

Antigone

AQA A Level Drama Play Guide

Downloadable Worksheets

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Relationships between characters

Character revision sheet

As you study the characters, use this revision sheet to note your discoveries.

Name of character	
Age and appearance	
Status/occupation/relationships (for example royal, family, servant, advisor)	
Background (place of birth, family, childhood, education, etc)	
Key role or function in play (protagonist/antagonist, messenger, helper/obstacle, lover, foil, chorus). Explain their actions within their role.	
Key scenes/moments	
Key lines	
Costume and make-up design	

Form and structure

Classical structure

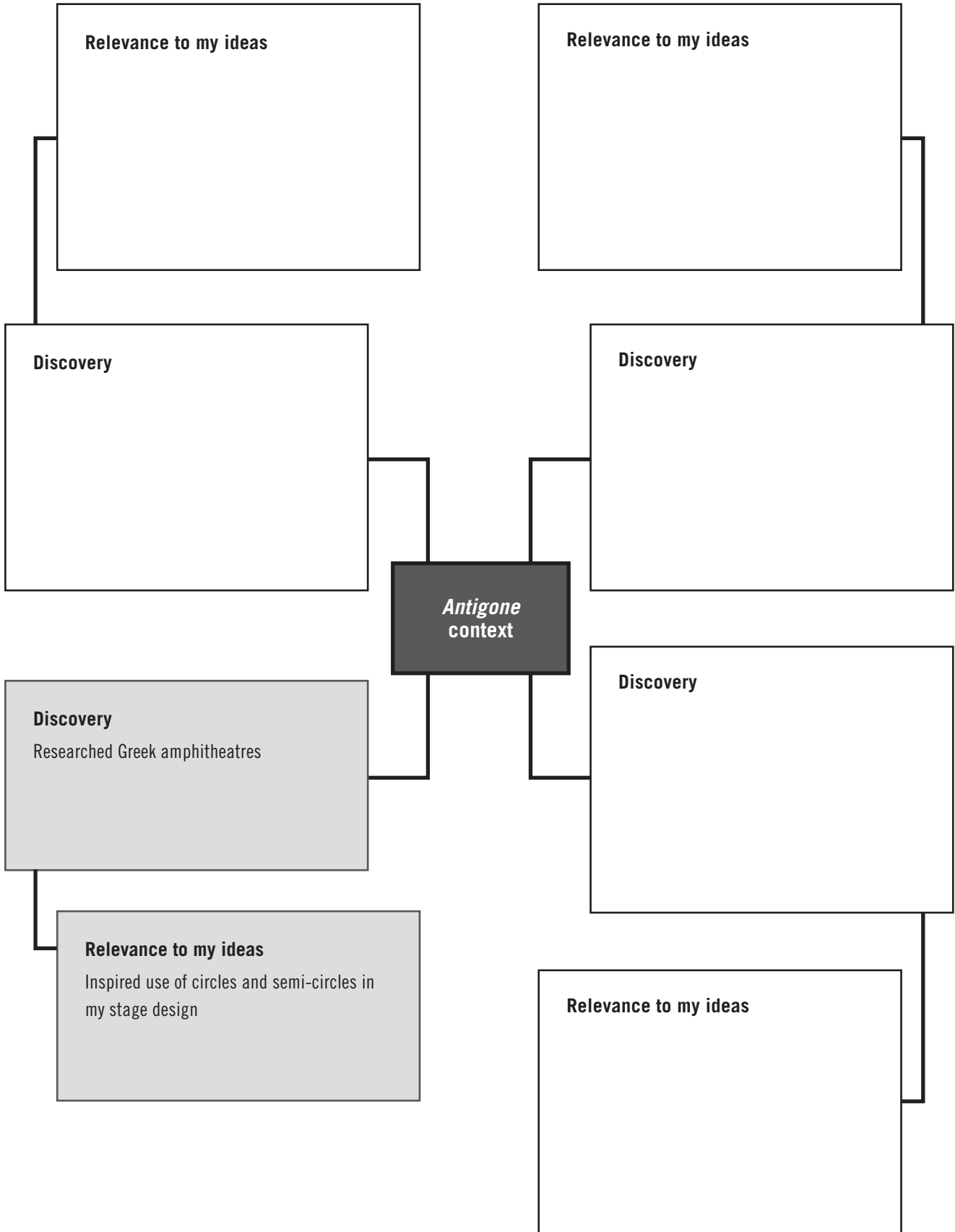
Use the chart below to analyse the structure of the play. (An example has been suggested.)

