Pericles' "Funeral Oration"
supposedly delivered in winter, 430

General DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What picture of Athenian democracy does the speech give?
2. What effect do you think the whole speech would have had on the audience?
3. How is the speech structured?
4. In one sentence, what is the essential 'message' of the speech? How does the structure support this message?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 01

1. What is a "pane pan·e·gy·ric n extraordinary praise delivered in formal speech or writing (formal)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 02

1. Why does Pericles think the speech should not be given?
2. What is the 'assigned' subject of the speech? Why does Pericles think it is hard to give a speech on this subject?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 03

1. Why does Pericles begin with praise of the ancestors?
2. If we continue Pericles' logic, who deserves the most praise?
3. What does Pericles say he will do before he delivers the panegyric proper?
4. Why do you think he does this?
5. What questions does Pericles say he will answer? Does he answer these questions? If so, in what sections of the speech does he answer each question?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 04

1. According to Pericles, what are the effects of Athenian government on "ordinary life"?
2. Does Pericles say anything that reminds you of Theseus in Oedipus at Colonus?
3. What does the last paragraph imply about Athens' economy?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 05
1. How does Pericles characterize Athens' military strength?
2. Why does Pericles emphasize the point that Athenian soldiers are every bit as good as their rivals even though "we live exactly as we please"?
3. Why do you think Pericles says "No enemy has ever encountered our united force ..."?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 06

1. What image of Athens' domestic politics does Pericles paint here?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 07

1. What would an Athenian have thought after hearing this section of the speech?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 08

1. What adjectives would you use to characterize the men Pericles praises here?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 09

1. Why does Pericles encourage the audience to emulate the actions and spirit of the dead men?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 10

1. What is an Athenian citizen's duty to the state?
2. What can a citizen expect to receive from the state for doing his duty?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 11

1. What civic role does Pericles assign to women?
2. What role for women is implied here?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for section 12

1. What rewards can a dutiful Athenian citizen expect to receive from the state?
2. What role for women is implied here?