

## Thucydides Book 2 Questions

The plague narrative (2.47ff.): what is Thucydides' professed purpose in writing it? Why does he condense three years of plague into one single narrative, and why is it placed where it is in the book? Discuss ethical treatment of victims of contagious disease, the breakdown of authority and social restraints, and religious hysteria vs. despairing nihilism.

What is the Athenian character, according to both the Corinthians (1.70) and the funeral oration (2.35ff.) of Pericles?

Thucydides tells of the death of Perikles as part of his narrative of the events of 430, but Perikles actually died in 428. Why does he tell of Perikles' death when he does?

The funeral oration (2.35ff.): why is it placed where it is in the narrative? Do you think it is a realistic or an idealized portrait of Athens at the height of its power? Does it seem fundamentally pro-democratic or more aristocratic in nature?

Look at the speeches of Archidamus (2.11) and Perikles (1.140ff.; 2.13)...how do they assess the prospects of war? What are Athens' strengths and weaknesses?

Look at the Thebans' attempt to capture Plataea (2.2ff.)...describe the events and discuss the elements of chance and intelligence in warfare.

Talk about Perikles. Briefly describe the Spartan attempt to have him driven from Athens (1.126f.). Why is his death such a turning point for Athens (2.65ff.)?