

02 Theater

Read the following passage. Then fill in the diagram with the information that you read.

The Greek Chorus and the Audience

In Greek theater, the chorus was either a person or a group of that served various purposes in supporting the play. It provided a commentary on the play by emphasizing the major themes and by clarifying the plot. The chorus also influenced reactions of the audience by engaging in overt communication with it.

To help the audience understand the events, the chorus helped to reinforce the main points of the play. It often revealed background information that the characters could not deliver—such as inner emotions like fear and resentment—without needlessly interrupting the play. Through either singing or speaking in unison, the chorus conveyed ideas that characters were unable to say. Also, an overview of events was sometimes presented to the audience members to facilitate their interpretation of the story. This would improve understanding and enhance enjoyment of the play.

Finally, the chorus could sway audience responses by displaying embellished reactions to prompt the audience to react similarly. Likewise, laugh tracks today can prompt television viewers to laugh. Another way the chorus interacted with the audience was by discussing events and characters. This was achieved by either mocking events or sympathizing with them. This clever tool to influence feelings and reactions of the audience altered the dynamic between the audience and the play itself.

clarify:
to free from confusion

commentary:
an explanation or illustration of something

overt:
explicit or easily seen or recognized

reinforce:
to emphasize

unison:
in harmony, at the same time

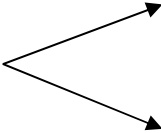
facilitate:
to make easier

embellish:
to exaggerate

laugh track:
a pre-recorded segment of the laughter that is added to a TV or radio program to mimic audience responses.

The Greek Chorus and the Audience

Definition:



Role 1:

Role 2:

1. According to paragraph 1, what was the role of the chorus in Greek theater?
 - (A) To introduce new characters
 - (B) To provide music for the play
 - (C) To analyze the audience's reactions
 - (D) To help the audience understand
2. According to paragraph 2, how did the chorus communicate characters' emotions?
 - (A) By telling the audience how to react
 - (B) By summarizing the play after it ended
 - (C) By presenting the thoughts of the characters
 - (D) By repeating their thoughts during the play.
3. According to paragraph 3, why did the chorus present overstated emotions?
 - (A) To parody the play's characters
 - (B) To encourage audience reactions
 - (C) To explain important events
 - (D) To provide new information

Fill in the blanks to complete the summary.

The role of the chorus in Greek theater was to provide a(n) _____ on a play to the audience in order to _____ the plot. The chorus explained the stories and _____ the audience's understanding of events. By singing or speaking in _____, the chorus was also responsible for influencing the way audiences reacted to a play. It did this by showing _____ reactions and discussing the play's events and characters with the audience.
