

Antigone Pre-Reading Activity

Who Do You Owe? • Law, Loyalty & Conscience

Students make their own decisions about difficult conflicts before they know how Antigone, Ismene, or Creon respond.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

WHO DO YOU OWE?

Law, Loyalty & Conscience
A pre-reading activity for Sophocles' Antigone

Students weigh family, law, conscience, community, and safety before reading the play.



8 SCENARIOS
20-42 MINUTES
9-12 GRADES

FAMILY • LAW • CONSCIENCE • COMMUNITY • SAFETY



Plotting Something • Antigone Collection ANTIGONE • PRE-READING ACTIVITY 1

Cases 1-2 STUDENT

Read each situation. Make your choice before discussing it with anyone else.

01 The Curfew

After several nights of violence, the city imposes a temporary curfew. A peaceful candlelight vigil is planned anyway for someone killed during the unrest. You believe the vigil matters, but officials warn that another crowd could turn dangerous. Do you go, stay home, or find another way to take part?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?
LAW COMMUNITY CONSCIENCE SAFETY

YOUR CALL ☐ A go ☐ B stay home ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

02 The Brother

Your older brother is wanted for taking part in a protest that ended with serious property damage. He says he did not hurt anyone and is hiding with relatives. Authorities ask you directly where he is. Your family wants you to protect him. What do you do?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?
FAMILY LAW SAFETY

YOUR CALL ☐ A tell them ☐ B protect him ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

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8 SCENARIOS

20-42 MIN

GRADES 9-12

15-page resource • editable PowerPoint + PDFs

Before the Play

Start with the responsibilities students already bring to the room.

Before You Begin STUDENT

Rank these five responsibilities before you read the cases.

Name _____ Period _____

FAM	FAMILY the people closest to you	MY RANK
LAW	LAW rules and public authority	MY RANK
CON	CONSCIENCE your own sense of right and wrong	MY RANK
COM	COMMUNITY the well-being and stability of the larger group	MY RANK
SAFE	SAFETY protecting yourself from serious harm	MY RANK

Which two were hardest to separate?
_____ and _____

Why?

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Students rank family, law, conscience, community, and safety before they see the cases.

Cases 1–2 STUDENT

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WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?
LAW **COMMUNITY** **CONSCIENCE** **SAFETY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A go ☐ B stay home ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

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WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?
FAMILY **LAW** **SAFETY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A tell them ☐ B protect him ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

Plotting Something • Antigone Collection STUDENT PAGE • CASES 1–2 4

Each scenario asks for a choice first. Discussion comes after students have committed to an answer.

Eight Ethical Scenarios

Modern situations, but the pressure points belong naturally with Antigone.

Cases 1-2 STUDENT

Read each situation. Make your choice before discussing it with anyone else.

01 The Curfew

After several nights of violence, the city imposes a temporary curfew. A peaceful candlelight vigil is planned anyway for someone killed during the arrests. You believe the vigil matters, but officials warn that another crowd could turn dangerous. Do you go, stay home, or find another way to take part?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

LAW **COMMUNITY** **CONSCIENCE** **SAFETY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A go ☐ B stay home ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

02 The Brother

Your older brother is wanted for taking part in a protest that ended with serious property damage. He says he did not hurt anyone and is hiding with relatives. Authorities ask you directly where he is. Your family wants you to protect him. What do you do?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

FAMILY **LAW** **SAFETY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A not know ☐ B protect him ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

Plotting Something • Antigone Collection STUDENT PAGE • CASES 1-2 4

Cases 3-4 STUDENT

Read each situation. Make your choice before discussing it with anyone else.

03 The Memorial

A city refuses to allow a public memorial for someone officials have labeled a traitor. The person's family argues that, whatever he did, they should still be allowed to mourn him publicly. City leaders say the memorial would insult people harmed by his actions. Should the ban stand?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

FAMILY **LAW** **COMMUNITY** **CONSCIENCE**

YOUR CALL ☐ A keep the ban ☐ B lift the ban ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

04 The Rule You Think Is Wrong

You are responsible for enforcing a rule that is legal and clearly written, but you believe it treats one group unfairly. Ignoring the rule could cost you the position you worked hard to earn. Enforcing it means doing something you think is wrong. What should you do?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

LAW **CONSCIENCE** **SAFETY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A enforce it ☐ B refuse ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

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Cases 5-6 STUDENT

Read each situation. Make your choice before discussing it with anyone else.

05 The Whistleblower

You discover that your workplace covered up a serious mistake. Reporting it could prevent the same harm from happening again, but it could also shut down the organization and cost many coworkers their jobs. Staying quiet protects people you know. Speaking up may protect people you do not. What do you do?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

CONSCIENCE **COMMUNITY** **SAFETY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A stay quiet ☐ B report it ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

06 The Relief Center

After a violent conflict, an emergency rule says that people who supported the losing side may not receive aid from a public relief center. An injured person arrives and asks for help. You are working the desk and have been told there are no exceptions. What should you do?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

LAW **CONSCIENCE** **COMMUNITY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A follow rule ☐ B give aid ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

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The cases deal with public order, family loyalty, treatment of the dishonored dead, enforcing a rule you believe is wrong, whistleblowing, aid to an enemy, public defiance, and the obligations of office.