Key events	Structure/purpose	Explanation
Antigone tells Ismene her plan to bury Polynices and asks for her help.	Prologue: Provides information about the death of the brothers and Creon's decree. First conflict is presented between faithful but reckless Antigone and cautious Ismene.	Introduces Antigone and her powerful, passionate nature, very different from her sister. Theme of private/moral/religious concerns versus the state.

Researching context, genre and style

Your discoveries and ideas

Use the mind map below to begin noting your discoveries. (An example has been suggested for you.)



Noting your rehearsal discoveries

Motivations, skills and effects

Using a grid like the one below, locate a key line or stage direction, then consider what the characters want, the skills to be used and the effect on the audience.

Character(s) Lines/actions/motivations	Acting skills used (vocal, physical, interaction, spatial relationships, reactions, etc)	Effect on audience (understanding of character and/or situation, creation of conflict/tension/comedy/surprise)
Antigone and Ismene, page 60 'My own flesh and blood – dear sister, dear Ismene, how many griefs our father Oedipus handed down!'	The sisters are in close proximity, leaning against a palace wall, holding hands. Antigone speaks with soft urgency, emphasising 'dear' in affection. Ismene is confused and watchful, her brow furrowed in concern.	The audience sees the intimacy and affection between the sisters and that Antigone is the leader. Both are worried about being overheard and seen, suggesting that their world is potentially hostile.

Noting your rehearsal discoveries

Notes on a section of the play

Use this grid to collate your overall discoveries about a scene.

Characters and pages:	
Positioning of characters on stage Are they standing or seated? Downstage, centre or upstage? How do they use the set?	(You could sketch this.)
Characters' motivations/actions What do they want? How will they try to achieve their wishes?	
Sources of conflict What obstacles do they face? How are their desires in opposition to another character's?	
Vocal and physical skills Changes in pitch, volume, tone, etc. Use of pause/pace. Use of gestures, movements, stillness, handling of props, etc.	
Spatial relationships How near or far are they from each other? Do they avoid or dominate another character?	
Listening and reacting How do they react to key moments? (Expressions, stillness, gestures, eye contact, etc)	
Pause/pace/silence Does the scene speed up or slow down? Are there pauses or silences? Why?	
Use of props/costume/set How do props, costumes and the set aid the scene?	(You could sketch an example.)
Purpose of scene; its effect on the audience What is the importance of this scene? How does it further the plot, or reveal information or insight? How does the audience feel about the characters and plot here?	

Acting choices

Vocal skills

Key lines

When you are experimenting with vocal skills to convey the character and their situation, use the chart below to note the effect you want and how you could accomplish it. (An example has been started, along with some other key lines.)

Line	Desired effect	Vocal skills used
Creon: My countrymen, the ship of state is safe (page 67)	To establish that Creon sees himself as the captain of this 'ship' he has steered to safety. He wants respect for his victory.	Warm and loud on 'My countrymen,' to command attention and respect. A slight pause before, solemnly pronouncing, with a steady rhythm, 'the ship of state is safe.'
Sentry: The body – someone's just buried it, then run off... sprinkled some dry dust on the flesh, given it proper rites (page 71)		
Creon: Stop – before you make me choke with anger – the gods! (page 73)		
Chorus: Did they take you in some act of mad defiance? (page 78)		
Antigone: I was born to join in love, not hate – that is my nature (page 86)		
Haemon: The whole city of Thebes denies it, to a man (page 97)		
Antigone: O tomb, my bridal-bed – my house, my prison cut in the hollow rock, my everlasting watch! (page 105)		
Tiresias: You will drive me to utter the dreadful secret in my heart (page 114)		

Acting choices

Physical skills

Key moments

Another way of exploring physicality is to choose a few key moments when a character's movement, gestures, posture and so on might change. The chart below has been started to show how you could note ideas for Creon.

