

Theatrical Beginnings: The Greeks



The Curtain Rises

1. Did theatre exist before the Greeks? Explain in detail.

The Greeks Honor Their Gods

2. Who is *Dionysus* (Dioneesus) and how do the Greeks honour him?
3. What are *satyrs*? What do they look like? What do they do to honour *Dionysus*?
4. When did these festivals first take place? How often?
5. What took place at the *City Dionysia*? How was it organized?
6. What is a satyr play?

The Playwright's Part

7. Explain the duties of the playwright.
8. Who financed the plays?
9. How did the *choregus* feel about the plays?

The City Donysia

10. Explain the City Dionysia festival in detail. How did the Greeks prepare? Who watched the performances? How did the festival begin?
11. How many plays were performed in a single day? How long did these plays last?
12. Explain what happened to unruly audience members.
13. What happened on the final day of the festival?

Thespis

14. Who was Thespis? How were his plays different? Why were these differences so significant?
15. Who followed in Thespis' footsteps? How did their work pave the way for the theatre?

The Greek Theatre Space

16. Describe the Greek theatre experience.
17. Define: *theatron*, *orchestra*, *skene*, *paraskenia* and *paradoi*

Masks and Costumes

18. What were Greek masks made of?
19. What were these masks used for? Explain.
20. How did the audience distinguish between male and female characters?
21. Why did actors feel it necessary to hide their entire bodies behind masks and costumes?
22. How could you differentiate between tragic and comedic characters?

Staging the Plays

23. What was a *mechane*? Explain how they were used and which characters used it.
24. How did the Greeks deal with scenes of violence?
25. What was an *ekkyklema* and how was it used?
26. Define *pinakes*.

Greek Tragedy

27. What sort of story did the Greek tragedy tell?
28. Describe the role of the tragic hero.

The Playwrights

29. Name the three prominent Greek playwrights.
30. What was unique about each of these playwright's work?

Greek Comedy

31. Who was *Aristophanes*?
32. What sort of stories did his plays tell?
33. Was *Aristophanes* interested in plot or idea?
34. Comic masks were different than tragic ones. Explain.
35. Who was *Menander*?
36. How was "New Comedy" different than *Aristophanes*' work? Explain.
37. How did *Menander* employ masks?

After the Classic Age

38. With the onset of the Hellenistic age, how did the Greek theatre change?
39. What happened to Athens politically?

Design of the Theatre

40. What changes were made to the stage in the Hellenistic era?
41. Define *Periaktoi*.

Actors Larger than Life

42. How were costumes altered during this period?
43. How were masks altered?

Actors as Stars

44. How were actors regarded during the Hellenistic period?
45. What benefits did popular actors have over the average citizen?
46. What was the function of *guilds*?
47. Why did Greek theatre decline?