

Discussion Questions for *Lysistrata*

Background: Aristophanes wrote the play some fifty years after the Persian War and during the Peloponnesian War fought between the allies of the Athenians and the allies of the Spartans. There are references in the play about the unity experienced by the Greeks during the Persian War (the Greeks successfully defeated the much larger Persian forces to retain their liberty) and the fighting that occurred between one-time allies in the Peloponnesian War.

1. Did you enjoy the selection? Why or why not?
2. Did the play seem modern? Were the themes applicable to our time?
3. Did the bawdiness of the play interfere with its message, or did the language help in making the message more compelling?
4. Do you think that the chorus, with its Strophe/Antistrophe help develop the arguments of both sides in the dispute?
5. What did you think of the action, or non-action, of the play? Did the play need a great deal of action to be successful?
6. Was the plot sufficiently developed in the play, and as a follow-on to question five (5) did it need action for its development?
7. Should we read something into the cessation of war beyond the obvious sexual references; that is do you think Aristophanes recognized that the role of women as mothers and protectors of the family could somehow influence the men to suspend warlike activities?
8. Although this is a comedy, Aristophanes raises serious questions about the role of men and women, as well as the nature of warfare. Do you think that the playwright was successful in raising these issues in the play? Do you think that writing a comedy about these issues was more or less effective than writing a tragedy?
9. Which character or characters did you most admire in the play? Which character or characters did you least admire in the play?
10. Where the men or women portrayed most sympathetically in the play?