

Ancient Greece

WORD FOR THE DAY: Prophet or seer: Someone with powers to see the future.

1. Let the kids know that they will have to play the role of the audience at the end of this play, so they should pay close attention.
2. Of course the kids should have some info on ancient Greece, as here's where democracy began. We assume the kids know what democracy is, but you might want to ask right away.
3. You should tell the kids at some point that even though there was democracy in ancient Greece, not every person could vote. You had to be a full adult citizen (and not a slave), and women did not have the right to vote. Of course this is even the way it was in American recent history.
4. Antigone is pronounced *Ann TI gun ee*
5. The kids should have some understanding of the evolution of religion in class-stratified societies. Religion in ancient Greece evolved from ancestor worship, as did just about every society on the planet, probably all. In Greece and its surrounding areas, power differentials began to take place. According to Lind (2004) ancestors of the more powerful families became more important and began to be worshipped as hero gods. These later became the contents of Greek mythological gods. In this story you see the survival of some earlier ancestral worship in their "death cult" which dictated the ways that family members should be buried. Aristotle in his *Ethics* stigmatizes as "extremely unloving" anything that suggests that ancestors are NOT interested in or affected by the fortunes of their descendants. But note that ancestors who were worshipped were nearly always male.
6. Lind also points out something interesting. In the ancient world the center of human cognition was not the brain. It was believed to be the heart. His long volume goes through ancient and today's less complex societies and shows how their oral and written traditions show how people "thought" and "decided" through feelings emanating from their hearts. It was believed that the heart had thoughts. We see remnants of that tradition even today, as in the expression, "What does your heart tell you?" etc.
7. Antigone is still performed in most theaters today. It is arguably the greatest classic ever written. In the real play there are more suicides. Antigone's sister killed herself and Creon's wife killed herself. But the kids would have about all they could manage with just the two suicides.
8. You might ask the kids if they know someone who has been so spoiled by their parents that they don't care about anyone but themselves.

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