

# Antigone research paper examples

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Antigone is a Greek play written by Sophocles. It is a Greek tragedy full of love, betrayal and death. Antigone the main character in the play is portrayed as rebellious and refuses to follow the rules in the family. Even though she took care of her blind father to his death, as was her duty as a daughter and woman, and although she sought to perform rituals over her brother's corpse to send him to the after life that were tasks known to be reserved for women, Antigone's character goes against nearly every Greek ideal for women in the 5th century (Butler 88). Her strength of character, opposition to authority, and inability to sit idly by while her brother's corpse lay in the open as food for birds and other scavengers, are all rebellious traits punishable by the stifling and silencing entombment she endured at the end of the play.

According to Antigone, the law is not absolute and can be broken any time in extreme cases like honoring the gods whose authority outweighs that of the king Creon. Creon demands that his authority should be followed to the latter. He is heard in the play saying " there is nothing worse than disobedience to authority" (Sophocles 21). This is when he was demanding that the law should be obeyed above everything else whether it is right or wrong. Even though he was king, Antigone had to stand her grounds because she believed that some situations called for immediate actions as long as the actions were honest and were honoring the gods.

Antigone was so much determined to bury her brother Polynices despite the fact that Creon the king had prohibited his burial in the city. Creon's decree of leaving Polynices unburied came after he had betrayed the people of the land and was not loyal to the land and the king abdicated his citizenship.

However, Antigone opposes the authority of the king because she believes citizenship is not only based on loyalty and Polynices was from that city. She decided to bury Polynices in honor of her family and in honor of the higher law of the gods by pleasing the dead. Antigone believed that the highest authority is the divine law and not the laws of the land and therefore, she was ready to face the consequences of breaking the laws of the land as long as she has honored the highest authority which is from the gods. She rejected the laws of the land decreed by Creon the king and buried her brother Polynices for the love of family.

Antigone is at all times portrayed as the rebel of the family who refuses to obey the laws of the land in the play. She refused to play by the rules and rebelled against the fundamental rules of the society which states that women should respect and be afraid of men considered to be dominant. The king was dominant and his authority was not to be questioned by anyone especially a woman. She never cared about the consequences of her rebellion and what she was to face afterwards but she went ahead and defied Creon's decree. Above all, she was a brave and wise woman who challenged the king's authority in the city.

Antigone had a fearless attitude which led to her death ultimately.

Throughout the play, Antigone is seen as someone who does what she decided to do as long as it honors the gods. She sticks on what she believes in. When she decided to bury her brother despite the king's decree that he should remain unburied, she did it without fear of anything that might happen to her or anyone including Creon the king of the land. She was so determined to bury her brother despite the cost. She says " I will bury him

myself. And even if I die in the act, that death will be a glory" (Sophocles 32). Antigone was a strong woman who could not hide her deeds because she believed in herself and what she thought was right. This can be seen when she stands up with a willing heart to face the consequences of her deeds and admits to Creon that she was the one who buried Polynices. Her character goes beyond an ideal Greek woman because they all fear men and are always submissive even if the men are on the wrong.

Antigone was a very strong willed woman. She was one person who could do anything in her power as long as it is in line with what she believes is right. She knew that her brother deserved a proper burial and nothing could stop her from burying him. She says " Creon is not strong enough to stand in my way" (35). She knew she will bury him despite the obstacles in her way. She wanted he mother, father and her brothers to be happily together in their after life and never wanted her brother's spirit to wander around. She was more than willing to suffer and even die for her cause and belief as long as she has accomplished her mission.

Antigone's character went against nearly all the Greek ideal women in the 5th century. The ancient Greek society was dominated by men and women were considered as frail. Moreover, they were expected to be submissive to me, be prizes to victor of war, to support their men in everything, whether right or wrong and obey the laws of the land to the latter. On the other hand, Antigone was very different from the Greek women. She was confident and resolute in her decision making even if her decisions were against the laws of the land. She was rebellious and could not support what she thought was not right and against the gods and love of the family. She refused to allow

her own sister to help her take responsibility of her actions after defying the king's decree. She never allowed men to dominate the land with laws that were against the gods. She argued with the king about not burying her brother Polynices on ground of loyalty to the land and because the king refused to hear her out, she decided to rebel against him which many Greek women could not do because of fear. In addition, she casted doubts on the king's authority and was not submissive like the other Greek women.

In ancient Greek, women were treated as inferior and unimportant but Antigone proved it otherwise. She stood her ground of burying her brother and proved men wrong by defying the King's orders. Many women feared the dominant men and always obeyed all the rules imposed on them but Antigone was a woman of a difference. She had no fear and had the strength mentally to rebel against these men and do what she thought was right and the king was against it. Creon was Antigone's uncle and the king of the land who was greatly feared by many and people obeyed all his decrees. For Antigone, she rebelled again him by going against his decrees because she tried reasoning with him but he refused to understand. Antigone had an unwavering confidence and a resolute nature compared to the other Greek women, she was fighting for what she believed in even of she was to face death for it. She rebelled against the societal norms.

Antigone posses the qualities of a tragic hero at the same time a martyr (Steiner 112). She was an honorable and important person in the society with a fearless attitude and did not let Creon's threats of death affect her. She stood by her grounds and went against every Greek ideal for women in the society. Her strength as a woman in the society was depicted in her

rebellion against the king when she buried her brother despite the king stopping his burial. She welcomed death and was not afraid of what would happen to her as long as she fulfills what was right to her. Antigone proved that women were not insignificant in the Greek society. Her death caused the death of two important ruling people in the society, which proved that women had an important role in the Greek society.

Antigone is a Greek play in which the societal divisions of gender. In the beginning of the play, she was an ideal woman in the society as she took care of her father. Later on, Antigone did not adhere to the social norms and this is what led to her death. The main cause of the strong willed woman's death was her rebellion against what the society demanded from her. Her punishment was death but her death led to the downfall of many other characters. Men held themselves in a higher standing than that of women and in due course, this led to the tragedy that occurs in the play.

## **Works Cited**

Sophocles. *Antigone*. New York: Prestwick House, Inc.; 2005. Print.

Sophocles. *Antigone, Oedipus the King, Electra* (Oxford World's Classics). Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA; Reissue edition, 2009. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press, 200. Print.

Steiner, George. *Antigones: How the Antigone Legend Has Endured in Western Literature, Art, and Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. Print.