

Activity 2

Task:

In your group, read the following passages depicting one Ancient Greek and one Ancient Roman sacrifice.

Answer the questions below.

Prepare to teach others about your extracts.

- What are the key aspects of this sacrifice?

Consider:

- What are they doing?
- Who is involved?
- What are the aims of this sacrifice?

Extra:

- What atmosphere does the language create?
- What are the similarities and differences between the two sacrifices?

Iliad, Book 2

Before the Greeks are planning to attack Troy, Agamemnon makes a sacrifice to Zeus, asking for victory over Troy in a day.

Agamemnon, their leader, himself sacrificed a fat five-year old ox to almighty Zeus, inviting the elders, the chiefs of the Achaeans [*Greeks*], to attend.

They stood around the victim, and took up the sacred barley, and Agamemnon prayed.

When they had offered their petition and scattered grains of barley, they drew back the victims' heads, slit their throats and flayed them. Then they cut slices from the thighs, wrapped them in layers of fat, and laid raw meat on top. These they burned on billets of wood stripped of leaves, then spitted the innards and held them over the Hephaestean flames. When the thighs were burnt and they had tasted the inner meat, they carved the rest in small pieces, skewered and roasted them through, then drew them from the spits. Their work done and the meal prepared, they feasted and enjoyed the shared banquet.

Taken from Homer's *Iliad*, translated by A. S. Kline, 2009

Aeneid, Book 4

Dido is in love with Aeneas and, with her sister, performs sacrifices to the gods in order to win their favour and bless her love.

First they visit the shrines and ask for grace at the altars:
They sacrifice chosen animals according to the rites,
To Ceres, the law-maker, and Phoebus, and father Lycaeus,
And to Juno above all, in whose care are the marriage ties:
Dido herself, supremely lovely, holding the cup in her hand,
Pours the libation between the horns of a white heifer
Or walks to the rich altars, before the face of the gods,
Celebrates the day with gifts, and gazes into the opened
Chests of victims, and reads the living entrails.

Taken from Virgil's *Aeneid*, translated by A.S. Kline, 2002