

## What Kind of Questions to Expect on the Midterm: Specific Examples

- Give an example of “the flexibility of myth” (the ability of a Greek myth-teller to change important parts of a story, within certain limits)
- Describe some typical features of an *agōn*.
- Which tragic poet was particularly interested in capturing some of contemporary Athenian intellectual culture in his plays? Give a specific example.
- Define “aetiology” in myth, and give a specific example from the readings.
- “Mouths unbridled and folly flouting the law end in misfortune, but a life of calm and of wise thinking will not be wrecked by storms, and will keep the household safe and whole.”
  1. Who says this, and in what play?
  2. Explain how these words are not fully representative of the attitude of the speaker(s). (For example, give a specific instance of the same character(s) speaking very differently.)
- “My mistress Artemis, I bring you this woven garland which I have made for you from the virgin meadow where no shepherd thinks it right to graze his flock, where no scythe has ever come, but in the spring the bee flies through its virgin greenery.”
  1. Who says this, and in what play?
  2. What is the significance of the description of nature?
- Name a couple of specific features of ancient painted representations of Oedipus. Identify one essential point these are used to make about Oedipus.
- What stage furniture is present throughout *Hippolytus*?
- What work contains an episode centering on Demophoon? Who is Demophoon? Identify an important thematic connection between the Demophoon episode and the rest of that work.

### Further Advice

1. Study the list of characters for all the plays we’ve read. For each one (including the choruses!), be able to explain:
  - Who they are (relationships, titles, etc.; personalities as defined by the positions they take, the way they speak, etc.)
  - What they do
  - How they are essential to the drama
2. For each play, produce a thumbnail sketch of how the audience experiences it:
  - Visually (what is the scene, what are the important elements of the set, props, etc.)
  - Dramatically and emotionally (where is the climax, where are the highs and lows in relation to each other, etc.)
3. The question-type “Here’s a passage. Identify its speaker, its context, and its significance” may be a bigger part of the midterm than is suggested by its frequency here. So review the reading thoroughly with this in mind (also looking for the connections to the major themes).
4. I may also put on the midterm several basic questions that you should be able to answer if you did the readings & understood. For example, “How does Jocasta kill herself?” In this handout, I’ve decided to focus on the types of questions most students find more challenging.