



## Quiz on Greek Theatre and Ajax context: Answers

1. Name one official position that Sophocles held [1].

*strategos*/one of the *hellonotamiai* (public treasurers)/*proboulos* (adviser to the city after the disaster in Sicily)

2. In what decade was the *Ajax* (probably) first produced? [1]

440s BCE

3. What was the Delian League? [1]

An association of city states whose aim was to protect Athens against another Persian attack, but which became Athens' empire

4. How do Athens' imperial ambitions relate to the play? [1]

Athens became aggressive with her league; some scholars think that the aggressive/prideful/arrogant characterisations of Ajax, Menelaus and Agamemnon is a reflection of/comment on the behaviour of the city.

5. Fill in the following table about Athens' two main drama festivals: [4]

Name	Tragedy or comedy?	Months held?
City Dionysia	Tragedy	March/April (i.e. beginning of sailing season)
Lenaia	Comedy	January (no sailing, therefore only Athenians can attend)

6. What was the name of the wealthy citizen who funded a chorus as a form of taxation? [1]

*choregos*

7. Where in Athens was the Theatre of Dionysus? [1]

bottom of the Acropolis



8. How many people could it hold? [1]

4,000-15,000 (most think 4,000-7,000)

9. Draw a line to link the following Greek terms with their English definition [4]:

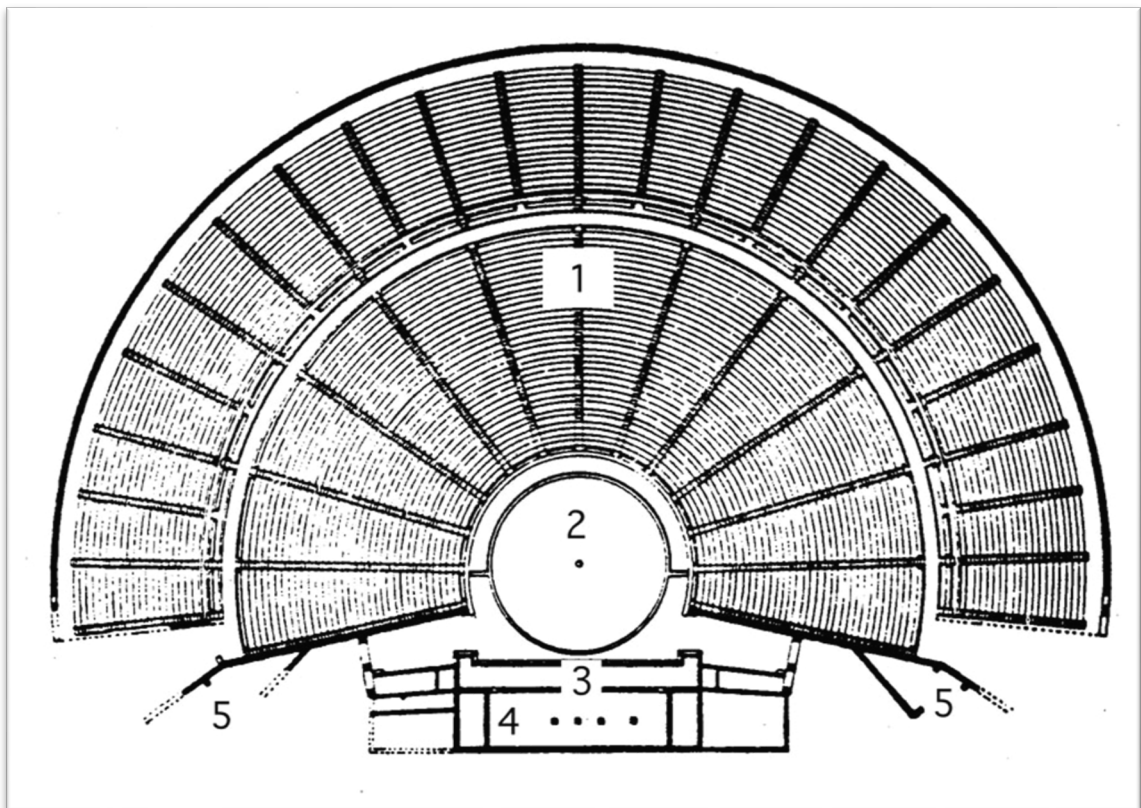
skene = stage building/hut

mechane = crane

theatron = audience seating area

ekkyklema = a wheeled platform

10. Label this diagram [4]:



1. *theatron*

2. *orchestra*

3. Please ignore this number

4. *skene*



5. *eisodos/eisodoi*

11. **How many main actors were there in Sophocles' day? [1]**  
3 (he supposedly added the third)
12. **Of how many members did the chorus consist in Sophocles' day? [1]**  
12-15 (supposedly Sophocles expanded it from 12 to 15, so probably 15 is the right number)
13. **Which community does our chorus represent in the *Ajax*? [1]**  
Salaminian sailors (who have fought with/for Ajax in the Trojan War)
14. **How does Sophocles 'break dramatic/theatrical conventions' in this play? [2]**  
Chorus goes off stage [to look for Ajax]; chorus splits into two; death of Ajax is possibly 'onstage'
15. **Which fourth century philosopher wrote a treatise on literature, and discussed what tragedy should consist of? [1]**  
Aristotle
16. **Fill in the gaps in each of the following 'tragic conventions': [6]**
- a) No violence onstage.  
(EXTENSION: **why?** Religious festival in honour of the god Dionysos **and how does this play 'break' this convention?** Ajax's death probably takes place onstage, or almost onstage)
  - b) Tragedy should have a unity of time, place and action  
(EXTENSION: **which ones of these does *Ajax* break?** Place: there is a scene change)
  - c) Messenger speeches (which give a vivid depiction of events which happen offstage, including deaths)
  - d) Rhetorical debates known as agones (sg. agon)
17. **In which of the following does the character of Ajax NOT appear? [4]**



B L O O M S B U R Y

***The Iliad***

Aristophanes

Anaximenes of Lampsacus

***The Odyssey***

The Parthenon

**Aeschylus**

~~Greek vases~~

**Pindar**

Heraclitus of Miletus

**Herodotus**