

**A LEVEL**  
*Candidate Style Answers*

# **DRAMA AND THEATRE**

H459  
For first teaching in 2015

**Candidate style answers  
with commentary –  
Antigone**

Version 1



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# Introduction

This resource has been produced by the A Level Drama and Theatre assessor team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

The sample assessment material for these answers and commentary can be found on the A Level Drama and Theatre web page and accessed via the following link:  
<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-drama-and-theatre-h059-h459-from-2016/>

# Question 1 Candidate style answer – high level

Describe your directorial vision for staging this extract, and then annotate the extract to show how you would direct the actors to use their voices.

[30]

In this extract, the playwright establishes a different relationship with a contemporary audience in comparison to the relationship the Chorus would have had with the audience in Sophocles' day. In Sophocles' day, the audience would have already known the background to the story (because it was based upon the Greek myths); however, contemporary audiences would not. Therefore, Anouilh has used the Chorus to tell the audience the important background details that they do not already know. Because of this, the Chorus must break through the imaginary fourth wall and create a connection between performer and spectator - this idea should dominate a director's vision for the extract and will influence many choices.

One such choice could be the positioning of the Chorus. At the start of this extract, the Chorus could be positioned closest to the audience - perhaps sitting on the edge of a thrust stage commenting upon the action that is about to take place behind them. They should use direct eye contact and, in a Brechtian style, the house lights could be kept on when the Chorus are talking to help make the audience feel connected to the action on stage and also to expose the theatricality of the production.

In this extract the Chorus' speech seems to represent a traditional ancient Greek parabasis that would have been common in Sophocles' play (where the Chorus deliver a speech direct to the audience). This speech highlights the theatricality of the production and helps to remind the audience they are watching a play - in this they even talk about the genre of the play, 'tragedy'. Therefore, for this extract, the Chorus needs to be seen as completely separate to the performers on stage. They are not yet involved in the action and are more like spectators than performers. This could be further enforced by the members of the Chorus moving to sit in the auditorium once they have finished their speech. This will ensure the Chorus seem more of a part of the audience than part of the action. Anouilh's Chorus need to seem more detached from the other performers.

When staging Anouilh's Chorus in this extract, it is also worth noting that the playwright has made several significant changes to the content of their speech in comparison to Sophocles' Choral speeches. In Sophocles' version, the Chorus speak about the danger of one person thinking themselves more powerful than the gods; however, in Anouilh's extract, the Chorus instead focuses upon the idea of tragedy and fate - the idea that everything is inevitable or fate, 'everyone's destiny is known'. It takes away the idea of individuality. This becomes a central idea of their speech and therefore this idea could influence the Choral movement. As the Chorus speak, their words could be accompanied by sounds of a machine, as if they are part of the 'machine' of life that they speak of that 'runs without friction'. Movements should also seem fluent and smooth, in synch with the sounds. The idea of a machine could also be shown through the costume and make up - the person playing the role of the Chorus should not have any individual or distinguishing marks and perhaps wear a white mask or painted face.

However, in contrast to the fluency of the Chorus, Antigone has to contradict all of the other characters on stage at this point. She is a character completely driven by instinct and, in this scene, we see her trying to be controlled by the machine that is society. She now has to ask to sit down - something she previously would have done instinctively. Therefore, at this point, we need to see that her movements have been completely restricted. Each time she moves her body, her movement should be blocked by a guard. This would help to highlight the playwright's own intention: to use the play as a protest against fascism in France in 1942. She wanted to show what life was like for people living under the strict Nazi regime after Hitler's army had occupied France and how controlled their life was.

Although Creon and Antigone represent complete opposites, in this extract, I would not direct Creon to show himself as a complete villain. He does show moments of sensitivity and there are points in the play where Antigone seems more forceful than Creon. The playwright does inject this character with more human qualities than just being merely a villain or tyrant and indeed this does mirror the original context of the play - the playwright based the character of Creon on the Nazi oppressors, yet such Nazi oppressors did actually allow the play to be staged showing that they weren't all controlling and authoritative. This idea could be seen when Creon first enters the extract and says, 'let go of that young lady at once.' He could tenderly touch her arm or move her away from the guards. When he speaks directly to her, his voice could change from authoritative to soft, even gentle.

To see the text extract, click here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242822-unit-h459-41-de-constructing-texts-for-performance-antigone-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

You may find it useful to print off the sample assessment paper and match the text extract to these comments. Candidate comments should line up to the relevant part of the text.

