MEDEA SUM

TEACHERS' GUIDE

PART 1 – THE PROJECT

PART 2 – LEARNING OUTCOMES

PART 3 – EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

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Project number:
2024-2-FR01-KA210-SCH-000295678

Co-funded by the European Union

PART 1

THE PROJECT

BACKGROUND

This toolkit has been developed as part of the European *Medea Sum* project, a collaborative educational programme that combines literature, theatre and citizenship education.

The project takes an active, interdisciplinary approach to making great myths accessible and relevant to today's world. Through the complex figure of Medea—at once a woman, a foreigner, a sorceress, a mother and a criminal—pupils are invited to explore fundamental questions: justice, power, responsibility and social norms.

At the heart of the programme, a fictional trial serves as the central thread. Pupils investigate, analyse testimonies, construct arguments and take on different roles to debate collectively. This role-play enables them to move beyond a passive reading of ancient texts: they interpret them, question them and link them to contemporary issues.

The toolkit offers a range of practical resources to support this approach: evidence, investigative materials, teaching ideas and activities. It aims to support teachers in running workshops that foster oral and written expression, critical thinking, creativity and cooperation.

More broadly, the project seeks to give pupils a vibrant access to classical culture, viewing it as a means to understand today's world and engage with it in an informed way.

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Through this initiative, we aim to:

- Promote an **interdisciplinary** approach across literature, history, philosophy and the arts.
- Encourage students to adopt different **perspectives** and to debate complex concepts such as justice, guilt, responsibility and the status of women.
- Develop **key European competences**: communication, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity.
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TERMS OF USE

The toolkit is intended for pupils aged 15 to 18. It has been designed to integrate easily into various educational contexts, adapting to different levels and subjects.

The proposed programme is organised around 8 to 10 sessions lasting between 1 and 1.5 hours, plus a final presentation session. This final session allows the pupils' work to be showcased, particularly through a role-play of the trial or some form of group presentation.

The programme is deliberately flexible. Teachers can adjust the number of sessions, their duration or the activities according to their constraints, the pupils' level and the intended educational objectives.

All resources are available online on the project platform, via a library of downloadable documents:
🔗 **[Link to the website and the library of downloadable documents]**

These resources are made available free of charge for non-commercial educational use, under a Creative Commons licence (CC BY-NC-SA). They may be used, adapted and shared, provided the source is cited and the same distribution conditions are maintained.

PART 2

LEARNING OUTCOMES

TARGETED SKILLS

The toolkit draws on several areas of competence, in line with the school curriculum.

In language and literature, it develops analytical reading, an understanding of different perspectives, and the ability to produce writing that is both creative and well-argued.

In moral and civic education, it encourages pupils to reflect on complex concepts such as justice, guilt and responsibility, whether individual or collective.

Oral and theatrical **expression** also plays a central role. Pupils are encouraged to speak up, defend a position, take on roles and participate in debates.

Finally, the programme promotes the development of **social skills**, particularly cooperation, active listening, empathy and the ability to accept differing opinions.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

At the end of the workshop series, the pupils produce a final presentation, which can take various forms: **a re-enacted trial, a monologue, a dialogue, a short play or even a podcast.** This presentation serves to showcase what they have learnt and highlight the groups' involvement.

They also compile **an investigation dossier**, in the form of a notebook or structured document, bringing together the elements analysed throughout the sessions.

Finally, pupils are able to identify several different perspectives on the same situation, understand them and present well-structured arguments in their favour.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

The assessment proposed in this toolkit is based on a formative, progressive and participatory approach.

It aims both to measure pupils' learning and to support their reflection throughout the project.

Why assess?

Assessment helps to highlight learning outcomes that are often difficult to measure objectively in a traditional setting: the ability to argue a case, cooperate, change one's perspective or engage in a debate. It also provides teachers with concrete benchmarks for adjusting activities and recognising pupils' progress.

What can be assessed?

Several aspects can be observed:

Comprehension and analysis: the ability to understand the issues at stake in the myth of Medea, and to identify facts, viewpoints and arguments.

Critical thinking: the ability to question a situation, to qualify a judgement, and to draw on evidence to form an opinion.

Oral and written expression: clarity of argument, quality of presentation, organisation of ideas.

Engagement and participation: involvement in activities, ability to work in a group, to listen to and respect others.

Creativity and ownership: ability to take ownership of the project through original work (trials, dramatisations, podcasts, etc.).

How to assess?

The toolkit offers several complementary resources to be used at different stages of the project:

At the outset, a teacher questionnaire helps to identify prior knowledge, specific needs and the classroom context.

At the end of the project, pupil and teacher questionnaires help gather structured feedback on learning, engagement and the relevance of the activities.