Chosen moment	Physical skills	Effect
Moment 1: Creon's entrance (page 69)	He is tall, lean, impressive, dressed in a smart business suit. He pauses in the double doorway of the palace and poses with his arms raised in triumph, as if he is expecting his photograph to be taken. He then bounds halfway down the palace steps, with an athletic gait, stopping occasionally to shake hands with the admiring citizens lining the steps. Choosing his moment carefully, he smiles broadly, opens his arms to the citizens and addresses them as 'My countrymen.'	I want to establish that Creon is a viable politician, who is using Thebes' success in this war as the foundation for his leadership. It is important that Creon isn't seen as evil, at least at this point, but as someone who pragmatically knows what he has to do to get the public behind him. He wants to show his ability to lead and his strength in making clear decisions. He doesn't want to offer any opportunity for a challenge to his right to rule.
Moment 2: His anger at finding out that there might be traitors: 'Everyone – the whole crew bribed to commit this crime' (page 73)		
Moment 3:		
Moment 4:		
Moment 5:		
Moment 6:		

Stage space

Locations in the play

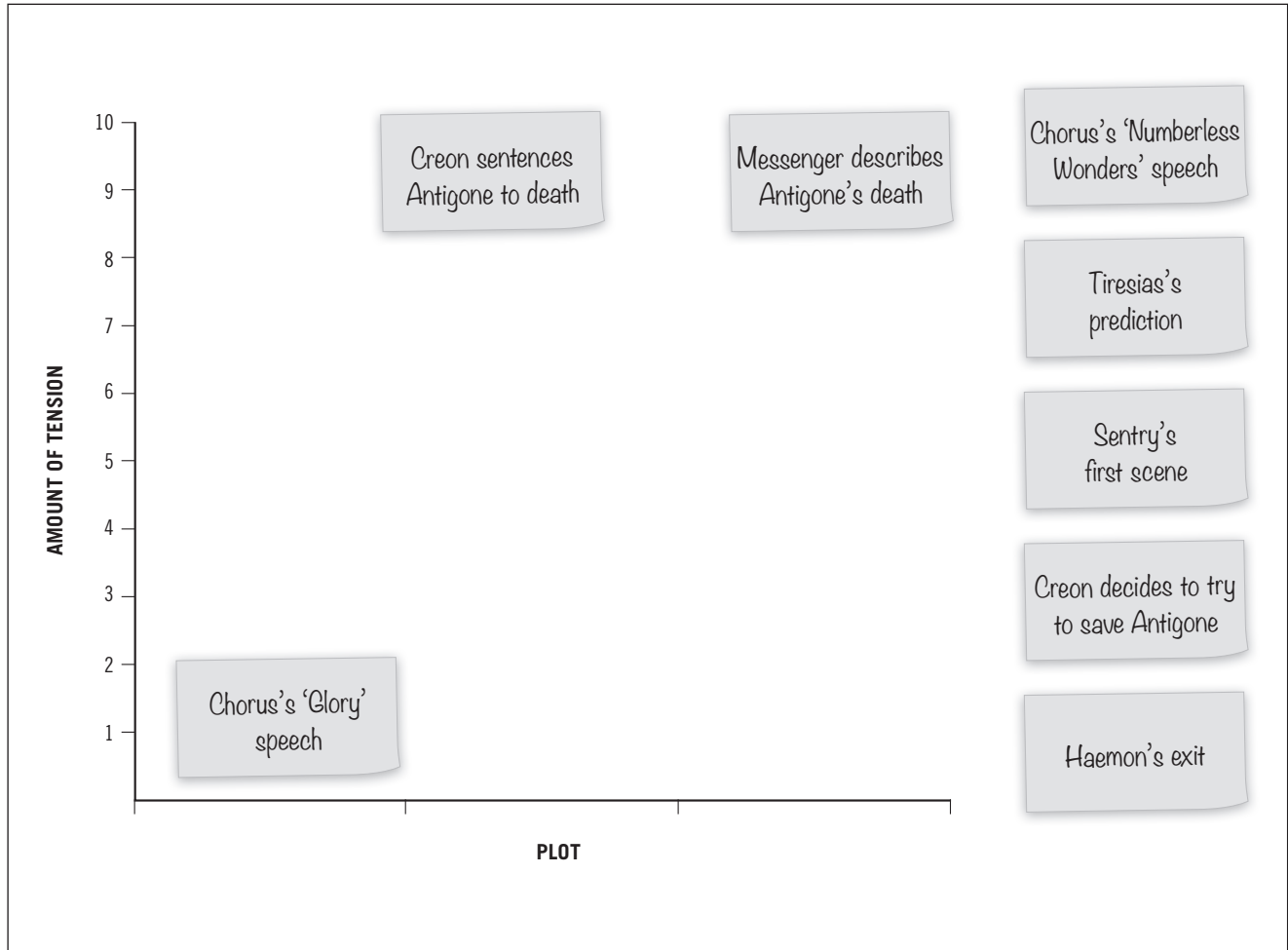
All the action of the play takes place outside the palace, but this space has been imagined in different ways, and the appearance of the space may change depending on the actions and time of day. Use the grid below to help you prepare your ideas. (Some examples have been suggested.)

