



# 10<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA

Week of:

APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup>

WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grades

Your child should spend up to 90 minutes over the course of each day on this packet.  
Consider other family-friendly activities during the day such as:

Help with a chore, meal, or yardwork around the house.	Listen to age appropriate podcast and discuss with a friend.	Encourage someone with a compliment, text, or letter.	Listen to a free audio story at <a href="https://stories.audible.com">stories.audible.com</a>
Explore art at <a href="https://artsandculture.google.com/">artsandculture.google.com/</a>	Text or call a friend to say hello.	Journal about your experiences during this timeframe.	Mindful Minutes: Each day to focus on the 5 senses.

*\*All activities are optional. Parents/Guardians please practice responsibility, safety, and supervision.*

by navigating in a web browser to <https://www.usd259.org/Page/17540>

### WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONTINUOUS LEARNING HOTLINE AVAILABLE

316-973-4443

MARCH 30 – MAY 21, 2020

MONDAY – FRIDAY

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM **ONLY**

For Multilingual Education Services (MES) support,  
please call (316) 866-8000 (Spanish and Proprio) or (316) 866-8003 (Vietnamese).

*The Wichita Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status or other legally protected classifications in its programs and activities.*

**10<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Packet Schedule: Week 2**

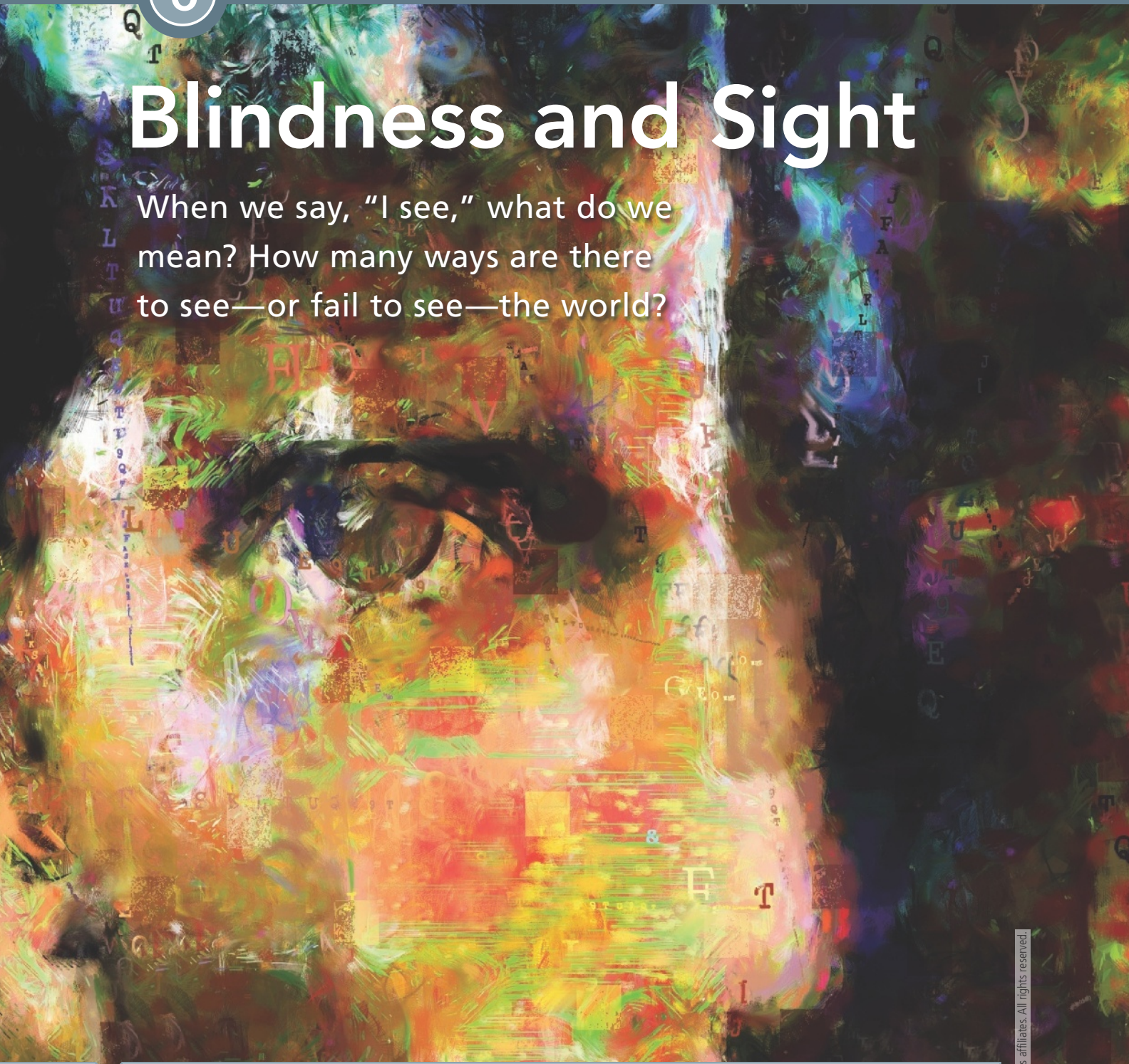
**Day 1:** 656-659 **Day 2:** 660-662 **Day 3:** 663-665 **Day 4:** 666-669 **Day 5:** 670-672

