - (ag uh MEM non)	Icarus - (IK uh ruhs)
Andromeda - (an DROM e da)	Io - (EYE oh)
Antigone - (an TIG uh nee)	Iphigenia - (if uh juh NEYE uh)
Aphrodite - (af ruh DEYE tee)	Medea - (mi DEE uh)
Ares - (AIR-eez)	Narcissus - (na SIS uhs)
Argonauts (AHR guh nants)	Oedipus - (ED uh puhs)
Ariadne - (uh REE ad nae)	Orestes - (aw RES teez)
Artemis - (AHR -tuh-muhs)	Pelias - (pae LE uhs)
Augean - (aw JEE uhn)	Perseus - (PER see uhs)
Baucis - (BAW kiss)	Philemon - (FILL ee mon)
Bacchus - (BAK-uhs)	Phineus - (FIN ee uhs)
Cepheus - (suh FEE us)	Procrustes - (proh KRUS teez)
Cerberus - (SUR buh ruhs)	Prometheus - (pruh - MEE thee uhs)
Ceres - (SEER eez)	Proserpine - (PROS ur peen)
Charon - (KAIR uhn)	Psyche - (SEYE kee)
Circe - (SUR see)	Pygmalion - (pig MAY lee uhn)
Clytemnestra - (cly TEM nes tra)	Pyramus - (PEER amus)
Cyclops - (sye KLOPS)	Scylla & Charybdis - (SIL uh, kuh RIB dis)
Daedalus - (ded L uhs)	Theseus - (THEE see uhs)
Diomedes - (daye O mee deez)	Thisbe - (THIS bee)
Dionysus - (deye-uh-NEE-suhs)	Tiresias - (teye REE see uhs)
Eetes - (EE teez)	Zephyr - (ZEF uhr)