

English 9
Agamemnon
Reading 1 Activity

For your assigned set of questions, develop answers. Point (by line number) to particular passages

Group 1

1. Consider the Watchman.
 - a. What exposition does he provide? That is, what background information does he give that helps us to understand the play?
 - b. How does he regard Clytemnestra?
 - c. What dominant images appear in his speech? Speculate on what symbolism the text suggests about the images.
 - d. How does the Watchman regard Agamemnon?

Group 2

2. Consider the Chorus.
 - a. Who comprises the Chorus? What is their attitude about being in Argos during the war?
 - b. In the Chorus's speech there's a juxtaposition of Clytemnestra's triumph and the war background. Discuss this intersection. What is the effect?
 - c. Find passages that suggest the Chorus's understanding of fate. Include statements about fate, the role of the gods, and the omen (ll. 118-124). What inferences do you draw about the role of fate in the play?
 - d. Find examples throughout the Chorus's several speeches of prominent image patterns, including net imagery, fire imagery. Identify whether images are metaphors or symbols.

Group 3

- e. The Chorus makes some universal statements (e.g., "we must suffer, suffer into truth"). Find a few of these and infer the Chorus's fundamental philosophy.
- f. The Chorus gives the backstory of the death of Iphigenia. What seems to be the Chorus's attitude toward Agamemnon's actions?
- g. The Leader does not believe Clytemnestra at first, regarding the end of the war. What do you make of this disbelief?

Group 4

3. Consider Clytemnestra.
 - a. What is her attitude toward the end of the war? What does she worry about?
 - b. How do others regard her; what do you make of their assessments? What is the role of gender in how the Watchman and the Chorus treat Clytemnestra? (Make only statements you can support with textual evidence.)