*The Chorus have to use the same constant rhythm and inflections within their delivery to show that they know how events will play out - any struggles against this are useless. They must speak in a constant rhythm to show a lack of emotion-they know the ending so it is no surprise.*

*The Chorus must break through the fourth wall and address the audience directly when using pronouns such as 'yourself'. They could place emphasis on such pronouns to make the audience realise they are being directly addressed and raise the volume for such direct addresses.*

*The rhythm of their words has to be almost melodic at this point because they are describing how the nature of tragedy can be tranquil and calm because the end is already known, it is peaceful. Therefore, some members of the Chorus could accompany this speech with quiet melodic chanting in the background almost like Gregorian chants.*

*The guards should speak in a colloquial manner to match the colloquial names that the playwright has given them. Their rhythm should be erratic and should lack fluency in comparison to the melodic words of the Chorus.*

*The Guards do have individual character traits - Jonas seems slightly more sympathetic to Antigone therefore they should be given their own distinct vocal features rather than sounding the same. They could also be given different accents to help show this.*

*Jonas will eventually help Antigone and so his voice needs to sound slightly softer than the other guards' voices. Jonas could occasionally seem to forget that the other guard is listening and his voice could slip into softer tones, such as when he says, 'a fine pickle' as if he is talking to himself. However, when he realises he is being listened to, his voice could suddenly become lower in pitch, and use falling intonation to sound more serious and aggressive and for lines such as 'she's a slippery customer!' He should not use rising intonation on such exclamations, but lower his inflections to show that he is trying maintain the appearance of a tough, aggressive guard here.*

*Jonas' vocals must show that he doesn't believe that this girl is Oedipus' daughter. He could use high-pitched expression to show his incredulity. He must treat her as if she is inferior to him, a typical 'tart' and speak in a patronising tone when telling her that she has 'dirty hands' and place stress upon the word 'you' as if suggesting that she is just as inferior as he is. 'The cheek' should be said with rising intonation to reveal his shock at her attempts to maintain superiority whilst being a prisoner.*

*Binns could be interpreted as a man who doesn't really care about his job but just wants money; he symbolises those who were impassive to the oppressive regime. He could say his lines in a slow, distracted manner perhaps whilst doing something else-smoking perhaps, as if not really paying much attention to his work as a guard, he would prefer to be drinking. However, when Jonas asks him 'any ideas' he should answer quickly, leaving little space between the question and his answer-he knows where to drink and is happy to talk about it. He also knows Jonas is slightly more superior to him.*

*Snout is slightly different - he seems weaker and less macho. His question about the wives should be said hesitantly as if he doesn't know whether he will get mocked for saying this-he could use rising intonation on the word 'wives' to show he's not really sure whether he should ask the question. He is the lowest of the guards.*

*Snout seems to want to impress the others with his knowledge - he speaks slightly more formally with words such as 'chap' and uses fewer colloquialisms. He seems more ambitious than the other two and more serious and so should use a lower pitch as if suggesting he wants to be taken seriously. He could have more of an RP accent than a regional accent.*

*Binns should interject quickly with his next suggestion of where to go drinking. His speed and pace should show that he is getting excited about the thought of drinking.*

*Jonas uses pauses whenever he says something negative about his wife, or thinks about other 'girls'. This suggests a moral conscience. After each pause, he should speak in a different tone as if quickly trying to change the subject and move away from his improper thoughts.*

*Snout is a pragmatist and thinks things through unlike Binns, therefore, Snout's vocal pace should be more controlled and measured, as if he is thinking about his words before he speaks them. There could be a slight delay before he speaks as if thinking it over in his head.*

*When Antigone asks to sit down, this should be said in a very quiet, weak voice. She is a character who likes to act upon impulse, to have to ask to do something as simple as sit down would pain this character.*

*When Jonas says, 'give her a chair' he should say this kindly and softly and then aggressively and quickly say, 'but don't let go of her' as if trying to show that he is macho rather than kind.*

*Jonas should completely change when Creon enters. His tone must now sound like a military man shouting on a parade ground in an effort to impress Creon.*

*Creon wants to maintain the appearance of the ultimate ruler and oppressor. He should emphasise the word 'I' to stress that his word is final. However, he should lower his voice when he says, 'I told you not to tell anyone' this does reveal a slight weakness - he is trying to hide his sensitivity from people in order to maintain control.*

