

Duty and Defiance

Trace a shared theme across two cultures and eras.

10.RL.1.A "Analyze the development of universal themes (e.g., survival of the fittest, coming of age, power of love) prevalent in world literature (e.g., short stories, poems, plays, novels, and literary nonfiction) of different cultures and eras."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Mark each challenge to an assigned duty. Track how the argument develops; cite A/B labels.

Who Decides What We Owe?

Compare these ancient Greek and nineteenth-century Norwegian conflicts without generalizing about entire cultures.

Develop a shared theme: an arguable idea about duty and judgment, not merely a topic.

Labels identify prose units. A bracketed editorial note marks one omitted portion of Antigone's speech.

A • Antigone

Sophocles · Ancient Greece, c. 442 BCE · English translation by R. C. Jebb.

Creon forbids burial of Antigone's brother Polyneices, whom he regards as an enemy. The penalty is death. Antigone has buried him and been caught.

CREON

A1 And thou didst indeed dare to transgress that law?

ANTIGONE

A2 Yes; for it was not Zeus that had published me that edict; not such are the laws set among men by the justice who dwells with the gods below; nor deemed I that thy decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes of heaven. For their life is not of to-day or yesterday, but from all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth.

A3 [...] So for me to meet this doom is trifling grief; but if I had suffered my mother's son to lie in death an unburied corpse, that would have grieved me; for this, I am not grieved. And if my present deeds are foolish in thy sight, it may be that a foolish judge arraigns my folly.

edict/decreed: public order; statutes: laws; arraigns: accuses. [...] marks an omitted discussion of early death.

<https://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/antigone.html>

B • A Doll's House

Henrik Ibsen · Norway, 1879 · Act III · English translation by R. Farquharson Sharp.

Nora has told her husband Torvald Helmer that she intends to leave their home. This exchange occurs during their argument about her decision.

HELMER

B1 It's shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.

NORA

B2 What do you consider my most sacred duties?

HELMER

B3 Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?

NORA

B4 I have other duties just as sacred.

HELMER

B5 That you have not. What duties could those be?

NORA

B6 Duties to myself.

HELMER

B7 Before all else, you are a wife and a mother.

NORA

B8 I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are—or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them.

sacred: treated as binding or deeply important; at all events: in any case. B1-B8 label prose units.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2542/2542-h/2542-h.htm>

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE ————— Use the passage

1 In A1-A2, how does Creon frame the issue, and how does Antigone change the terms of the argument?

- 2** How does A3 develop the idea of duty in A2? Explain the connection between Antigone's principles and the cost of her choice.

- 3** Trace Nora's response from B2 to B8. How does the exchange develop a theme rather than merely repeat a disagreement?

- 4** Evaluate this claim: "Both women reject all obligations in order to do whatever they feel." Use one detail from each excerpt and distinguish their reasons.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 100-140-word comparison developing a shared theme about duty and judgment. Trace how the argument develops in each excerpt, using two specific details from each with A/B labels. Explain how the distinct conflicts shape different versions of the theme. Limit claims to these excerpts; do not invent the plays' later events.

Compare the developing theme

Connect your four details to the shared theme and to a meaningful difference. Draft a coherent paragraph, not a list of quotations.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Mark each challenge to an assigned duty. Track how the argument develops; cite A/B labels. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In A1-A2, how does Creon frame the issue, and how does Antigone change the terms of the argument?	Creon treats daring to break his law as the issue. Antigone answers yes but argues that a mortal ruler cannot override enduring divine laws. She shifts the issue from obedience to which authority deserves obedience.
2	How does A3 develop the idea of duty in A2? Explain the connection between Antigone's principles and the cost of her choice.	A2 claims that divine law outranks a mortal ruler's edict. In A3 she says leaving her brother unburied would grieve her more than her own doom. Her willingness to bear the penalty makes her religious and family obligations concrete.
3	Trace Nora's response from B2 to B8. How does the exchange develop a theme rather than merely repeat a disagreement?	She first asks Helmer to define duty, then asserts duties to herself, and finally argues that she must think and understand as a human being. His insistence on wife and mother gives her a specific social definition to challenge. The progression suggests that discovering one's obligations can require examining inherited roles.
4	Evaluate this claim: "Both women reject all obligations in order to do whatever they feel." Use one detail from each excerpt and distinguish their reasons.	The claim ignores the obligations both invoke. Antigone submits to divine and family duties above the king's edict; Nora calls her duties to herself sacred and emphasizes independent understanding. Both challenge assigned obligations, but one appeals to enduring law while the other stresses developing personal judgment.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Both excerpts suggest that judging duty can require challenging an authority's definition of it. Antigone counters Creon's public edict with enduring divine laws (A2), then makes her choice concrete: leaving her brother unburied would grieve her more than death (A3). Her challenge therefore defends older religious and family obligations against a ruler. Nora first names duties to herself (B6), then argues that she must think and understand as a human being rather than accept others' views (B8). Her conflict concerns a husband's definition of a wife's identity. The theme develops through each woman's increasingly explicit reasons, but their alternatives differ: Antigone invokes an established higher law; Nora insists on forming independent judgment.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

The model contains 112 words by whitespace count, including locator labels. Accept other supported themes and distinctions. Require evidence from both excerpts and analysis of the developing arguments, not claims about whole cultures or unprovided endings. Antigone does not reject all tradition; Nora does not claim that she has no duties. Discuss the characters' positions analytically, without requiring students to endorse either decision.