Throughout the project, observation of pupils (participation, interactions, progress) is a key assessment tool.

A reflective and accessible assessment: "the hand"

In addition, a simple, visual activity can be offered to pupils: the "hand" assessment. Each finger corresponds to a question:

- What I liked
- A word to introduce the topic
- What I didn't like / a difficulty I encountered
- What I felt was missing / what I would have liked
- What I've learnt

This format encourages personal expression, even for the most struggling pupils. It allows for the collection of qualitative feedback that is quick to analyse, whilst developing pupils' ability to reflect on their experience.

How can assessment be integrated?

Assessment can be integrated in a flexible way:

- through **self-assessment** (pupils analyse their own work),
- through **peer assessment** (feedback between groups),
- **through teacher assessment**, based on simple criteria (participation, reasoning, cooperation).

It may take the form of an oral, written or creative presentation, in keeping with the spirit of the project.

PART 3

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

The educational workshops on Medea draw on resources from the *Medea Sum* toolkit, designed to support teachers in delivering flexible and active lesson plans.

All content is available online on the project website and can be freely downloaded, adapted and printed according to the needs of the class. This flexibility allows teachers to adapt the materials to suit their teaching objectives, students' levels and learning contexts.

CONTENTS OF THE TOOLKIT

The *Medea Sum* Toolkit offers a set of supplementary resources designed to immerse pupils in an investigation into the trial of Medea.

In addition to **the teaching guide**, it opens with a **letter from the judge** inviting students to re-examine the case and question the responsibilities at jeu . This letter is fictional and encourages students to get involved in the 'game': the aim is to help the judge reopen the file of a case that haunts him, drawing on the evidence he has gathered.

At the heart of the system lies a database of diverse **'evidence'**: extracts from texts by Pierre Corneille, Euripides and Seneca, reproductions of paintings, excerpts from laws, and film clips. The literary texts are provided in their original languages (French, Latin, Greek) as well as in translations (French, English, Italian), with an indication of whether these are from copyright-free versions or machine translations.

The toolkit also includes:

- **character profiles to be completed** (identity, role in the case, grey areas)
- **investigation workbooks** organised by thematic themes to guide the analysis.

Finally, **fictional press articles** can be used as an optional extra to enrich the scenario and broaden the range of perspectives on the trial.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The workshop structure outlined below is a **suggested teaching approach**. It has been designed to guide teachers step by step, but remains entirely flexible.

Teachers are free to adapt the toolkit, select certain elements or tailor the content to suit their classroom context, the time available and the objectives set.

Each session includes:

- an educational objective,
- a description of the procedure,
- related resources to be used (letter from the judge, character sheets, pieces of evidence, witness statement template, etc.).

SESSION 1

THE LOST VERDICT

Objective:

This first session allows participants to:

- to get to grips with the investigation and understand the context of the trial.
- to establish the framework for the investigation
- to spark the pupils' curiosity.

Organisation:

The pupils are divided into groups of 4 to 5.

Procedure:

Each group receives a letter from the judge. In this document, the judge expresses his doubts and presents the initial evidence gathered in the Medea case. He poses a key question:

"Medea is guilty… but of what?"

Based on this letter, pupils are asked to:

- identify the aspects of the legal situation that they understand,
- formulate hypotheses regarding the charges brought against Medea,
- identify the grey areas and unresolved questions.

Related resources:

1 - The judge's letter

2 - Access to the investigation file, including:

- the evidence
- thematic pathways (investigation workbooks) linked to the evidence.

Possible adaptations:

The programme can be adapted as required:

- offer a single thematic trail for the whole class,
- assign a different trail to each group,
- or provide access to all the exhibits for more independent and in-depth work.

Learning outcomes at the end of the session:

- understanding of the issues at stake in the trial,
- initial hypotheses regarding Medea's guilt,
- identification of questions to be explored in the remainder of the investigation.

SESSION 2

MEDEA'S CIRCLE

Objective:

To explore the perspectives of the secondary characters. The aim is to spend an hour examining the myth of Medea through the lens of a single character.

Each group receives **a character sheet (key)** containing biographical details, extracts from historical or literary sources, and some clues about their role in the story.

These characters help to trace Medea's life and her various misdeeds.

Suggested characters:

Aetes, Jason, Pelias, Creon, Creusa, Aegeus, Circe, Nerine, the Messenger, Medea , the Chorus, the Children, Cleon, Pollux.

It is also possible to include the authors as characters to be played: Corneille, Euripides, Seneca.

Pupils must:

- determine what the character knows or does not know,
- identify their position: witness for the prosecution, witness for the defence, neutral or ambiguous,
- identify elements in historical sources that support their testimony.