*Jonas should speak quickly in his replies to Creon and try to leave no gaps between Creon's last words and his first words - he does not want to upset this man. Jonas' vocals should now seem breathless and jumpy. He is now nervous. He is the only one of the guards who speaks and this suggests his authority over the others.*

*Creon should ask her his questions quietly, especially when talking about how he has 'forbidden anyone to go near' he does not like admitting in public that people are not following his orders, especially family and so he is embarrassed. This could also suggest he feels a little guilty about making this ruling.*

*Jonas thinks that he will impress Creon with his in-depth knowledge of Antigone's actions. He should start to enjoy telling the details, his vocals should now slow down and he should sound less breathless. He should take his time as if enjoying embellishing the story. With each punctuation mark he should pause.*

*Jonas should use rising intonation and a high-pitched voice here when he describes seeing Antigone, 'grabbing away with her bare hands.' He is astonished that a woman would do this.*

*He is enjoying talking about her crime - he could keep changing his volume as if to entertain his audience, 'do you think she stopped?' could be said loudly and then pause before he gives the loud and high pitched answers, 'not a bit of it!' The exclamatory sentences are showing how much he is enjoying telling this story and his hyperbole also shows this, 'she fought like a tiger.' He could say these lines in a serious tone as if to emphasise how well he did. When he says 'let her go' he could say it in a high-pitched voice as if trying to imitate a female voice-he is trying to amuse his audience.*

*Creon's line, 'is this true' should be said in a disbelieving tone - he is irritated by Jonas' dramatic telling and doesn't know whether to believe it.*

*Jonas should sense the disbelieving tone and become more serious, he should speak quietly and more professionally now.*

*Creon's language now needs to seem less composed. He is shocked by Antigone's confession and worried about what this will mean for him. He is much quieter and is stumbling over his words. He seems to start a sentence and doesn't know how to finish it. By the end, he seems to have gained back some composure and speaks in a more professional and business-like manner - his speed should increase as he issues commands. When he speaks to the guards and gives them commands, he should do so loudly, when he talks about Antigone, 'take off her handcuffs' he should speak in a softer tone, we need to see a hint of sensitivity at this point. He is also in shock.*

# Commentary

The first part of the question asks for the candidate's directorial vision for staging the extract. The second part asks for the extract to be annotated to show how the actors could be directed to use their voices.

The response opens with a useful consideration of the position of the chorus and the comparison of this version with earlier (Greek) treatments and makes a number of directorially inspired observations. There is knowledge and understanding of both ancient theatrical conventions and ways of tackling the extract.

It continues with discussion about fate and individuality, revealing a competent grasp of the essence of the play as a whole and the challenges facing performers in staging the particular extract.

The contrasts between chorus and the Antigone character are well drawn and there is clearly considerable breadth of knowledge that goes beyond a mere Brechtian approach.

The candidate focuses on movement for a time and then makes the points about the Nazi influences, contemporary with Anouilh. It is a mature and well structured response.

There are some parts where development of ideas and some issues are less well drawn and further links with the actual lines in the passage might have been helpful in supporting the argument.

The annotations very directly tackle the use of the voice part of the question, and they are clear and definite to enable actors to interpret the director's vision and produce a credible performance for any audience. The Gregorian chants suggestion sounds very promising and a good experimental angle to take.

It therefore overall falls into the top level, 5, and just above the mid point as excellent and highly developed.

## Question 2 Candidate style answer – high level

As a director, explain and justify how you could use staging in a present-day performance of *Antigone*.

[30]

Whilst this play will not be staged in a country that is experiencing Nazi occupation, as it was in Anouilh's first 1944 staging, the ideas about Nazi occupation in 1944 are still relatable with many modern-day examples of countries undergoing tyranny and or having to resist oppressive regimes. A director should try to maintain a balance between making it relatable and contemporary for a modern audience and remaining faithful to the playwright's original political messages. For this reason, I would use costumes that blur both the modern and the historical. I want to show that the themes and ideas are universal and not confined to one country or time.

Lines are blurred in conflict and Antigone should not be instantly identified as the good character, nor should Creon be the bad character. The playwright herself was not treated badly by her Nazi oppressors - she was allowed to have her play produced. Therefore, costume should be used to make subtle suggestions. Creon could appear more like a business man wearing a crumpled suit. He should look tired and over-worked showing that he does work hard to avoid trouble, indeed he works hard to try to spare Antigone's life-he should not be portrayed as the brutal and evil tyrant. Indeed, it was one of the playwright's intentions that Antigone and her Uncle Creon were made more equal, rather than the ancient Greek portrayal of Antigone very much as the hero and Creon the bully. Albert Camus did state, 'Antigone is right but Creon is not wrong.' Camus went on to argue for equilibrium to be established between the two antagonists. I would also try to achieve this. Creon's costume should not portray him as the all-powerful and tyrannical ruler but should make him more relatable. He should look more like the pragmatic politician or thinker rather than the powerful military ruler that he is sometimes portrayed as in Sophocles' original version of the play. The actor playing this role could also be smaller and slighter than Antigone.

