

Antigone scene 1: tone



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In *Antigone* by Sophocles, the character of Creon is portrayed as volatile, narcissistic, and hypocritical. All these qualities can be clearly seen in his tone during scene 1 of *Antigone* where Creon addresses the chorus as their king, and also receives news of Eteocles' burial. His tone when addressing different parties and also his shifts in tone give the reader an invaluable insight into his personalities and goals. The scene opens with Creon addressing the chorus in his first speech as king.

He first employs a polite and respectful tone in an attempt to make a strong positive impression. This can be seen when he says "Gentlemen, I have the honor to inform you that our ship of state ... Has come safely to harbor at last." (Creon). However, this tone switches to a more narcissistic one when he says "This is my command, and you can see the wisdom behind it." (Creon). This tone shift shows that Creon was attempting to flatter the chorus by treating them as equals, after the shift however, he reverts to his more regularly egotistical self.

Creon's tone in his opening speech is strongly ironic. This irony can be found when he says "No ruler can expect complete loyalty from his subjects until he has been tested in office," (Creon) when he then demands their complete loyalty in the desecration of Eteocles' body without any such test. This hypocrisy shows the irony in Creon's character by making the reader question both his claims and his morals.

The general tone shift in the scene can be seen in Creon's shift from a stately and authoritative tone, used with the chorus, to the aggressive and volatile tone he uses with the sentry. This tone shift can be seen both in the sentry's clearly agitated persona, seen here "I did not do it. I did not see

who did it. You must not punish me for what someone else has done. ” (Sentry), and Creon's fury at the innocent Sentry and the Choragos, seen when he says “ Stop! Must you doddering wrecks go out of your head entirely? ” (Creon).

The tone of the Sentry shows us that Creon has a reputation for a short temper and harsh punishment, whilst the tone of Creon make the reader dislike him as he bullies and insults the sentry and the Choragos. This tone amplifies the hubris in Creon and makes his eventual humility much more powerful. The general tone of this scene, whilst shifting, is ironic. The tone sheds Creon in a bad light with the reader and sets him up as a flawed character from the start of the play. The shifts in tone serve as a vehicle for the reader to experience Creon's explosive temper and ever changing mood.