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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2014 Volume IV: Eloquence

Medea: Innocent or Guilty? It's Just Rhetoric

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by Ludy P. Aguada

This unit was developed for use in an Advanced Placement English Language and Composition course. Though AP English Language often focuses on American Literature to analyze and practice the effective use of rhetoric, this unit will use *Medea* by Euripides as its foundational text. Students will read the play, discuss themes such as love and betrayal, family and abandonment, and explore issues such as justice, personal responsibility for one's actions and the consequences that result. As a culminating activity, students will conduct a mock trial to determine whether Medea should be found guilty of the murders of the princess of Corinth, King Creon, and the murder of Medea's own two children, or be found innocent by reason of insanity. Students will act as jurors, witnesses, and attorneys. They will conduct research to construct "autobiographies" for their characters, use information from the play as part of the trial record, prepare witnesses for trial, conduct direct and cross examinations, and deliberate her guilt or innocence. These activities will develop students' skills for reading closely as well as their ability to write and speak persuasively.

(Developed for Advanced Placement English Language and Composition, grades 11-12; recommended for Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition, grades 11-12, English III, grade 11, and English IV, grade 12)

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