In this play we should see the characters as victims of what tragedy can do to them and they should all look vulnerable. The play presents a clear message that the characters are doomed and they are all determined by forces beyond their control. This idea could be enforced by the idea of puppets and puppeteers. For example, when the Guards recount their story of how they found Antigone with her brother's body, a digital projection of puppets re-enacting the story could be shown. The use of puppets would also help to get around the classical fact that deaths often take place off stage – therefore a puppet show of the significant deaths could be used, such as when Eurydice's death is announced. The puppets could also be used to visualise the back story, such as when the Chorus impart information to the audience-such as at the start when they describe Antigone's family background.

Size is an important way that their vulnerability and lack of power could be reinforced. As well as puppets, the staging could tower over the performers as if suggesting that they are all vulnerable and weak in the fated universe in which they live. To convey this idea, I would use Doric columns which are movable (as a nod to the ancient Greek inspiration behind this play). These large columns could be moved and form different parts of the stage design. The columns could be used at points to project various videos onto, even projecting the Chorus' speech. As these columns are moved from place to place, the sound effects of huge machine/cogs turning could be played to reinforce the idea that these characters are parts of a tragic machine that keeps turning-nothing they do will change their outcome. They are parts of the machine of life and nothing they do will change this.

The Chorus continually remind us that we are watching a play and therefore the audience should be in no doubt of the theatricality of the entire piece. The metatheatrical aspects of this play could be highlighted through the stage design, therefore characters themselves should move the pieces of scenery or even switch on lights which would be appropriate for lines such as Creon's line to Antigone, 'you have cast me the villain in this little play of yours.' I would make use of Brecht's idea to use a half curtain throughout the performance and this would enable the audience to see set changes being made in front of them. This non-naturalistic style of presenting would ensure that the audience are not simply voyeurs peering through an imaginary fourth wall. It would help them to remain objective and learn lessons from the play that they could apply to their own lives.

To help ensure the audience realise that there is no imaginary fourth wall, I would reject the use of a traditional proscenium arch stage when choosing a venue for this play. The arch can often help to frame the drama and make the audience feel as though they are peering through an imaginary wall. Instead, I would choose a more informal, less traditional theatre space. The theatre space must allow for the half curtain to be used. Therefore, I would use a thrust stage which thrusts out into the theatre on three sides. This thrust stage could be used for when the Chorus speaks. The person playing the role of the Chorus should look directly at the audience and address them. Such a theatre space will also allow actors to enter the stage through the audience through vomitory entrances. At the start of the play, the Chorus could enter from such an exit showing that, from their first entrance, they are more connected to the audience than the world of the performers. Whereas the other characters such as Antigone should enter the play from an entrance upstage and seem much more separate from the audience's world.

This use of space and entrances will help to show an audience that there is no imaginary fourth wall and, just like the blurred lines in conflict, or the blurred lines between victim and villain in this play, the boundaries between audience and actor are blurred. In this play, the performers are presenting a story that has already happened - there can be no suspense or tension, we can't be emotionally swept along because everything 'has already happened'. Therefore, it is important that a realistic or naturalistic approach is not taken when presenting this play. The audience must remember the theatricality of the performance and remain objective spectators.

## Commentary

The question asks candidates as if a director to explain and justify how they could use staging in a present-day production of the whole play.

This response goes straight into pointing out the differences with Nazi oppression and the comparisons in today's world in terms of oppression and makes those points effectively.

The blurring of modern and ancient costumes is a good suggestion and the staging element is addressed thoroughly. As costumes are discussed more, there is a competent conjoining of points about politics and power and status. The more subtle use of costumes is a clever suggestion to blend the extremes of the antagonists favoured by previous generations.

The use of puppets and puppeteers is convincingly discussed to present a coherent part of the staging, with contrasting sizes being symbolically important. In the set design the movable columns is very simple but effective and further reveals the candidate's grasp of staging.

The firm rejection of the fourth wall and proscenium is totally credible and the argument is sustained by points about tension, entrances, space and proxemics.

