

Socrates Apology Assignment

1. In the opening of the Apology how does Socrates contrast his form of speech with that of his accusers?

Socrates accusers spoke persuasively but hardly anything they said was true, they told many lies. Socrates promises to tell the whole truth.

His accusers spoke in stylized and embroidered phrases, while Socrates himself spoke plainly, “at random and expressed in the first words that come to mind”, relying on the justice of his cause.

His accusers claimed that Socrates is an accomplished speaker, which Socrates believed is only true if they called an accomplished speaker “the man who speaks the truth”. He acknowledged he is a “stranger” to the court’s manner of speaking.

2. What is the Socratic method? How does irony function in the Socratic method?

Socratic method is a systematic investigation technique that involves asking questions to expose contradictions and revealing inconsistencies in one’s arguments.

Irony is evident when Socrates pretends ignorance to draw others’ flawed reasoning.

3. What are the charges against Socrates? At the opening of his defense how does Socrates distinguish between two sets of accusers? Which accusers does he think will be harder to refute? Why?

Socrates was charged with corrupting the youth and not believing in the gods of the city.

Socrates distinguishes between the old and the later accusers. Old accusers were those who believed Socrates was a wise man who was a student of all things in the sky and below the earth, who makes the worse argument the stronger, they believed that a person who studies these things do not believe in gods. In the other hand, the later accusers (Meletus, Lycon, Anytus) accused Socrates of believing in other new spiritual beings instead of believing in gods that the city believes, they also accused Socrates of corrupting the young.

Socrates thinks the old accusers were harder to refute. This is because the old accusers shaped public opinions over many years. Also, the old accusers were numerous to bring them into court or refute them individually.

4. What is the story Socrates tells the jury of the Athenians concerning what a friend is told by the oracle at Delphi? What was the point of this story?

Socrates tells the jury a story involving his friend, Chairephon. Chairephon was impulsive and a friend to many jurymen, he was passionate enough to go to Delphi and asked the Oracle if any man was wiser than Socrates. Pythian replied that no one was wiser.

Socrates tells this story to inform the jury about the cause of the slander against him. He was conscious and acknowledged that he was not wise at all, he was at a loss as to the god's meaning, believing god could not lie. He interpreted this to mean that true wisdom comes from knowing one's own ignorance.

5. According to Socrates what benefits for the individual and for the state come from the practice of philosophy? What did Socrates mean when he referred to himself as a “gadfly”?

Philosophy encourages pursuit of virtue and wisdom. He teaches the citizens that excellence (virtue) makes wealth and everything else good for men. He encourages the citizens to be as good and wise as possible.

Socrates referred himself as “gadfly” to mean he was attached to the city by the god to provoke the state (a sluggish horse) to awaken and improve.

6. Why does Socrates claim that his accusers will be more harmed by his execution than he?

He claimed that killing him won't stop others from questioning injustice. This will cause the accusers to face even greater scrutiny and moral consequences.

7. Why doesn't Socrates employ emotional appeals to pity in order to save his life?

He doesn't apply emotional appeals such as begging and pleading since this should not be the correct way to base justice, it should be based on truth. He believes using these tactics would undermine his principles and be a disgrace to his reputation.

8. What is the jury's verdict and what do the accusers recommend as a proper penalty? What counter penalty does Socrates propose for himself? Why does he propose this to be his just penalty?

Jury's Verdict: Guilty

Accusers recommended death.

Socrates proposes free meals in the Prytaneum. Later, since he had no money for a fine, he assessed it at one mina of silver, which his friends increased to thirty minae.

9. Even though he may very well have avoided death, why does Socrates not choose prison, a fine, exile, or even silence as a counter penalty? Why does Socrates say that

**"the unexamined life is not worth living?" What did he mean by this? Was he correct?
Why or why not?**

Socrates doesn't choose prison because imprisonment would subject him to the ruling magistrates (the Eleven), he doesn't choose a fine since he has no money, he doesn't choose exile because according to him, it would be wrong for him to think that other cities would tolerate his company when his own citizens do not. He doesn't choose silence, since it would be disobedience to the god who attached him to this city to speak and not to keep quiet.

By saying, "the unexamined life is not worth living?", Socrates meant living without reflection or pursuit of virtue would be equivalent to abandoning the primary function and blessing of human existence, which is to pursue wisdom and to care for the state of the soul.

Socrates was correct: without proper reflection, we tend to repeat patterns unconsciously if we don't examine our beliefs, values and actions. Examining our beliefs, values and actions helps us evolve.