Project--Make Your Own "Greek Tragedy"

Your group will write and perform a play according to the structure below. You must choose a familiar story from history or from fiction to dramatize. Remember that Greek Tragedy uses a "late point of attack."

Everyone in the group will be an actor. You may have as many characters as you want, as long as you never have more of them onstage at one time than you have members in your group.

The "audience" will serve as chorus.

You will make all necessary masks for your characters. We won't worry about masks for the chorus, but be sure the text tells us who the chorus are supposed to represent.

You must be sure that the lines for the chorus are presented clearly so that the "audience" will be able to "perform" them without rehearsal.

We will go over proper format for scripts.

You will not be required to memorize your lines.

You are not required to use props or scenery, but if you want to do so, you will need to make or find what is necessary.

At the completion of the project you will hand in your script, and your grade will be based both on the script and the performance.

Note: Although of course real Tragedy always ends unhappily, it is not so easy to find familiar stories in this day and age that don't have happy endings, so you are not required to give your play a "tragic" ending. However, you may do so if you like, even if it means changing the ending of an existing story.

You must provide copies of all of the chorus's words to hand out to the "audience." You may make these copies yourself, or you may have me make them. However, if you want me to do it, you MUST get them to me by the end of school on the day before the performance.

Your play will have the following structure:

Prologue
Characters speak, perhaps directly to the audience. Tell us what the play is going to be about, and what you think we will learn from it.

Parados
Chorus, in unison, tells us what has happened before the beginning of the action of the play. They should also tell us who they are. If you want, you can have the chorus speak in verse. (In a real Greek play, the chorus would "enter" here, but since the "audience" is serving as chorus, we'll just assume that part. But if you want, you can have them say something about "entering.")

Episode 1
Characters, in masks, of course, act out the beginning of the action of the play. If you want, you can have the chorus interrupt the action to ask questions or make comments. (If you are going to do this, make sure you have copies of the whole play, rather than just the chorus parts, to hand out to the "audience.") Remember that characters in Greek Tragedy tend to talk a lot about decision making and moral choices--what should I do? Am I doing the right thing? Etc. Remember that anything violent should take place offstage, with a character or "messenger" entering to tell us what happened.

Choral Ode 1
Chorus speaks about something connected with the theme of the story, but not necessarily about the story itself. Or, if you prefer, you may use a popular song or poem here, that you think expresses the mood or theme at this point in the play. If you use a poem, the "audience" will read it in unison. If you use a popular song, you may simply play it on the stereo at this point. (In a real Greek Tragedy the chorus would probably also "dance" at this point. You can't expect the audience to do this, since they won't have rehearsed, but if you want, you can have the members of your group perform the movements of the chorus while the "audience" reads or the song plays. This is NOT, however, required.)

Episode 2
Characters act out the next part of the story, again with choral comment if you want.

Choral Ode 2
(See Choral Ode 1)

(If necessary, you may add more Episodes and Odes here.)

Final Episode
Characters act out the end of the story.

Exodus
As or after the characters leave, the chorus tells us what we have learned from the story.