It is firmly a Level 5 response, though the candidate appears to believe that the playwright was a woman. A little further exposition of how a naturalistic production might look to give added weight to the style chosen might have been expected.

## Question 1 Candidate style answer – mid level

Describe your directorial vision for staging this extract, and then annotate the extract to show how you would direct the actors to use their voices.

[30]

For this extract, I would want to achieve a Brechtian style of theatre. I would present the extract on a bare, stark stage. Not only would this allow the audience's attention to remain focused upon the important ideas and not to become distracted, it would also help to show the stark surroundings that Antigone now finds herself in whilst imprisoned. She protests that she is Oedipus' daughter and she is far from used to being in such environments and the stage should reflect this. It should look dirty and muddy, perhaps with little in the way of furniture or light. When she sits down it should be on a cold, hard object rather than a chair. There could be a blue light used to convey the idea that it is cold and Antigone should keep shivering throughout.

Whilst the Chorus speak at the start of the extract, I would use Brecht's idea of having a half curtain so that the audience can see the set and costume changes being made to set up the stage to show the guard's area. This would help to remind the audience that they are watching a play and would fit with the Chorus' words that this is a 'tragedy'. They cannot forget that they are in a theatre.

Brecht wanted audiences to focus upon the events on stage rather than the emotions of a character and I would ensure that the actors tried to present the roles with some emotional restraint. This is particularly important for Antigone's role at this point. She should not be hysterical, but she could be calm and accepting of her fate. This would help the audience to engage with the messages that were being presented to them about tragedy and the idea that their fate had been determined from the start. Antigone should seem still when she says lines such as 'I shan't run away.'

Costume could be used at this point to show power and instead of using detailed, realistic costumes, I would make use of small symbols to help convey important messages. For example, the Guards could wear some form of military costume (perhaps medals) to show that, even though in the social order they are lower than Antigone, at this point their military links to the King give them power over her. Whereas, Antigone could be dressed in torn clothes that seem unfit for the environment that she is now in. In contrast to the Guard's heavy leather boots, Antigone could wear no shoes and be bare-footed to show her vulnerability and lack of power at this point. In contrast, before Creon enters the stage we could hear his heavy boots as he walks to create a sense of tension about the ruler entering. This would then contrast with his gentle and caring lines towards her. This would help to show the opposition in his character-while he has to rule with the firm grip, he doesn't want to find Antigone guilty.

In conclusion, I would use a minimal and bare style but would add small symbolic details to help convey the important information to the audience.

To see the text extract, click here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242822-unit-h459-41-de-constructing-texts-for-performance-antigone-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

You may find it useful to print off the sample assessment paper and match the text extract to these comments. Candidate comments should line up to the relevant part of the text.

*When they start by saying 'So' they could do this loudly and then wait, as if trying to get the audience's attention - they are speaking directly to the audience and this needs to be clear.*

*When they say, 'a sudden' they should speed up their delivery as if to make it more tense, but then slow down when they say, 'no need to do anything' - as if to show you can't do anything to avoid fate.*

*They should become quieter when they start to speak of silence. The speech should now become calmer - they are trying to make tragedy should peaceful and something that does not have any suspense. They could use a soothing tone of voice.*

*They should shout 'fit for a King' and bow as they say it to show their respect for Creon who will enter soon.*

*When they say 'little Antigone' they need to show that they are showing some compassion towards Antigone - it needs a softer tone of voice. They know this will be a tragedy.*

*Jonas has complete confidence in his actions and should speak forcefully - he likes to follow orders and please Creon. He just wants to get his job done. He should speak quickly as if he is efficient.*

*Antigone is angry at this point but she knows she has no power - she must ask them to 'tell them to take their filthy hands off' but she is asking Jonas which suggests he is a little more gentle or reasonable with her. Therefore, he should keep using a reasonable tone of voice and remain polite.*

*Antigone is brave, she should shout this line, 'I don't care about dying.' Yet she is stubborn, she should say this line, 'I won't have them touch me' in a more erratic way perhaps pausing between each word as if she is struggling to get free.*

*Binns could speak in a German accent to show the playwright's context - the Nazi occupiers in France.*

*Binns is interested in having a good time and is indifferent to Antigone. He should speak in an excited way when they start talking about drinking. His speech could become quicker.*

*Binns needs to lack intelligence and is only interested in drinking. He could say 'you really did get blotto that time!' in between hysterical laughter. He might even seem drunk at this point, sometimes slurring his words. He represents the people who were indifferent at the time the play was written and followed orders.*

