



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Medea

based on the play by
Euripides

Written by
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Euripides

Euripides (480 BC – 406 BC) was one of the three greatest ancient Greek tragedians (along with Aeschylus and Sophocles). Very little is known about his life, but more of his plays survive than those by other Greek playwrights.

Euripides is known for the psychological realism of his characters. *Medea*, for instance, expresses a wide range of very complicated human emotions, including jealousy, resentment, self-pity, and love. What is more, Euripides' audience, like his characters, may have trouble coming to an emotional conclusion about some of the very difficult issues the playwright raises. *Medea* has the right to be angry, but it is hard to agree with the actions that result from this anger. There are no clear answers about how justice should be administered.

Euripides also raises questions about the treatment of foreigners and women within Greek society. In the *Bacchae*, the god Dionysus, son of Zeus, fights for recognition as a deity. His worshipers are looked down upon because they come from Asia Minor instead of Greece. *Medea's* rights as both a woman and a foreigner are limited; her husband discards her and marries a Greek princess.

Euripides is famous for his use of the "deus ex machina" ("god from the machine"), a device that neatly but unrealistically resolves the problems of the plot. For instance, in the play *Ion*, the goddess Athena descends and explains away the complications of the plot. Euripides was criticized by his contemporaries for his repeated use of this device.

In Euripides' time, plays were written for entry into competitions at festivals like the *Dionysia*. The *Dionysia* was a large religious festival held in honor of the god Dionysus (the god of both wine and the theater). Euripides won the first prize in 441 BC and then three more times. In comparison, Aeschylus is said to have won fourteen times, and Sophocles more than twenty.

Major Works

Eighteen plays by Euripides survive. Part of a manuscript containing the plays of Euripides in alphabetical order was discovered in a monastery; the works that have titles that start with the Greek equivalent of the letters E-K remain.

Euripides' most famous plays are *Medea*, *The Trojan Women*, *Electra*, and *The Bacchae*.

Awards

Euripides won first prize at the City Dionysia for his tragedies in 441, 425, and 405 BC (when his plays were performed posthumously).

INTRODUCTION *Medea*

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Medea* by Euripides. It includes twenty lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The two **introductory lessons** introduce students to Greek theater, the organization of Greek plays, and the mythological background of *Medea*. At the end of the second lesson, students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading assignment. Before they actually begin to read the play, students respond to a brief journal prompt that prepares them for the emotional states of the characters in the opening scenes of *Medea*.

The **reading assignments** are done for homework, followed by oral readings in class. The parts to be spoken during each class period are listed in the lessons. The teacher needs only to assign students to each part. Students have approximately fifteen minutes of work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing vocabulary work for three to ten vocabulary words they will encounter during their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. The questions come in two formats: short answer and multiple-choice. The best use of these materials is to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and use the multiple-choice version for occasional quizzes. If your school has the appropriate equipment, it might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as aid in the students' understanding of the play. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately three to ten words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II reinforces understanding of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having them match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have a thorough knowledge of the words when they encounter them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a review of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete reading the work, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all the vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of the words they have studied.

The **group activity** which follows the vocabulary review has students working in small groups to discuss several important aspects of the play. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to five specific aspects of the play.

The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion** session in which the groups share their ideas about their topics with the class; thus, the entire class is exposed to information about all the topics and can discuss each topic based on the nucleus of information brought forth by each of the groups.

Two lessons are devoted to **creating a film version** of *Medea* based on the knowledge students have gained, their personal feelings and experiences, and the needs of a modern audience.

A lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the play.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, interpreting, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to inform: students write a composition based upon their theme topics. The second assignment is interpretive: students recast dialogues from *Medea* using modern methods of communication. The topic is given in the letter assignment. The third assignment is to give students a chance to simply express their own opinions: following the unit test, students write a composition explaining who, in their opinion, is the most sympathetic character in *Medea*.

In addition, there is a **Greek history research assignment**. Students are required to fill out a sheet of terms related to 5th-century BC Greece and then find an article or section of a nonfiction work on one of the topics (philosophy, ancient tragedy, the Persian or Peloponnesian Wars, Greek art and architecture, Athenian democracy, etc.). During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the topics they have researched. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives them the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

There is a **nonfiction reading assignment** that accompanies the Greek history assignment. In the process of researching the Greek history assignment, each student will fill out a worksheet about one of the articles, chapters, etc. he or she read as part of the research. On the worksheet, the students answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. This gives them practice analyzing nonfiction sources.

The **review lesson** pulls together all the aspects of the unit. There is a choice of four to five activities or games to use, which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: short answer and multiple-choice. In addition, each format has matching, quotations, composition, and vocabulary sections. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **extra activities packet** includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the play, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which provides suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** to choose from to enhance this unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his or her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without copyright infringement. No other portion of this unit may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

UNIT OBJECTIVES *Medea*

1. Students will gain an understanding of the conventions of Greek drama and understand the ways Euripides uses these conventions.
2. Students will be able to explain what the *deus ex machina* is and why Euripides employs it in *Medea*.
3. Students will be able to explain how Euripides examines Medea's place as both a woman and a foreigner in the society of Corinth.
4. Students will be able to explain why Medea is both a sympathetic and unsympathetic character.
5. Students will be able to explain the role of the Chorus in Greek drama and in *Medea*.
6. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
7. Students will make connections with the material in the text and apply the lessons learned to their lives.
8. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters as they relate to the author's theme development.
9. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
10. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the play through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the play.
11. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.
12. The writing assignments in this unit are designed for several purposes:
 - a. to check and increase students' reading comprehension,
 - b. to make students think about the ideas presented by the play,
 - c. to encourage logical thinking,
 - d. to provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language,
 - e. to encourage students' creativity.