Related documents:

Character sheets. Pupils write the testimony using the questions provided in the 'character profile' template.

Learning outcomes by the end of the session

- An understanding of the myth through the eyes of a key character.
- A short summary of the key arguments this character might have put forward at Medea's trial.
- Ability to 'step into the character's shoes' briefly during the upcoming interview session.

SESSION 3

PREPARATION OF QUESTIONS

Objective:

To prepare for the confrontation between the characters.

Part 1:

Each group reads/performs the testimony of their character, which they prepared in Session 2

The other groups must:

- analyse the new information available,
- update their character profile/backstory based on this information

Part 2:

The groups prepare for the next session (interrogation)

They must:

- formulate 2 to 3 key questions they wish to ask one or more other characters during the meeting (e.g. motivations, contradictions, possible alliances),
- anticipate the answers that will be given to their own character
- think about how to obtain new clues.

This session develops argumentation and oral preparation skills.

Expected outcomes at the end of the session

- The pupils have heard all the testimonies of the key characters written by the groups.
- They have planned the questions they wish to ask them in the next session
- They have anticipated the questions that might be asked of their character.

SESSION 4

QUESTIONING / SPEED DATING

Objective:

To cross-check accounts and compare versions.

Organisation:

Procedure:

Each group/character “takes the stage”.

The other groups take turns asking whatever questions they wish to advance their investigation and refine their understanding of the case.

Each exchange lasts around 5 to 7 minutes.

These exchanges help to reveal contradictions and alliances, and to build up each group’s investigation file.

Expected outcomes at the end of the session

- They have “played” their character and answered the questions.
- Compare possible viewpoints and argue in favour of their character’s .

SESSION 5

CHOOSING THE FORM OF THE VERDICT

Objective:

To decide collectively how to present the answer to the question:

"Medea is guilty, but of what?"

Each group deliberates to choose **the narrative form and the roles** they wish to assign to their final production. For example:

1. A re-enactment of the trial (theatrical or oral)

- The pupils re-enact the trial with a judge, a defence lawyer, a prosecutor and witnesses.
- Objective: to present different points of view and reach a collective verdict (guilty of a specific crime, a moral offence, a mistake, etc.).

2. The verdict with commentary (in dialogue or from multiple perspectives)

- Pupils choose one or more characters (e.g. Medea, Jason, the nurse, Creusa, etc.) and write a **discussion** in which each gives their opinion on Medea's guilt.
- The scene may take the form of a **dramatic dialogue**, a **round-table discussion** or a **fictional debate**.

3. Medea's voice (introspective monologue)

- Pupils write an **inner monologue** by Medea addressed to the judge, her children, or posterity.
- In it, Medea acknowledges (or denies) her guilt, seeks to justify herself, or questions human justice.

4. The judgement of the heirs (symbolic or poetic trial)

- The verdict is delivered not by the protagonists of the story, but by **new judges or the heirs of the deceased judge**, or even by the **pupils themselves** playing this role.
- This form allows the myth to be linked to the present: what would we have judged today?

5. The Trial of the Dead (theatrical)

- Pupils write a play taking place in the Greek underworld, where all characters of the tragedy can express their opinions to a judge, for instance Hades, Minos, Rhadamanthys, or Aeacus.
- This allows the pupils to link the characters of the play to other mythological concepts.

The choice of form depends on the pupils' profile, the time available and the skills one wishes to develop (writing, speaking, creativity, theatrical expression, etc.).

SESSIONS 6 TO 9

PREPARATION OF THE FINAL VERDICT

Objective: To devise, write and finalise the final production.

Each group:

- writes its script or final text,
- prepares the delivery, staging or visual aids (depending on the chosen format),
- rehearses or fine-tunes the presentation.

SESSION 10

FINAL PRESENTATION

Objective: To share and discuss the groups' conclusions.

Each group presents its work (5 to 10 minutes).The other pupils can ask questions, give their reactions, or compare the findings. A group discussion concludes the session, focusing on the following questions:

- What have we learnt about Medea?
- What does this trial tell us about justice, guilt, or the status of women?

The session can end with a moment of reflective discussion or a symbolic vote on Medea's verdict.

POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS

Several extensions can enrich and deepen the teaching programme. It is possible to broaden the work to include other female mythological figures such as Antigone, Cassandra or Phaedra, in order to compare their life stories, their choices and the judgements passed on them according to historical and cultural contexts.

Organising cross-trials, bringing together several myths or different eras, would also help to highlight points of convergence and divergence in value systems and social representations. Finally, the production of digital or dramatised versions of the verdicts — in the form of videos, podcasts or virtual exhibitions — would offer a variety of presentation formats, promoting both the students' engagement with the content and its dissemination to a wider audience.