*Jonas is a little more cautious and so should speak using a more measured manner. Perhaps he pauses before words, showing he is thinking about them.*

*Jonas needs to shout as if to alert the other guards to the fact that Creon is now here.*

*Creon needs to pause for a while before speaking - he is pragmatic and will not rush into speaking. Jonas addresses him with 'Sir' but then uses an informal use of language, 'mates'. He should seem uncomfortable and perhaps slip between a using a posh accent and his normal accent.*

*Creon needs to treat the Guards as if they are all the same person and all incompetent. He should speak slowly and angrily to them. His anger should rise as he asks them questions.*

*Jonas is getting worried that he will be in trouble. He should now speak very quickly. He should no longer be trying to use a posh accent.*

*Creon does not believe Jonas and thinks he is lying, yet he realises that if he is not, this is very significant. He should say this line slowly and quietly as if he doesn't want to hear the answer. It is now that Creon is starting to believe what the guards are telling him because he remains quiet whilst they speak.*

*Creon has remained silent for a long time and has listened to the guards - he now believes them. This line should be said in a shaky voice.*

*He cannot believe what she has done; he should pause at each point of ellipsis. In contrast, Antigone has no remorse and should not use any pauses.*

*When he goes back to addressing the guards, he should speak quickly.*

## Commentary on Question 1 – mid level

The first part of the question asks for the candidate's directorial vision for staging the extract. The second part asks for the extract to be annotated to show how the actors could be directed to use their voices.

This response argues for and justifies a Brechtian treatment of the extract and links points to actual lines to support the argument. It is quite well debated and there is clearly knowledge and understanding of the techniques that would make it work in that style.

Minimum, make-do furniture, dirt on the floor, targeted simple lighting and a half curtain to partially conceal off stage would all work for the extract in terms of staging and maintains the truth that the audience are watching a play, with a message for their thinking.

There are some points that could have been developed further and there might have been a comparison with some other styles that would have presented a contrasting approach. There is not much sense of contexts to set the extract against.

More comment on the characters and their mental state would have better explained some of the thinking behind the moves and actions.

The annotations are focused on the task of addressing the voice issue and they are adequate in the main, without being expanded as much as they could have been. There is sufficient to stage a workable scene from them, conforming to a straightforward directorial vision.

This is marked in Level 3, clear references, demonstration and understanding.

## Question 2 Candidate style answer – mid level

As a director, explain and justify how you could use staging in a present-day performance of *Antigone*.

[30]

When staging this play, the theme of conflict should dominate many of the creative staging decisions and processes. Conflict is a central tenet of the play - whether it be conflict between characters and their principles, or inner conflicts, or contextual conflicts - the conflict that the story is based upon, of the conflict that influenced the French playwright in Nazi occupied France in 1944. The theme of conflict has to be made apparent to the audience from the start. As the audience enter the theatre, they could watch many images of conflict from all over the world being projected.

It can be difficult to stage a play that was written during the Second World War and make it relevant to a modern audience as well as retaining the ancient Greek traditions that inspired the story. Sometimes the historical story can sometimes seem a little too distant for a modern audience. Instead of setting it in the past, I would use a futuristic setting almost creating a picture of an apocalyptic future society with almost a Big Brother-type feel-cameras watching everyone, sound projected from all around the venue etc.

To make the audience feel more connected to the play, I would use the venue space to create the tragic atmosphere that this play demands. The use of a small, intimate venue would help make the tone of the play more sombre and tense from the start. To begin with, I would have the Chorus marching on to the stage almost like soldiers marching onto the battlefield. I would also use sound effects to help add to this military and tense setting such as air raid sirens or battle explosions heard in the background. I would use a thrust stage with a long ramp from the end of the thrust stage into the auditorium to allow characters to enter the stage from the audience.

As well as tragedy, the staging of this play has to show lighter moments because there are moments of comedy. For example, the Guards could be used to show some dark humour and makes it more relatable to the audience. They should drink beer and play cards, perhaps the beer could be a brand that is popular today. (If using a small venue, the audience will be close enough to see such detail in the props.) The playwright created these characters (they did not appear in Sophocles' *Antigone*) and wanted to use them to show the antipathy of society and the passive resistance. Therefore, they need to be injected with humour for the audience to be interested in them and to understand the messages they convey about indifference or even to relate to them and question their own impassive natures. Instead of futuristic costumes, the Guards could be the only characters dressed in contemporary and recognisable clothes.