<b><u>Narrative (nerədiv)</u></b> <i>A spoken or written story:</i>	<b><u>Collaborate (kə'labə,rāt)</u></b> <i>Work together on an activity, to produce something.</i>	<b><u>Strongholds (strôNG,höld)</u></b> <i>A place that has been fortified to protect it against attack.</i>
<b><u>Reemerge (re-ih-murj)</u></b> <i>To come forth or rise again.</i>	<b><u>Amphitheatre (-am-fuh-thee-uh-ter)</u></b> <i>open circular or oval building surrounded by seats for the presentation</i>	<b><u>Sophisticated(sə'fistə,kādəd)</u></b> <i>Showing a high level of worldly experience and knowledge of fashion and culture.</i>

- Read Aloud Accommodations are available on the specialized instruction and supports website referenced at the beginning of this packet.

# Blindness and Sight

When we say, "I see," what do we mean? How many ways are there to see—or fail to see—the world?



Blind Teen Ben Underwood

**Discuss It** How do Ben's experiences and attitudes redefine what it means to have vision?

Write your response before sharing your ideas.





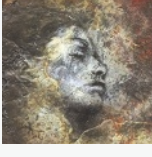
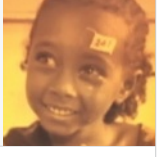

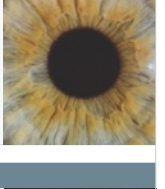


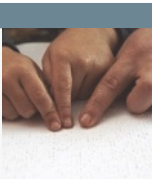
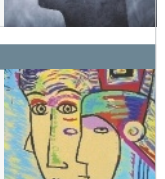
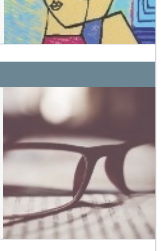
© Pearson Education, Inc., or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

# What does it mean to see?

LAUNCH TEXT  
NONFICTION NARRATIVE  
Just Six Dots



<b>WHOLE-CLASS LEARNING</b>	<b>SMALL-GROUP LEARNING</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT LEARNING</b>
<p>LITERATURE AND CULTURE</p>	<p>LETTER</p>	<p>NOVEL EXCERPT</p>
<p><b>Historical Context</b> Oedipus the King</p> 	<p><b>View From the Empire State Building</b> Helen Keller</p> 	<p><i>from</i> <b>Blindness</b> José Saramago, translated by Giovanni Pontiero</p> 
<p>ANCHOR TEXT: DRAMA</p>	<p>POETRY COLLECTION</p>	<p>MEDIA: NEWSCAST</p>
<p><b>Oedipus the King, Part I</b> Sophocles, translated by Nicholas Rudall</p> 	<p><b>Blind</b> Fatima Naoot, translated by Kees Nijland</p> 	<p><b>Dr. Geoffrey Tabin Helps Blind Ethiopians Gain Sight</b> ABC News</p> 
<p>ANCHOR TEXT: DRAMA</p>	<p>SHORT STORY</p>	<p>MEDIA: INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC</p>
<p><b>Oedipus the King, Part II</b> Sophocles, translated by Nicholas Rudall</p>  <p>▶ MEDIA CONNECTION: Oedipus the King</p>	<p><b>On His Blindness</b> Jorge Luis Borges, translated by Robert Mezey</p>	<p><b>How Your Eyes Trick Your Mind</b> Melissa Hogenboom</p> 
	<p><b>The Country of the Blind</b> H. G. Wells</p> 	<p>SCIENCE ARTICLE</p> <p><b>Blind, Yet Seeing: The Brain's Subconscious Visual Sense</b> Benedict Carey</p> 
	<p>MEMOIR</p> <p><b>The Neglected Senses</b> <i>from</i> For the Benefit of Those Who See Rosemary Mahoney</p> 	<p>ORAL HISTORY</p> <p><b>Experience: I First Saw My Wife Ten Years After We Married</b> Shandar Herian</p> 
		<p>SCIENCE ARTICLE</p> <p><b>Visual Neuroscience: Look and Learn</b> Apoorva Mandavilli</p> 
<p>PERFORMANCE TASK</p> <p>WRITING FOCUS: <b>Write a Nonfiction Narrative</b></p>	<p>PERFORMANCE TASK</p> <p>SPEAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS: <b>Present an Oral Retelling</b></p>	<p>PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT PREP</p> <p><b>Review Notes for a Nonfiction Narrative</b></p>

## PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

**Narrative: Nonfiction Narrative and Storytelling Session**

PROMPT:

Is there a difference between seeing and knowing?

## Unit Goals

Throughout the unit, you will deepen your perspective of blindness and sight by reading, writing, speaking, listening, and presenting. These goals will help you succeed on the Unit Performance-Based Assessment.

Rate how well you meet these goals right now. You will revisit your ratings later when you reflect on your growth during this unit.

SCALE	1	2	3	4	5
	NOT AT ALL WELL	NOT VERY WELL	SOMEWHAT WELL	VERY WELL	EXTREMELY WELL
<b>READING GOALS</b>					
	1	2	3	4	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate written narrative texts by analyzing how authors introduce and develop central ideas or themes. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></li> <li>Expand your knowledge and use of academic and concept vocabulary. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></li> </ul>				
<b>WRITING AND RESEARCH GOALS</b>					
	1	2	3	4	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a narrative in which you convey experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></li> <li>Conduct research projects of various lengths to clarify meaning and to explore topics in greater depth. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></li> </ul>				
<b>LANGUAGE GOALS</b>					
	1	2	3	4	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly use varied sentence structures to add interest to writing and presentations. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></li> </ul>				
<b>SPEAKING AND LISTENING GOALS</b>					
	1	2	3	4	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with your team to build on the ideas of others, develop consensus, and communicate. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></li> <li>Integrate audio, visuals, and text in presentations. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></li> </ul>				

### STANDARDS

#### Language

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## Academic Vocabulary: Nonfiction Narrative

Academic terms appear in all subjects and can help you read, write, and discuss with more precision. Here are five academic words that will be useful to you in this unit as you analyze and write nonfiction narratives.

Complete the chart.

1. Review each word, its root, and the mentor sentences.
2. Use the information and your own knowledge to predict the meaning of each word.
3. For each word, list at least two related words.
4. Refer to a dictionary or other resources if needed.

**TIP**

**FOLLOW THROUGH**

Study the words in this chart, and mark them or their forms wherever they appear in the unit.

WORD	MENTOR SENTENCES	PREDICT MEANING	RELATED WORDS
<p><b>integrate</b></p> <p>ROOT: <b>-teg-</b> "touch"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If your day is too busy for a long workout, try to <i>integrate</i> exercise a few minutes at a time.</li> <li>2. I like how you <i>integrate</i> comic details into an otherwise sad story.</li> </ol>		<p>integration; integral</p>
<p><b>delineate</b></p> <p>ROOT: <b>-lin-</b> "line"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On the map, the red lines <i>delineate</i> national borders and the blue lines indicate bodies of water.</li> <li>2. With only a few brush strokes, the artist was able to <i>delineate</i> her subject's features clearly.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>volition</b></p> <p>ROOT: <b>-vol-</b> "wish"; "will"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you do that of your own <i>volition</i> or did someone pressure you into it?</li> <li>2. Pearl made the decision instinctively, without conscious thought or <i>volition</i>.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>vivid</b></p> <p>ROOT: <b>-viv-</b> "live"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Even though it happened long ago, my memory of that day is incredibly precise and <i>vivid</i>.</li> <li>2. Henri Matisse is a French painter who was known for his <i>vivid</i> use of color.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>altercation</b></p> <p>ROOT: <b>-alter-</b> "other"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In our school, there is zero tolerance for fighting or any type of <i>altercation</i>.</li> <li>2. Sam and Rick got into a disagreement that nearly became an <i>altercation</i>.</li> </ol>		

## LAUNCH TEXT | NONFICTION NARRATIVE

This selection is an example of a **nonfiction narrative**, a type of writing in which an author tells a true story. This is the type of writing you will develop in the Performance-Based Assessment at the end of the unit.

**As you read**, think about how the writer communicates information. Mark the text to help you answer the question: How does the writer help the reader understand the sequence of events and the complexity of the topic?



