



Exploring Senior Cycle Texts

Medea by Euripides

Medea by Euripides is a drama included as part of the Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination 2026 & 2027. It may be used as part of the Comparative at Ordinary Level or Higher Level.

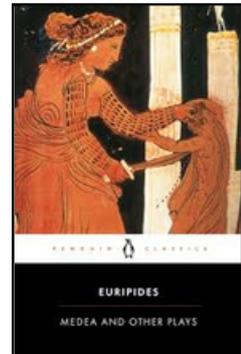


Image courtesy of Penguin

Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons.
- You may like to adapt and adjust the tasks to suit your context.
- *Medea* covers themes which could be considered sensitive or controversial. You may wish to consult with our READY Framework to support you in your study.



Scan the QR code or [click here to access a Getting Started with Guide for this Text](#)

Before you read (Teacher Guidance)

1. Discussion Starter: Betrayal and Revenge

On mini whiteboards or paper, have students discuss and jot down responses to prompts linked to the theme of the text like:

- Is revenge ever justified?
- What might drive someone to extreme actions after betrayal?
- How might gender or power affect someone's response to betrayal?

Encourage groups share one key point each.

2. Vocabulary Investigation

Give pupils a list of the vocabulary or phrases which they may find challenging. Instruct them research the meaning. Students and vocabulary could be divided up. The Freyer model could be used on one or two of the key words to help embed the knowledge. Some examples of vocabulary from the extract:

sapped, boon, hapless, tyrant, diviner, yoke, destitute, calamity, timorous

3. First Lines Prediction

Give students only the first few lines of Medea's speech ("But on me hath fallen this unforeseen disaster...") and encourage pupils to discuss with each other:

- What do you think has happened to her?
- What emotions can you already sense?

After reading the full extract, they can revisit their predictions.



Activities Based on Extract (Teacher Guidance)

The following may be completed in written or oral format,
as individuals or as part of a group activity.

1. Sympathy Spectrum

Create a line across the classroom: one end is “I completely sympathise with Medea”, the other is “I don’t sympathise at all.”

Read the extract aloud and have students stand where they feel Medea belongs.

Then discuss: What makes her sympathetic? What makes her unsettling?

2. Quote Detective

Give pupils some key lines from the extract to analyse. Scaffold questions could be provided to those who need it such as: what does this line reveal about Medea’s feelings? What does it tell us about her society or position? How might an audience respond? What connotations do they words have?

“Of all things that have life and sense we women are the most hapless creatures.”

“For divorce is not honourable to women, nor can we disown our lords.”

“Though woman be timorous enough in all else... yet in the moment she finds her honour wronged, no heart is filled with deadlier thoughts than hers.”

Reflect and Respond (Teacher Guidance)

The following question may be based on the extract included or form part of
your extended study of the novel.

1. Modern Translation Challenge

Ask students to rewrite 5–8 lines of the extract in modern English, keeping the tone and meaning. They can compare their versions and discuss which words were hardest to modernise and why.

2. Short Story

Direct students to write a short story in which a character feels abandoned or betrayed by someone they once loved deeply. Show how this betrayal affects their emotions, actions, and sense of identity.

3. Discursive Essay

Give pupils the prompt: *Women have often been silenced or ignored when they speak about their suffering.* Direct them to write a discursive essay discussing this statement, drawing on examples from literature, film, or society that illustrate how women’s voices are treated when they challenge injustice.

4. Persuasive Essay

Give pupils the prompt: *Anger is a destructive emotion — it harms those who feel it most.* Direct them to write a persuasive essay either agreeing or disagreeing with this statement, using examples from life, literature, or film to support their view.