There are several important symbols in this play which could be woven into the set design and help convey messages. One of these is knitting or the idea of spinning thread to convey the sense of fate or predetermination. Creon's wife Eurydice takes influence from the Greek figure in mythology Clotho who was responsible for spinning the thread of human life, she also made important decisions about what path their lives would take. Therefore, on the stage floor, I would project a large web. As the play progresses, this web should become more intricate with more weaves and twists to show the characters becoming embroiled in their pre-determined paths. It will help to give a sense that the characters are all trapped within their stories and cannot escape their inevitable destinies. When the news comes that Eurydice has died, we could see a digital projection of a spider on this projection trapping a fly.

The staging also has to allow for the convention of direct address that appears frequently throughout this play and that would have been used in ancient Greek tragedies. The Chorus serve to remind the audience that this is a play about a play and so, for the Choral parts, I would use have them address the audience from a balcony at the side of the stage. It should be illuminated by a single spot and the audience's attention will always be drawn to this. They could then remain in this balcony and watch the action unfold.

The playwright did not want to produce a realistic play and so my version will not aim to produce a naturalistic version of the play. Antigone is not supposed to look like a realistic young woman, instead she should seem like a symbol of an individual who is trying to fight the state or a larger power/force. Therefore, her small stature could be emphasised by lighting. When Antigone is lit, she could be lit from above or the front. However, when Creon is lit, he could be lit from a light that is placed on the floor in front of him and points upward, this would have the effect of casting a large shadow behind him and give the impression of a large size in comparison to Antigone. Creon could remain downstage more often, nearer the audience, so that he has the space behind him to cast a larger shadow. Whereas Antigone could be positioned upstage more often to seem smaller.

## Commentary

The question asks candidates as if a director to explain and justify how they could use staging in a present-day production of the whole play.

The response makes a valid justification for staging the play in a futuristic setting rather than historical and justifies it to some extent. Big Brother is cited as an inspiration, with cameras and sound projections to render it relevant to today's audiences.

The thrust, intention and flow of the play would not be put out by such a treatment and the discussion continues with thinking about space, atmosphere, sombre tone, battle in the background all on a thrust stage.

Using the guards as a vehicle for some light relief is a good idea and would have benefited from some quoted examples from the play with specific techniques suggested.

The use of semiotics is identified in the direction, though the term is not used and features such as direct address firmly putting it in a Brechtian style are valid and generally well made points.

The response lies around the Level 3/Level 4 mark, with clear references, demonstrations and understanding coupled with moments of more confident assessment of the essential elements in the play. Therefore, it is marked just into Level 4.

## Question 1 Candidate style answer – low level

Describe your directorial vision for staging this extract, and then annotate the extract to show how you would direct the actors to use their voices.

[30]

As director, I would ensure that, for this extract, it seems realistic and tense on stage. This is the moment when Antigone has been caught by the guards and will now face Creon. She has to admit to her actions and is she bold and brave, she tells them that she is not afraid of dying and she needs to seem confident (despite what she has previously done).

As director, I would convey tension through the scenery and stage design for this extract. The set could be painted using drab, grey and depressing colours to make the atmosphere seem more oppressive and tense for Antigone and to make the audience realise that events are now serious for her, she is talking about dying and is imprisoned by guards. We see that she cannot escape. The lighting and sound could also help to achieve this impression.

Make-up could be used to show how pale Antigone has now become once she is a prisoner and she is now living in very different conditions than those she is used to, she is now a prisoner. Her hair could seem wild and untidy.

This play is a tragedy inspired by Sophocles' play of the same name and the audience should understand that, in this extract, it is a tragedy. Anouilh's tragedy focuses more upon the miseries of people's lives under Nazi occupation in France in the 1940s. Therefore, costumes could be worn by the guards to show this 1940s setting and to help audiences see that it is not an ancient Greek version of the play.

Lighting and sound could be used to suggest the time of the piece – daytime. She has been caught in broad daylight with the body. Therefore, lights and sounds could be used to show this idea to the audience. Antigone could also be dressed as if it is daytime rather than night. The house lights could remain on in the auditorium throughout the extract.

As director, I would use a Brechtian approach when staging the extract. This approach will be useful for helping the audience to see the tragic elements of the play and understanding the serious messages put forward by the Chorus at the start of the extract. I would therefore use Brecht's alienation theories, placards and gestures throughout the extract.