Cases 7-8 STUDENT

Read each situation. Make your choice before discussing it with anyone else.

07 The Public Stand

You believe a new rule is unjust. You could quietly ignore it and probably avoid trouble, or you could break it openly so that other people are forced to notice. Public defiance would bring a much harsher punishment and would create problems for your family too. Which choice is more responsible?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

CONSCIENCE **FAMILY** **SAFETY** **LAW**

YOUR CALL ☐ A ignore quietly ☐ B defy openly ☐ C another way

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

08 The Oath

You accepted a public position and promised to enforce the law. Later, you are ordered to carry out a legal policy that you now believe is unjust. You can follow the order, refuse and risk removal, or resign so someone else will carry it out. What does your promise require of you now?

WHAT IS IN CONFLICT?

LAW **CONSCIENCE** **COMMUNITY**

YOUR CALL ☐ A follow order ☐ B refuse ☐ C resign

Which responsibility matters most in your decision? Why?

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Record, Compare, Defend

Students have several ways to push past a quick first answer.

Decision Record STUDENT

Record A, B, or C for each case. Keep this page you will come back to it after the play.

Name _____ Period _____

CASE	MY CHOICE	WHAT MATTERED MOST?	ACCEPT THE COST?	ONE REASON
1	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____
2	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____
3	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____
4	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____
5	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____
6	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____
7	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____
8	☐ A ☐ B ☐ C	_____	☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ no	_____

Which case do you most want to argue about? Case # _____

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When Is Disobedience Justified? STUDENT

Choose three cases. Rate how justified the disobedience would be.

Write the case number above the line and a short reason below it.

NOT JUSTIFIED 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 FULLY JUSTIFIED

CASE # _____ POSITION _____ OF 10

Why here? _____

CASE # _____ POSITION _____ OF 10

Why here? _____

CASE # _____ POSITION _____ OF 10

Why here? _____

What makes a broken rule easier—or harder—to defend?

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The Council Table STUDENT

Work together to decide when breaking a law or order can be justified.

Work with 3-4 people. You do not have to agree about every case.

1 **Start with the hardest case**
Choose the case your group argued about most—or the one no one felt sure about.

2 **Name the conflict**
Which responsibilities are pulling in different directions?

3 **Write a rule**
Complete: "A person is justified in disobeying a law or order when..."

4 **Test your rule**
Would you still stand by the rule if you disliked the person breaking it?

Our rule: _____

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Decision Record

Disobedience Continuum

Council Table

The group task asks students to write a rule for when disobedience can be justified - and then test that rule against a case where they disagree.

After Reading

Return to the original decisions once students know the play.

After the Play: Reconsider AFTER READING

Return to your first answers after you know what Antigone, Ismene, Creon, and Haemon choose.

Name _____ Period _____

The case I changed my mind about most

Case # ____ Before, I thought... After reading, I think...

The responsibility I found harder to rank after reading

family • law • conscience • community • safety

Which character made me rethink one of my answers?

Character: _____ What changed?

One question I still have

What still feels unsettled?

Did the play change what you think a person owes family, law, or conscience?

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Students reconsider their own answers.

Teacher Connection Guide TEACHER

Use these connections after students know the play.

1 • The Curfew Public order after violence; Creon's concern with stability; how far emergency authority should reach.

2 • The Brother Family loyalty versus law; Antigone and Ismene weigh family duty and danger differently.

3 • The Memorial The treatment of a condemned or dishonored dead person; public punishment versus private grief.

4 • The Rule You Think Is Wrong Enforcing a law you believe is wrong; Haemon's attempt to challenge Creon's judgment.

5 • The Whistleblower Loyalty to an institution versus speaking up when the people in charge may be wrong; Haemon and Tiresias both challenge Creon.

6 • The Relief Center Whether being labeled an enemy changes the treatment a person deserves; Creon's treatment of Polyneices.

7 • The Public Stand Open defiance, consequences, and the difference between private disagreement and public resistance.

8 • The Oath A public promise to uphold the law versus refusing an order you believe is unjust.

These are starting points, not answers. A modern case does not have to match the play perfectly to be useful.



Plotting Something • Antigone Collection TEACHER CONNECTION GUIDE 12

The teacher connection guide links each modern case to useful points in the play without turning the analogy into a one-to-one match.

The goal is not to prove that Antigone was right before students read. It is to give them something of their own to compare with the characters later.

Teacher Support

Use the shorter route or give the disagreement room to develop.



Discussion prompts



20-25 minute version



Full 42-minute version

Also included: a teacher quick-start page with printing guidance, placement notes, and one simple ground rule for keeping the cases open-ended.

Antigone: Who Do You Owe?

Law, Loyalty & Conscience • Grades 9-12