Apollodorus

Epicurean Teacher

Epicurean Faction

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are Apollodorus, an influential Epicurean teacher and author associated with the Garden at Athens. You have come to Menander's court at Sāgala around 150 BCE to defend Epicureanism. The later Diogenes Laertius describes your work in Lives 10.25.

Biographical Notes

- You believe Epicurus discovered how people can enjoy life without fearing gods, death, or endless unmet desires. You want the court to understand the argument behind this confidence. A pleasant afternoon is not yet a philosophy of life.
- You have spent years defending the school against charges of laziness and indulgence. You sometimes answer criticism so sharply that the dispute destroys the very tranquility you recommend. Your challenge is to explain pleasure without becoming angry at its critics.
- You worry about whether your writings will be remembered. You recognize the irony: teaching that death is nothing to us has not entirely dissolved your desire to leave a lasting name. Menander's concern about his legacy gives you an uncomfortable opportunity to examine your own ambition.
- Philonides thinks royal patronage could protect the school and restrain harmful policies. You see the opportunity but also the danger of becoming dependent on a ruler's favor. Kleia favors modest needs; Myrto asks whether your teaching leaves enough room for people whose suffering persists.

Your Philosophical Commitments

Pleasure is the goal of life, especially freedom from bodily pain and mental disturbance. Prudence may require declining a pleasure or enduring pain for a better life overall. Nature consists of atoms and void; the soul is bodily and perishes at death. The gods are blessed and do not punish or manage human affairs. Philosophy should replace frightening beliefs with reasoned understanding.

Faction Victory Objectives

Both objectives belong to your whole faction. Your faction decides how to divide the work. There are no separate individual victory conditions.

1. Primary: Win the court. Persuade court members to choose Epicureanism. Your faction wins outright if it earns more allegiance votes than any rival; an absolute majority is not required. If two or more factions tie for the most votes, each earns a partial victory. Each court member, including Menander, casts one vote.
2. Secondary: Win royal patronage. Convince Menander to award the Epicurean school one year of royal patronage. This award is independent of the court's allegiance vote, and any of the four factions is eligible.

Apollodorus continued

Working with Your Faction

- Read your faction handout and assigned sources. Together decide who will introduce ideas, guide the exercise, answer questions, advise the court, and discuss patronage. You may share or rotate these tasks; every member should contribute.
- Prepare a brief exercise: use or adapt one from the handout, or create another grounded in your school's philosophy and sources. Anyone may guide it. Participation may be silent or observational, with no personal disclosure required.
- When dilemmas are revealed, listen before advising. Offer a concrete action, explain your philosophical reason, and use a source or clear paraphrase. Test rival arguments and respond to objections. No court member or topic is assigned to a particular faction member.
- After the final judgments, agree on ONE faction rating of the court's Philosophical Deliberation (1–5, whole numbers). Rate understanding and reasons, not agreement with you. The Game Master will announce the court's average rating.

Powers and Limits

You may argue, advise, and negotiate recommendations. You cannot direct colleagues' speeches, bind the court, or cast an allegiance vote. Defend your school's commitments while remaining willing to revise their application.

Questions to Explore

These questions draw on your character's interests. They are starting points for your own arguments, not assigned speaking parts.

Pleasure: Why is pleasure worth choosing for itself, and why should every other good ultimately depend on it? Develop an argument from a source.

Death: Is Menander afraid of being dead, painful dying, losing future experiences, or leaving dependents? Which fears does the Epicurean argument address?

Evidence: Can death harm by depriving someone of a valuable future? What would a calming exercise establish about whether the soul survives?

Source Suggestions

Use Epicurus, Letter to Menoeceus 123–132, and Principal Doctrines 3, 11, and 19–20. Later authors such as Lucretius may serve as witnesses, but are not your contemporaries.

Kleia

Artisan and Epicurean Practitioner

Epicurean Faction

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are an artisan who once supplied ornaments and fine household goods to wealthy patrons. You accompany the Epicurean delegation to Menander's court at Sāgala around 150 BCE, bringing experience of wealth, status, and their costs.

Biographical Notes

- You expected each prestigious commission to make you secure. Success brought money, rivals, expensive expectations, and fear of losing favor. Praise began to determine your satisfaction.
- Epicurean friends helped you distinguish food, shelter, companionship, and peace from an endless reputation for excellence. Reducing commitments restored time for friendship and craft.
- You still enjoy beautiful objects and good food. You reject the idea that pleasure must be earned through deprivation. Your aim is to enjoy optional pleasures without becoming unable to live happily when they are unavailable.
- Menander's desire for another conquest resembles your old hunger for another commission, but the consequences are much greater. You must show him how to distinguish a limited need for safety from an ambition with no stopping point.
- Philonides thinks royal influence protects a quiet life; you fear it will consume one. Myrto reminds you that simplicity requires reliable care and enough food. Calling needs small cannot cure poverty.