To see the text extract, click here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242822-unit-h459-41-de-constructing-texts-for-performance-antigone-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

You may find it useful to print off the sample assessment paper and match the text extract to these comments. Candidate comments should line up to the relevant part of the text.

*The Chorus should speak directly to the audience so should use a clear, loud voice to make themselves heard.*

*When they say 'silence', this could be said in a quieter volume.*

*They should say, 'Antigone has been caught' in a sad tone as if they feel sorry for her, they know this will lead to her death.*

*The Guards need to be aggressive with Antigone and so they should shout at her and be forceful.*

*Antigone should shout her lines, she is very angry at being treated in this manner. She thinks that they are being very rude to her.*

*She should speak about dying in a quiet tone as if she is a little frightened but then shout when she talks about the guards touching her.*

*When he says 'potty if you ask me' he could say this in a nasty tone as if he is trying to insult her.*

*Binns could sound drunk when he says this, even slurring his words.*

*The stage directions say that she must use a small voice for this and there is a pause.*

*Jonas must speak loudly here and quickly. He needs to sound professional.*

*Creon must pause before he speaks because he is shocked to see Antigone.*

*Creon is angry because they have not followed his orders and so he should shout this.*

*He is angry when he calls them fools and should also shout this.*

*He is getting angrier with the guards and thinks they are making this up. He needs to really shout at this point.*

*Jonas should deliver this speech in a shocked tone of voice, he can't believe what Antigone was doing.*

*Creon should now turn his anger to Antigone. He should start shouting at her.*

# Commentary

The first part of the question asks for the candidate's directorial vision for staging the extract. The second part asks for the extract to be annotated to show how the actors could be directed to use their voices.

In part, this response offers an uncomplicated and workmanlike series of suggestions about staging in a realistic and tense manner, which is clear as an aim.

It talks of scenery and stage as conveying that tension, but is unable fully to explain that in theatrical terms. There is a passing comment about the misery of Nazi occupation, but insufficient development of the idea of oppression and fear being worked through the scene.

Antigone looking pale with wild hair does not explain how the staging would meet the term 'vision' and the use of sounds is rather vague.

The desire to use Brechtian techniques is not explained at all.

The annotations address the voice part of the question in very simple terms, have no nuances and shades of spoken language and are very basic, being little more than what is suggested by the playwright already.

The response is basic without much development so is marked in Level 2 on all criteria in the level. More could have been developed on relevant contexts.

## Question 2 Candidate style answer – low level

As a director, explain and justify how you could use staging in a present-day performance of Antigone.

[30]

For my stage space I would use a theatre in-the-round space such as Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre. Here the stage space is circular with raked audience seating and can seat up to 700 people.

The stage space should be a large open space because it needs to accommodate a large variety of characters such as the Chorus, the guards and Antigone in this play. In the opening scene alone we see twelve characters if only one person plays the Chorus.

Despite being in the round, the theatre does offer several chances for entrances and exits which is useful when new characters enter. Although, the stage space doesn't really change much so when locations change, props will need to change and there is little wing space so props will need to be carried on by the actors or by stage hands. However, this would fit in with Brecht's ideas.

The lighting needs to show various different times and locations such as dawn when Antigone meets with the Nurse. The action takes place across 24 hours and follows the three unities of action, time and place which are derived from Aristotle's Poetics and have obviously influenced the playwright.

In terms of costume, I would use modern day clothing to help make the characters more relatable. It is important that an audience can relate to the characters if they are to understand their actions or care about them such as when they die. I would have them wearing clothes to suit their ages, so perhaps jeans for Antigone but a suit for Creon because he would be older. I would not use any make-up for Antigone because she is not really a girly girl, but would use make-up for her sister, Ismene, to show the differences. Ismene could also have long hair but Antigone could have cropped hair.

I would not use much in the way of scenery because neither the playwright nor Brecht wanted audiences to be distracted by the use of scenery. This would help the audience to see the important messages in the play and listen to the words.

## Commentary

The question asks candidates as if a director to explain and justify how they could use staging in a present-day production of the whole play.

The response presents a generally adequate if undeveloped response to the question with some suggestions for the staging of the whole play that would work and be generally plausible.

In-the-round is certainly an interesting technique for this play, but more thought was needed on how particular scenes would be presented and how the actors would convey their meaning to their audience.

Lighting, costume, make-up and scenery are mentioned very briefly and here also, there is an inadequate development of the ideas to fully address the question. The point about a contemporary audience was not particularly addressed.

The response is Level 2, basic in understanding, development and references on all criteria in the level.



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