Greek Theater Notes
Hello! 😊 Here are some tips for success today:

• Today you’ll work on assignments W and X, but not in that order. Leave a blank page for **W. Drama Terms**, and start the notes **X. Greek Theater Notes** on the subsequent page.
• You will be tested on select parts of the following notes, so do a good job.
• The notes will take approximately two pages. If you’re using the Cornell format, it will be three to four.
• Remember to shorten and abbreviate whenever possible.
• I’ve written out more information than usual as I’m not there to explain. Don’t copy down what it says word-for-word. Paraphrase the key details of each slide. What’s not in **bold** is just explanation and isn’t needed in your notes.
• There are five main sections to the notes: Author, Tragedy, Greek theater, Chorus, and Oedipus background. Keep the sections clear and distinct.
• I’ll go over the notes with you next week and show you the clips you won’t be able to see in the PDF of the notes.
• The notes should take you about 30-35 minutes. Use the remaining time to define the sixteen drama terms on the last slide.
I. The Author
The Author

- Sophocles: Greek playwright
- Born in 496 BC in Colonus, Greece (near Athens)
- Died at age 90 (406 BC – remember how BC/AD works – like a negative number approaching zero)
- Wrote over 100 plays
- Only 7 remain
The Author

• Entered many contests with his plays
• Won over 20 times in his life and never placed lower than 2\textsuperscript{nd}
• He changed Greek theater immensely
• Added a third actor to his plays and more elaborate scenery
II. Tragedy
Tragedy

- Tragic plays involve the downfall of the hero; it usually ends with the hero’s destruction (not death necessarily).
- Involves intense emotion in the audience that leads to a *catharsis* or emotional release.
- According to Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher: Tragedy inspires the emotions of pity, fear, wonder, and awe.
Tragedy

- A tragic hero must be capable of great suffering. Usually he or she is wealthy/powerful/super happy. Think about it, if they have nothing to lose, the tragedy doesn’t seem as great.
Tragedy

• Tragedy shows how the hero is brought to disaster because of a single flaw in his or her character

• Think about Romeo. What was his flaw? He was impetuous. He didn’t think before he acted. He decided to marry someone an hour after he met her. He killed Tybalt in a rage, and if he’d have just waited, Tybalt would have been brought to justice by the prince. His rash actions ruined his life (and his new wife’s). He ruined his own life.
Tragedy

• Tragedies were produced as part of a religious festival to Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility

• Awards were given to the playwright who presented the best series of 3 plays (a trilogy in modern terms)
III. Greek Theater
Greek Theater

• Plays were performed in amphitheaters that seated 40,000
• We have an amphitheater in the quad. They’re designed to naturally amplify sound.
• The stage was on a raised platform to make the actors easier to see.
Greek Theater

- The *skene* was a large building behind the stage that served as a backdrop and housed the dressing room.
- The *orchestra* was a circular floor located between the skene and the audience.
- The next slide shows a picture of an amphitheater still standing and used today.
This would have been the skene. It was probably built out of wood and has rotted away.
Greek Theater

• The next slide has a labeled diagram. Make a small copy in your notes including all the labels.
Greek Theater

• No scene changes, no complicated subjects. Think about the theater you saw. There’s no “curtain,” etc. to change scenes.

• No physical horror or violence took place onstage. Messengers told the audience what happened

• Audience often knew the story ahead of time and came to see the emotion of the characters
Greek Theater

- All actors were men
- **Wore masks with built-in megaphones**
  
  Like this, but built in to the mask. Remember, this is before electricity and microphones. They had to make sure all 40,000 people could hear them without a mic.

- **Wore platform shoes and long robes** (to make them bigger and more visible to the audience).
- **Actors moved in a bold and definite manner.** This would seem like overacting to a modern audience, but anything too subtle wouldn’t be visible at a great distance.
Greek Theater

• On the next slide, you’ll see a bunch of (super creepy) masks like the Greeks used. Notice what they’re made out of and imagine how heavy they must have been.

• Notice too that they show the role the character would play: bad guy, victim, etc. There was guessing needed.

• This is where the now widely-known symbol for drama (comedy and tragedy) originates.

• Draw one of the following masks in your notes.
Greek Masks

c. 380-235 BC

1st-2nd Century AD
IV. Chorus
IV. Chorus

• CHORUS: group of 15, acted as one character, moved and sang together

• Set the mood, sometimes sided with one character, warned of danger.

• CHORAGUS: the leader of the chorus who interacts with the characters in the play

• Not much exists like this in modern theater, but think about the oompaloompas (Is that how you spell that? No idea.) from Charlie and Chocolate Factory (the old version). I’ll show you the clip next week.
Like these guys...
V. Antigone Background
Antigone Background

• As you know, *Antigone* is the third in a series of three plays: *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus* complete the trilogy.

• What many people don’t know is that **Sophocles wrote *Antigone* first, wrote *Oedipus Rex* second, and wrote *Oedipus at Colonus* last.** C.S. Lewis did something similar with *Chronicles of Narnia.* It leads people to debate the order in which they should be read.
Antigone Background

- All 3 deal with the curse of Oedipus and how it affects his family for generations
- Curse: Prophecy to the king and queen of Thebes that their son will kill his father and marry his mother
End of Today’s Notes

• Leave room here for about a quarter of a page of notes next week.

• The drama terms assignment is on the next slides.
Drama Terms – define each of the following terms in your own words.

• Many of the following terms will be familiar from last year. Define what you can from memory.

• You can define these using your own knowledge, the internet, your textbook, or your notes. Keep the definitions brief.
W. Drama Terms – define each of the following terms in your own words.
Drama Terms – define each of the following terms in your own words.

1. Dialogue
2. Monologue
3. Soliloquy
4. Aside
5. Protagonist
6. Antagonist
7. Tragedy
8. Tragic Flaw
9. Tragic Hero
10. Hubris
11. Catharsis
12. Stage Directions
13. Ode
14. Chorus
15. Choragus
16. Character Foil