Event/page	Set/lighting/props/sounds	Effect on audience
Antigone and Ismene first scene, pages 59–64	The lighting will be dim, with a few windows in the upstage palace lit with candles. The upstage cyclorama will have a faint orange glow of low-angle lighting near its bottom edge where it meets the stage, suggesting the very earliest signs of sunrise. Antigone will enter, wrapping a long shawl around herself, while Ismene will follow with a candle. There will be a faint distant sound of pipes and drums.	The lighting will establish that the time is just on the edge of night and morning. That Ismene thinks to bring a candle, while Antigone strides out without any light, indicates a difference in their characters. The distant pipes and drums, suggesting the returning soldiers, grows louder once the Chorus appears.
First entrance of Chorus, pages 65–66		
Creon's first speech, pages 67–68		
Antigone sentenced to death, pages 83–90		
Antigone prepares for death with the Chorus, pages 102–107		
Tiresias advises Creon, pages 111–116		
Creon mourns the deaths of Haemon and Eurydice, pages 124–128		

Using tension in the play

A tension graph

Use the graph below to locate the moments in the play that are most tense and those that are most relaxed. A few moments have been plotted for you. Add others that you think are important, such as scenes when characters make decisions or take key actions.

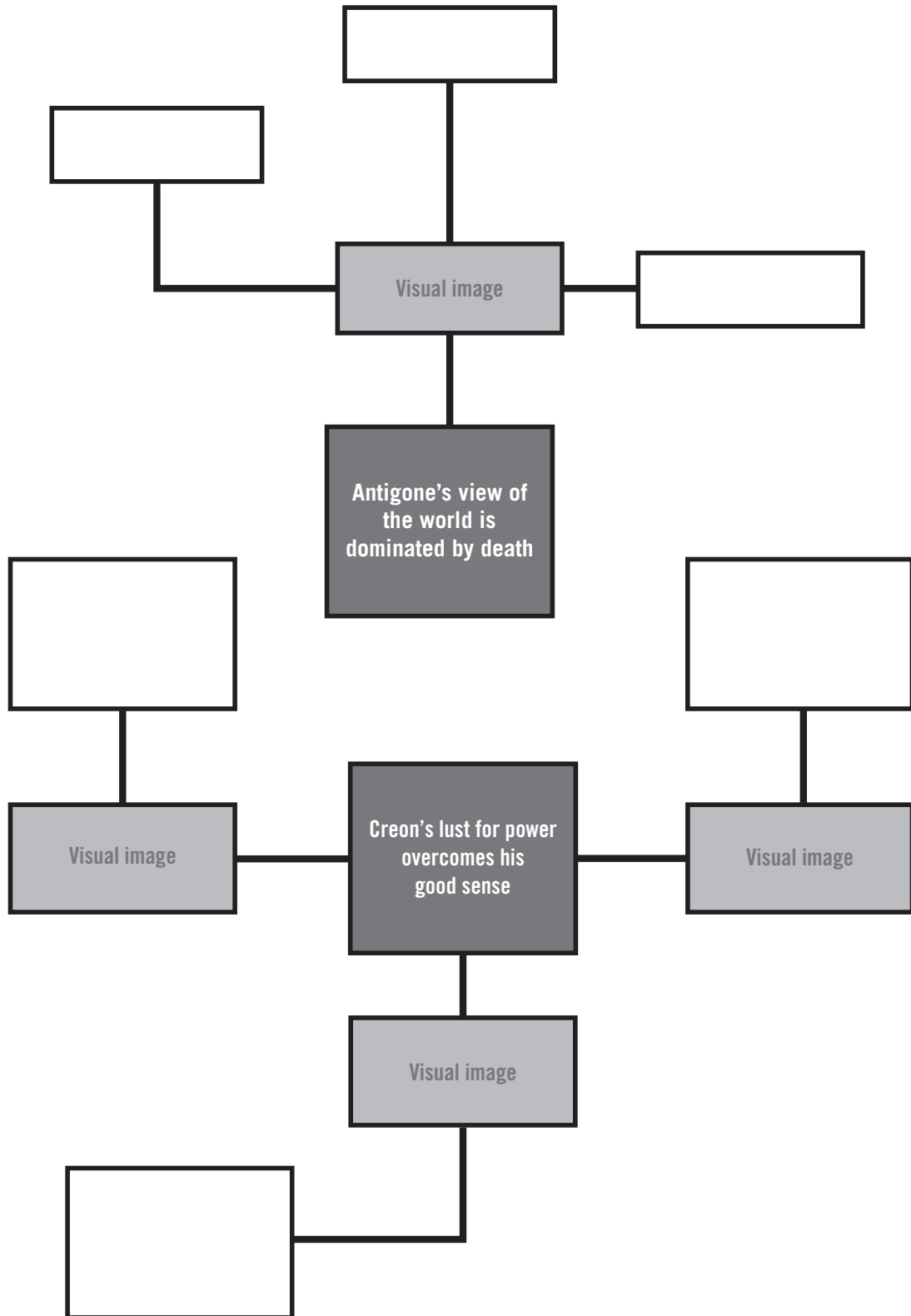


Set design

Setting and props design

Visual imagery

Think about what the play means to you and how you can use items in the set to help the audience understand that meaning. You could use a mind map, like the examples below, to set out your concept.