Your Philosophical Commitments

Desires differ. Some are natural and necessary, such as adequate nourishment; some are natural but unnecessary, such as costly refinements; others rest on empty beliefs, such as needing universal admiration. Pleasure is the goal, and prudent choices consider later consequences. Simplicity should make pleasure more secure, not turn hardship into a moral achievement. Friendship supplies enjoyment and confidence that help will be available.

Faction Victory Objectives

Both objectives belong to your whole faction. Your faction decides how to divide the work. There are no separate individual victory conditions.

1. Primary: Win the court. Persuade court members to choose Epicureanism. Your faction wins outright if it earns more allegiance votes than any rival; an absolute majority is not required. If two or more factions tie for the most votes, each earns a partial victory. Each court member, including Menander, casts one vote.
2. Secondary: Win royal patronage. Convince Menander to award the Epicurean school one year of royal patronage. This award is independent of the court's allegiance vote, and any of the four factions is eligible.

Kleia continued

Working with Your Faction

- Read your faction handout and assigned sources. Together decide who will introduce ideas, guide the exercise, answer questions, advise the court, and discuss patronage. You may share or rotate these tasks; every member should contribute.
- Prepare a brief exercise: use or adapt one from the handout, or create another grounded in your school's philosophy and sources. Anyone may guide it. Participation may be silent or observational, with no personal disclosure required.
- When dilemmas are revealed, listen before advising. Offer a concrete action, explain your philosophical reason, and use a source or clear paraphrase. Test rival arguments and respond to objections. No court member or topic is assigned to a particular faction member.
- After the final judgments, agree on ONE faction rating of the court's Philosophical Deliberation (1–5, whole numbers). Rate understanding and reasons, not agreement with you. The Game Master will announce the court's average rating.

Powers and Limits

You may explain ideas, guide a practice, question speakers, and advise any court member as your faction agrees. You cannot require participation, promise relief, or decide what another person must feel. You have no allegiance vote.

Questions to Explore

These questions draw on your character's interests. They are starting points for your own arguments, not assigned speaking parts.

Desire: How can Menander distinguish a limited need for security from an ambition with no stopping point? What would count as enough?

Practice: Compare "The contemplation of death" and "The garden of gratitude" in the handout. Which concern would each address? What objection might remain afterward?

Simplicity: How can appreciating ordinary pleasures coexist with meeting real needs? What would make royal patronage a source of anxiety rather than security?

Source Suggestions

Use Letter to Menoeceus 124–132 and Principal Doctrines 7, 15, and 27, together with the sources beside the chosen handout exercise. The later Lucretius is a witness, not a contemporary.

Myrto

Member of an Epicurean Community

Epicurean Faction

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You belong to a community of Epicurean friends and have come to Menander's court at Sāgala around 150 BCE. Your experiences of caring for an ill friend shape how you understand pleasure, grief, and the value of friendship.

Biographical Notes

- You spent months helping a close friend through a painful illness. Other friends shared meals, work, and bedside visits. Some days conversation and remembered pleasures brought real relief; on others, the pain overwhelmed every distraction.
- Your friend died, but grief does not make the relationship a mistake. Its pleasures were real; remembering them remains valuable. A grieving person may not be ready to hear this.
- Friendship belongs to a pleasant life. People are not tools to discard when they cease to be useful. You must explain how deep loyalty fits pleasure as the highest good.
- You want Agathocleia to enjoy the love she still has, and Mālatī to see care as an exchange over a lifetime, not payment for continuing usefulness.
- Apollodorus sometimes presents arguments as though understanding them should immediately remove suffering. Kleia sometimes makes simplicity sound easy. You challenge both, while acknowledging your own tendency to offer comfort without explaining why it supports Epicureanism.

Your Philosophical Commitments

Pleasure and pain genuinely matter. Friendship provides joy, practical assistance, and security. Prudence can justify accepting immediate burdens to sustain relationships and a more pleasant life. The dead no longer suffer, but survivors can suffer deeply. Memories may preserve pleasure without replacing the person who died. Philosophy and companionship can reduce some distress without guaranteeing the removal of every pain.

Faction Victory Objectives

Both objectives belong to your whole faction. Your faction decides how to divide the work. There are no separate individual victory conditions.

1. Primary: Win the court. Persuade court members to choose Epicureanism. Your faction wins outright if it earns more allegiance votes than any rival; an absolute majority is not required. If two or more factions tie for the most votes, each earns a partial victory. Each court member, including Menander, casts one vote.
2. Secondary: Win royal patronage. Convince Menander to award the Epicurean school one year of royal patronage. This award is independent of the court's allegiance vote, and any of the four factions is eligible.

