

# [Antigone and ismene the personalities of the two](https://assignbuster.com/antigone-and-ismene-the-personalities-of-the-two/)

Antigone and IsmeneThe personalities of the two sisters; Antigone and Ismene, are asdifferent from one another as tempered steel is from a ball of cotton.

One ishard and resistant; the other: pliable, absorbing and soft. Antigone wouldhave been a strong, successful 90’s type woman with her liberated and strongattitude towards her femininity, while Ismene seems to be a more dependent1950’s style woman. Antigone acts as a free spirit, a defiant individual, while Ismene is content to recognize her own limitations and her inferiority ofbeing a woman. In the Greek tragedy “ Antigone”, by Sophocles; Antigone learns thatKing Creon has refused to give a proper burial for the slain Polyneices, brother of Ismene and Antigone. Infuriated by this injustice, Antigone sharesthe tragic news with Ismene.

From her first response, “ No, I have heardnothing”(344). Ismene reveals her passivity and helplessness in the light ofCreon’s decree. Thus, from the start, Ismene is characterized as traditionally” feminine”, a helpless woman that pays no mind to political affairs. Doubtingthe wisdom of her sisters plan to break the law and bury Polyneices, Ismeneargues: We who are women should not contend with men; we who are weak are ruled by the stronger, so thatwe must obey….(346)Once again Ismene’s words clearly state her weak, feminine character andhelplessness within her own dimensions.

Antigone, not happy with her sistersresponse chides her sister for not participating in her crime and for herpassivity, saying, ” Set your own life in order”(346). For Antigone, no lawcould stand in the way of her strong consideration of her brother’s spirit, noteven the punishment of an early death. Ismene is more practical ; knowing thetask is impossible, she feels the situation to be hopeless. It is a wonder, which of the two sisters are really guilty of thesechronic charges. Of coarse, Antigone acted so quickly, and failed to take theadvice of the moderate sister, Ismene. Instead, going against Creon’s words, Antigone rashly goes ahead and breaks the law.

Antigone is a fool, she mustlearn that such defiance, even when justified, is not conductive to longevity. Although Antigone is foolish, she is also courageous and motivated by hermorals. Proper burial of the dead was, according to the Greeks, prerequisitefor the souls entrance into a permanent home. Therefore, perhaps Ismene isalso foolish for her quick refusal to help Antigone perform the duty ofPolyneices proper burial.

Ismene definitely seems hasty in her acceptance ofpersonal weakness. Perhaps in some way, both sisters are guilty of the sametragic sins. Perhaps it is this rashness, more subdued in Ismene’s case, thatleads both sisters to their own destruction. To my surprise, there is a strange twist in both sister’s charactertowards the end of the play. Antigone makes a rather contrasting statement,” Not for my children, had I been a mother, Not for a husband, for his molderingbody, Would i have set myself against the city As I have done”(368) Thesewords defy rational explanation. To judge from her attitude towards authorityand law, Antigone would probably take on any task to preserve family dignityand human justice. In Ismene’s final words, she abandons her practicalattitudes with a sudden rush of devotion towards the sister she abandoned intime of need.

“ Let me stand beside you and do honor the dead”(358). Ismeneheroically takes a stand and shares Antigone’s crime. The two sister’s were crushed by the vindictive Creon, yet they werewinners in spirit, in their determination , they died together, as one. Nobility shall live in their hearts forever.