Lighting and sound design

Sound and lighting together

Lighting and sound design grid

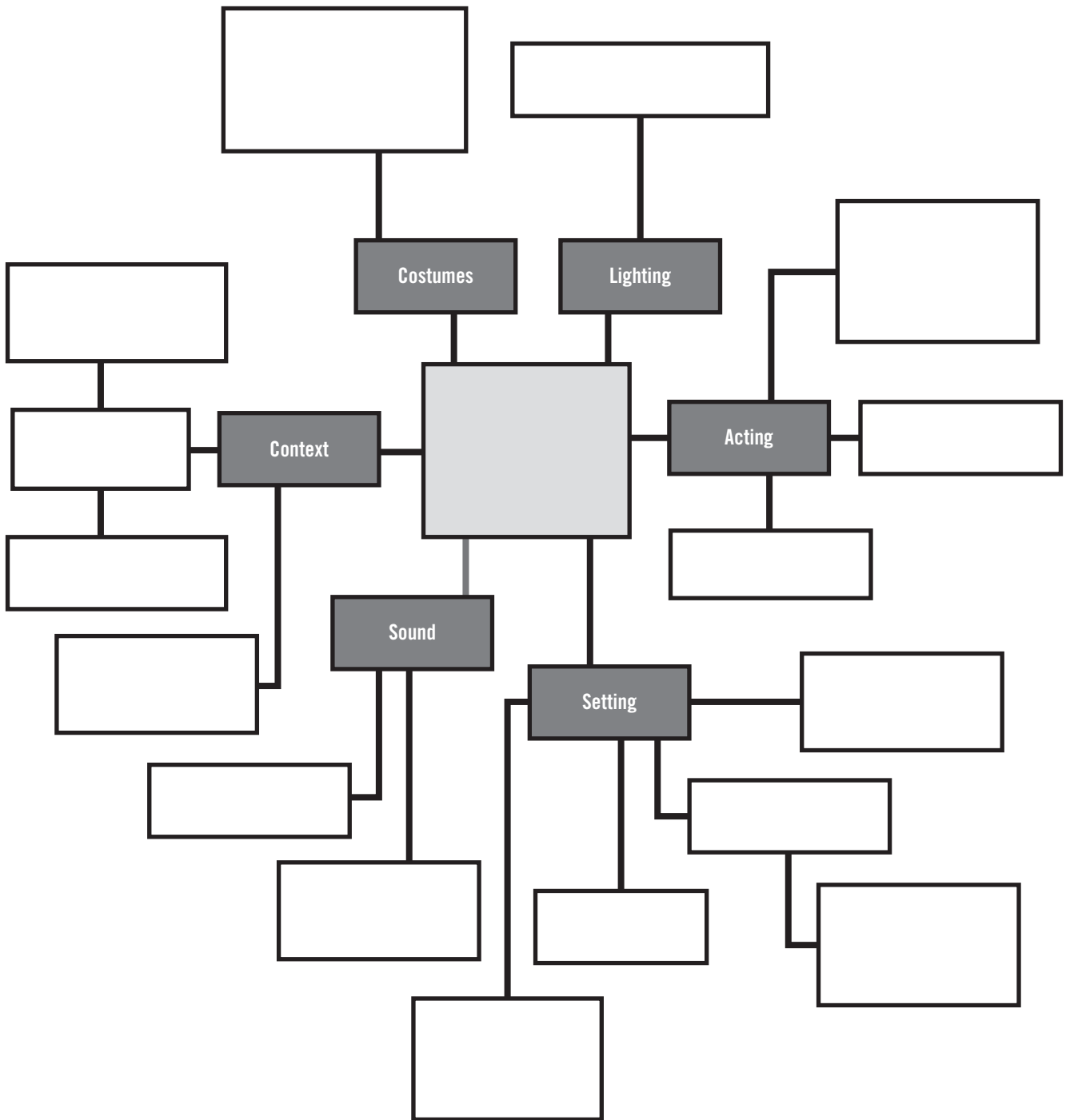
Use the grid below to begin planning your lighting and sound design choices for the different sections of the play.

Scene/key moment	Lighting (intensity, angle, colours, lanterns, etc)	Sound (music, sound effects, live, recorded, volume, etc)	Effect on audience (setting, mood, atmosphere, context, tension, psychological insight)
Opening of play – Antigone and Ismene			
First entrance of Chorus			
First Sentry scene			
Antigone and Creon			
Haemon and Creon			
Chorus and Antigone			
Tiresias and Creon			
'God of a hundred names' chant			
Messenger and Eurydice			
Creon's lament/ending			

Creating a cohesive concept: acting, directing, design

Ideas for your ideal production

Use the mind map below to set out your ideas for your ideal production.



Making a plan

Mind map

Use this mind map to plan a response to an exam question about the relationship between characters. (You could use a similar map for another question.)

