

# Antigone argumentative essay examples

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Antigone is a legendary Greek play originally written by Sophocles. In the play, it is easy to confuse who between Antigone and Creon is the protagonist, and there have been many debates on the same issue.

According to Greek tradition, a protagonist is the person with the leading role in the story, that is, the hero or heroine of the story. It is the person from whom the title of the story is derived. Whereas many scholars are of the opinion that Antigone is the play's heroine, Creon seems more deserving of this position.

Naturally, literalists consider the character whose name forms the title of the play to be the protagonist. However, in Antigone, Creon portrays a strong character that matches Antigone's volition. As expected, the play reveals a thrilling battle between Antigone and Creon with both characters portraying similar qualities at some point. Although, the play portrays Antigone as the heroine of the story, Creon fights to maintain law and order in the republic and this heroic struggle cannot be ignored. Greek literature defines the protagonist as the character or the person who realizes their mistakes or faults. This definition leads to further confusion over who should be the protagonist in the play Antigone. This is because Antigone fits the contemporary description of a hero while Creon fits the second. The play also presents Antigone and Creon as antagonists, which makes both of them tragic heroes of the story.

Antigone and Creon have a lot in common. They were born into a higher social class than most people, and both have terrible defects in their characters. Although the play derives its name from the character Antigone, it does not necessarily make her the protagonist. She fulfills the role of the

protagonist in the traditional sense. The plot of the play centers on her actions and beliefs, but her pride and stubbornness leads to her untimely death.

Creon, on the other hand, also has many characteristics that qualify him for the role of hero in this story. The tragic hero should be accountable for his own downfall, experience a misfortune that is greater than they deserve, and should also come to a certain realization about his self. Creon fits this description perfectly. He recognizes his mistakes and tries to rectify them. He is also extremely proud and stubborn and refuses to let Antigone win the fight. When the gods made his mistake known to him, he tries to correct it by releasing Antigone (Sophocles 24). Unfortunately, it was already too late.

Antigone, on the other hand, never realizes her mistakes. She continues to fight Creon up to the point of death, which is characteristic of the antagonist. This makes Creon the protagonist, although not in the conventional sense. Although Antigone and Creon are sworn enemies, they share similar traits. For instance, both of them are strong-willed, and stand by their beliefs. The events at the beginning of the play set the stage for a bruising battle between Antigone and Creon. Antigone insists that Polynices must receive a proper burial, while Creon insists that Polynices is a traitor who should not receive a proper burial. Antigone fights for the proper burial of her dear brother and her aim is to bring justice to her brother and appease the gods (Sophocles 17). Antigone stands firm in her ground and insists that family members have an obligation to take of each other. She says to Ismene, “ My own flesh and blood how many griefs our father handed down to us.” This statement reveals Antigone’s love for her family and the extent to which she

will fight for them. On the other hand, Creon does not give in to Antigone's demands and orders sentries to keep watch of the tomb so that no one buries Polynices. Creon, on the other hand, fights for the adherence of the republic laws. He stands by what he believes; just like Antigone stands by her beliefs (Sophocles 17). Creon's first speech is a statement of his determination to keep the "ship of the state" in the right direction. In lines 117-180 of the play, Creon invokes the words "law", "policy" and "decree" a lot showing how determined he is in upholding the laws.

Whereas Antigone is anti-authority, Creon, on the other hand fights to maintain the status quo. From the beginning of the play, Antigone casts doubt on Creon's leadership skills and authority. She defies Creon's order not to accord Polynices a proper burial. Although the laws of the republic state that traitors should not be accorded proper burial, Antigone cleverly argues that human law is not above divine law. The divine law states that everyone is sacred and should be accorded a proper burial. Antigone also fights for recognition of women in society. The contemporary laws deny women such an opportunity. On the other hand, Creon fights to maintain law and order. He is firm in ensuring that the laws are followed to the latter. Creon envisions dire consequences when those who disobey the law are not punished. Creon also fights Antigone because he believes women should be put in their place, and never let to lead. In line, 758 Creon asserts, "We must defend the men who live by law.. never let some woman triumph over us." Clearly, Creon wants to maintain the culture which denies women equal opportunities. Creon fits perfectly in the role of the tragic hero. His main goal was not to kill Antigone, but to ensure that his laws are followed; he did not want

Antigone's actions to lead to more people disregarding his laws. He wanted the people of Thebes to see him as a man who stands by his word. Antigone, on the other hand, is also neither evil nor good in any extreme manner. Her goodness can be seen in her love and loyalty for her brother Polyneices. Although she disobeys the laws created by a man, she is keen to obey the laws of the gods. Her pride and arrogance lead to her tragic end; she refuses to apologize to Creon for her crime and is more willing to die than beg for his mercy (Sophocles 34). She refuses to conform to his reasoning and is willing to bear the consequences of her actions. She is aware of the consequences of her actions even before she buries her brother, but this does not prevent her from pursuing her course. She proceeds with her plan even when her sister Ismene refuses to assist her. Antigone refuses to be crushed by a male-dominated society and takes a stand as one who gives a voice to women. She stands by what she believes even to the point of death, which is characteristic of the antagonist.

## **Works Cited**

Sophocles. *Sophocles' Antigone*. Trans. Diane Rayor. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Print.