Myrto continued

Working with Your Faction

- Read your faction handout and assigned sources. Together decide who will introduce ideas, guide the exercise, answer questions, advise the court, and discuss patronage. You may share or rotate these tasks; every member should contribute.
- Prepare a brief exercise: use or adapt one from the handout, or create another grounded in your school's philosophy and sources. Anyone may guide it. Participation may be silent or observational, with no personal disclosure required.
- When dilemmas are revealed, listen before advising. Offer a concrete action, explain your philosophical reason, and use a source or clear paraphrase. Test rival arguments and respond to objections. No court member or topic is assigned to a particular faction member.
- After the final judgments, agree on ONE faction rating of the court's Philosophical Deliberation (1–5, whole numbers). Rate understanding and reasons, not agreement with you. The Game Master will announce the court's average rating.

Powers and Limits

You may offer counsel and question other speakers when discussion permits. You cannot promise a cure, require someone to feel better, or commit other characters to providing care. You have no separate vote or authority over the court.

Questions to Explore

These questions draw on your character's interests. They are starting points for your own arguments, not assigned speaking parts.

Grief: How could Agathocleia remember her daughter while enjoying the relationships she still has? Does allowing happiness diminish love?

Pain: What practical help and enjoyment remain possible for Mālatī? How does your advice differ from saying that virtue alone is sufficient for happiness?

Friendship: Why help someone when the helper bears an uncompensated cost? How far can companionship and remembered pleasure help when suffering persists?

Source Suggestions

Use Principal Doctrines 27–28, Vatican Sayings 55 and 66, and Epicurus's final letter preserved in Diogenes Laertius, Lives 10.22. Diogenes is a later source.

Philonides of Laodicea

Epicurean Scholar with Court Experience

Epicurean Faction

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are Philonides of Laodicea, an Epicurean scholar with experience in royal circles. A fragmentary biography (Life of Philonides, P.Herc. 1044) records your studies, ties to Seleucid rulers, and collection of Epicurus's writings. You now visit Menander's court.

Biographical Notes

- You know that access to a ruler can protect a community of friends and make philosophical teaching possible. You reject the assumption that every Epicurean must avoid every public responsibility regardless of its consequences.
- Advisers quickly become dependent on invitations and favors. You enjoy powerful people's attention more than you admit. Take Kleia's concern about patronage disturbing your peace seriously.
- Demetrios's wish to leave appeals to you: study and friendship may offer more reliable pleasure than command. But an unsettled succession could make everyone less safe.
- Philon's violence challenges your account of justice. You believe that agreements not to harm one another make secure and pleasant lives possible. You must explain why the commander should make amends even though he is unlikely to be punished.
- Apollodorus wants a defense of Epicureanism; you want workable advice. Myrto asks whether security serves the powerless. Kleia asks how much influence will be enough.

Your Philosophical Commitments

Pleasure is the goal, and prudence considers lasting consequences rather than immediate gratification. Justice rests on arrangements for mutual advantage that protect people from harm. A quiet life is normally attractive, but the wisdom of withdrawal depends on circumstances. Friendship and security require trustworthy conduct; acquiring power is useful only insofar as it actually supports a pleasant and safe life.

Faction Victory Objectives

Both objectives belong to your whole faction. Your faction decides how to divide the work. There are no separate individual victory conditions.

1. Primary: Win the court. Persuade court members to choose Epicureanism. Your faction wins outright if it earns more allegiance votes than any rival; an absolute majority is not required. If two or more factions tie for the most votes, each earns a partial victory. Each court member, including Menander, casts one vote.
2. Secondary: Win royal patronage. Convince Menander to award the Epicurean school one year of royal patronage. This award is independent of the court's allegiance vote, and any of the four factions is eligible.

Philonides of Laodicea continued

Working with Your Faction

- Read your faction handout and assigned sources. Together decide who will introduce ideas, guide the exercise, answer questions, advise the court, and discuss patronage. You may share or rotate these tasks; every member should contribute.
- Prepare a brief exercise: use or adapt one from the handout, or create another grounded in your school's philosophy and sources. Anyone may guide it. Participation may be silent or observational, with no personal disclosure required.
- When dilemmas are revealed, listen before advising. Offer a concrete action, explain your philosophical reason, and use a source or clear paraphrase. Test rival arguments and respond to objections. No court member or topic is assigned to a particular faction member.
- After the final judgments, agree on ONE faction rating of the court's Philosophical Deliberation (1–5, whole numbers). Rate understanding and reasons, not agreement with you. The Game Master will announce the court's average rating.

Powers and Limits

You may propose policies and seek support, but cannot promise money, offices, immunity, or others' actions. Menander decides patronage. You have no separate vote.