READING ASSIGNMENTS *Medea*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	<i>Reading Assignment 1</i> Prologue and Parodos	
	<i>Reading Assignment 2</i> First Episode and Stasimon	
	<i>Reading Assignment 3</i> Second Episode and Stasimon	
	<i>Reading Assignment 4</i> Third Episode and Stasimon	
	<i>Reading Assignment 5</i> Fourth Episode and Stasimon	
	<i>Reading Assignment 6</i> Fifth Episode and Stasimon	
	<i>Reading Assignment 7</i> Exodos	

UNIT OUTLINE *Medea*

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction Historical Background	Background Day 2 PV Prologue and Parodos R Prologue and Parodos for homework	Read Prologue and Parodos aloud Class discussion about moderation PV First Episode and Stasimon R First Episode and Stasimon for homework	Read First Episode and Stasimon aloud Discussion about Medea and Creon PV Second Episode and Stasimon R Second Episode and Stasimon for homework	Read Second Episode and Stasimon aloud Analyze relationship between Jason and Medea PV Third Episode and Stasimon R Third Episode and Stasimon for homework
6	7	8	9	10
Read Third Episode and Stasimon aloud Consider the Aegeus Episode PV Fourth Episode and Stasimon R Fourth Episode and Stasimon for homework	Read Fourth Episode and Stasimon aloud Relationship Timeline PV Fifth Episode and Stasimon R Fifth Episode and Stasimon for homework	Read Fifth Episode and Stasimon aloud Dramatic Irony PV Exodus R Exodus for homework	Read Exodus aloud Film Versions Tragic Odes	Theme Reports
11	12	13	14	15
Theme Reports Day 2 Work on Greek History Assignment	Writing Assignment 1	Making <i>Medea</i>	<i>Medea</i> Film Review	Writing Assignment 2
16	17	18	19	20
Extra Discussion Questions	Greek History Reports	Vocabulary Review	Unit Review	Unit Test Writing Assignment 3

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To introduce the *Medea* unit
2. To distribute books and other related materials
3. To learn about Greek theater

Activity #1

Ask students what they know about ancient Greek theater. Have they ever seen the masks used in Greek tragedy and comedy? Have they ever heard of a Greek Chorus? Have each student fill out the KWL paper for Greek tragedy.

Activity #2

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should preview the study guide questions before each reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in that section. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the play. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

Reading Assignment Sheet You need to fill in the reading assignment sheet to let students know when their reading has to be completed. You can either write the assignment sheet on a side blackboard or bulletin board and leave it there for students to see each day, or you can make copies for each student to have. In either case, you should advise students to become very familiar with the reading assignments so they know what is expected of them.

Extra Activities Center The resource materials portion of this unit contains crossword and word search puzzles. Make an extra activities center in your room where you will keep these materials for students to use. (Keep several copies of the puzzles on hand.) Explain to students that these materials are available for students to use when they finish reading assignments or other class work early.

Nonfiction Assignment Sheet Explain to students that they each are to read at least one nonfiction piece at some time during the unit. Students will fill out a nonfiction assignment sheet after completing the reading to help you evaluate their reading experiences and to help them think about and evaluate their own reading experiences.

Greek History Research Sheet Explain to students that they are to briefly explain each term on the sheet as they work through the unit. They can do research online or in the library.

Books Each school has its own rules and regulations regarding student use of school books. Advise students of the procedures that are normal for your school.

Activity #3

Label the picture of the Greek theater. If something is not in the picture, draw it in, and label it.

- A. Chorus—the group of actors who comment on the action
- B. choragos—the leader of the Chorus
- C. deus ex machina—“god from the machine”—a device that neatly solves the problems of the plot at the end of the play

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1

PROMPT

Your assignment is to take the information about one of the ideas we've discussed and write an essay about it. Your research has been done through group work, reports, and discussion. Now, take that information and shape it into a well-developed essay.

PREWRITING

One way to start is to decide which of the five topics that have been discussed most interests you. Review your notes, and give the topic some more thought. Jot down ideas relevant to your topic. Then, pick out the three best points. Organize any other thoughts you've put down to see if they can be used as supporting examples or statements for any of your three main points.

DRAFTING

A diagram of a basic, five-paragraph essay might look like this:

1. introduce essay topic
2. main idea (topic sentence) followed by examples or details supporting main idea
3. main idea (topic sentence) followed by examples or details supporting main idea
4. main idea (topic sentence) followed by examples or details supporting main idea
5. summary/closing

Once you have mastered the basic skills of creating a main topic, supporting that topic with main ideas of substance, and explaining those main ideas with examples or details, a whole new world of creativity opens up to you. Then, you can perfect your style of writing, choosing a method of conveying your ideas.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your essay, ask a classmate to read it. After reading your rough draft, your classmate should tell you what he or she likes best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and the way in which your work could be improved. Reread your essay, and, considering your critic's comments, make the corrections you think are necessary.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper, double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.