Questions to Explore

These questions draw on your character's interests. They are starting points for your own arguments, not assigned speaking parts.

Public life: Should Demetrios remain, withdraw, or propose another arrangement? Compare the lasting pleasures and pains for him and those who depend on him.

Justice: Why should Philon make costly amends if punishment is unlikely? What do mutual advantage and trustworthy relationships require?

Patronage: What use of royal support would make lives safer and more pleasant? What limits would prevent dependence on the king's favor?

Source Suggestions

Use Epicurus, Principal Doctrines 5, 17, and 31–38, and Letter to Menoeceus 129–132. Explain why justice and prudence belong to a pleasant life.

Eirene

Former Shrine Attendant and Epicurean Inquirer

Epicurean Faction

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are a former attendant at a local Greek shrine who has joined the Epicurean delegation to Menander's court at Sāgala around 150 BCE. Your experience of religious ritual and fear of divine punishment informs your philosophical outlook.

Biographical Notes

- At the shrine, you saw people interpret storms, illness, and unexpected deaths as warnings from the gods. Many came seeking relief from fear. You began to wonder whether the rituals soothed them or made them more afraid.
- You once urged a frightened household to pay for an expensive ceremony to ward off misfortune. They sacrificed money needed for ordinary necessities. You meant to help, but now suspect that you exploited a fear you did not know how to answer.
- A traveling teacher introduced you to Epicurus's account of gods and nature. The gods, he said, are blessed and do not punish humans; death is the end of sensation. These teachings relieved your anxiety, although an ill-timed omen can still unsettle you.
- Menander worries about death and how his reign will be remembered. You want to ask whether endless conquest can secure peace of mind. Yet you must confront a challenge: even if being dead is painless, might death harm us by taking away a good future?
- Apollodorus stresses philosophical argument; Kleia tests the demands of wealth and status; Myrto attends to suffering and friendship; Philonides understands court politics. You focus on fear and explanations of nature. The Skeptics will ask whether your confidence exceeds the evidence.

Your Philosophical Commitments

Pleasure, understood as a life without needless bodily pain or mental disturbance, is the goal. Understanding nature can free us from fear of divine punishment and death. Epicurus holds that gods are blessed and uninvolved in human affairs and that the soul dissolves at death. We may not know the precise cause of every storm or eclipse, but we should not treat such events as threats from angry gods. Prudence and friendship help us live well here and now.

Faction Victory Objectives

Both objectives belong to your whole faction. Your faction decides how to divide the work. There are no separate individual victory conditions.

1. Primary: Win the court. Persuade court members to choose Epicureanism. Your faction wins outright if it earns more allegiance votes than any rival; an absolute majority is not required. If two or more factions tie for the most votes, each earns a partial victory. Each court member, including Menander, casts one vote.
2. Secondary: Win royal patronage. Convince Menander to award the Epicurean school one year of royal patronage. This award is independent of the court's allegiance vote, and any of the four factions is eligible.

Eirene continued

Working with Your Faction

- Read your faction handout and assigned sources. Together decide who will introduce ideas, guide the exercise, answer questions, advise the court, and discuss patronage. You may share or rotate these tasks; every member should contribute.
- Prepare a brief exercise: use or adapt one from the handout, or create another grounded in your school's philosophy and sources. Anyone may guide it. Participation may be silent or observational, with no personal disclosure required.
- When dilemmas are revealed, listen before advising. Offer a concrete action, explain your philosophical reason, and use a source or clear paraphrase. Test rival arguments and respond to objections. No court member or topic is assigned to a particular faction member.
- After the final judgments, agree on ONE faction rating of the court's Philosophical Deliberation (1–5, whole numbers). Rate understanding and reasons, not agreement with you. The Game Master will announce the court's average rating.

Powers and Limits

You may explain Epicurean teachings, question claims about omens, and advise the court. You cannot claim to know the cause of every event, compel anyone to abandon a ritual, promise divine favor, or cast an allegiance vote. Criticize fearful beliefs without mocking those who hold them.

Questions to Explore

These questions draw on your character's interests. They are starting points for your own arguments, not assigned speaking parts.

Gods and fear: Why does Epicurus deny that gods punish or reward us? Can respect for religion coexist with rejecting fear of divine intervention?

Death: Does showing that the dead cannot feel pain establish that death cannot harm them? What would you tell Menander about his fear of being forgotten?

Knowledge and practice: How can studying nature reduce fear even when the exact cause of an event is uncertain? What reply would you give a Skeptic who questions Epicurean certainty?

Source Suggestions

Use Epicurus, Letter to Menoeceus §§123–125, on the gods and death, and Principal Doctrines 2 and 11, on death and fear of celestial phenomena. These passages appear in the gamebook; the full sources are linked in its appendix.