# Just Six Dots

The Story of Braille

## NOTES

- 1 **A** system of just six raised dots can tell any story. Six dots can spin out tales of romance or relate accounts of historic events. They can even tell the story of the man who invented them: Louis Braille.
- 2 As a young boy, Louis loved to observe his father, a leather worker, in his workshop near Paris. Louis would gaze with eager attention as Simon-René Braille transformed unfinished leather into fine harnesses for horses. One day when he was three, Louis grabbed an awl and a strip of leather. He jabbed the sharp tool down, hoping to copy his father's masterful movements and punch the strip with a perfect hole. Instead, the awl slipped and pierced his right eye. The injury and resulting infection left Louis completely blind by the age of five.
- 3 Simon-René was determined not to let Louis's blindness end his education. Returning to the workshop, he pounded nails into wooden strips, arranging them to form letters. Soon, Louis attended the local school, where he excelled. However, his parents realized that he needed specialized instruction to truly succeed. At the age of ten, Louis went to Paris to study at the world's only school for the blind.
- 4 There, Louis met the founder of the school, Valentin Haüy, a sighted man who was deeply committed to educating the blind. Recognizing the importance of independence in learning, he developed a new way of printing books with thickly embossed letters. The system worked, but the books were heavy and slow to read. On top of that, it took both sight and skill to make them.
- 5 When Louis was eleven, army captain Charles Barbier visited the school. He had devised a different system, which he called "night





writing,” that allowed soldiers to read orders in the dark. It used raised dots in sets of twelve. Barbier’s code inspired Louis to create his own, easier and faster system.

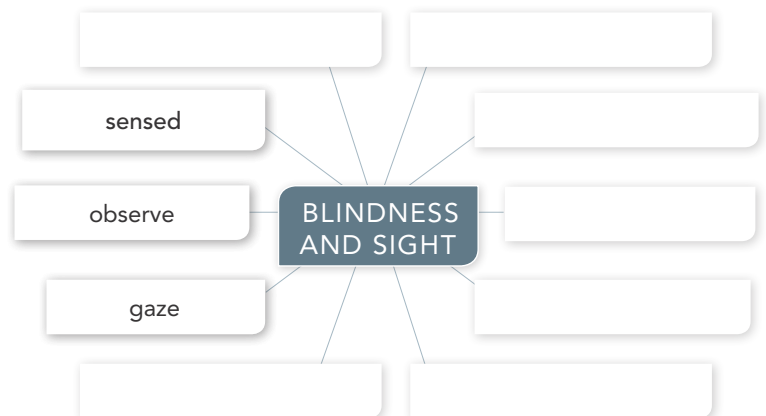
- 6 Louis worked on his code for years. By the time he was fifteen, he had perfected the code that would bear his name. Unlike Barbier’s code, braille uses cells of just six dots. By arranging six dots in two parallel rows with three dots in each, he created a cell that can be instantly sensed by one fingertip. With sixty-four possible combinations of dots, each cell names a letter, number, punctuation mark, or word.
- 7 The director of Louis’s school was so impressed with the invention that he encouraged all of the students to learn it. Louis published the first braille book in 1829. Blind students could now read with ease. They could also write, using a pointed tool called a dot stylus.
- 8 However, braille did not gain wider acceptance right away. The school’s next director, Pierre-Armand Dufau, was opposed to braille code. He worried that once blind people could read there would be no need for sighted teachers, so he banned the use of braille. Dufau’s assistant, Joseph Gaudet, did not agree. After many years, he convinced Dufau to accept Braille’s system. They decided to introduce the new invention when the school moved into a new building.
- 9 At the dedication ceremony on February 22, 1844, Gaudet read aloud a 15-page book that told the crowd about Louis Braille’s accomplishment. Then, he sent one student out of the room and asked another to use the code to write down a poem. The first student came back into the room and read the poem perfectly. The crowd was amazed, and some suspected a trick. One man guessed that the first student had memorized the poem before the ceremony. He took a theater ticket out of his pocket and challenged the students to repeat the demonstration with information from that paper. When they performed the task one more time, even he was convinced.
- 10 On that day, the world accepted what Louis Braille already knew: Just six raised dots can contain the passion and power of language. 🐼

NOTES

**WORD NETWORK FOR BLINDNESS AND SIGHT**

**Vocabulary** A Word Network is a collection of words related to a topic. As you read the selections in this unit, identify interesting words related to the ideas of blindness and sight, and add them to your Word Network. For example, you might begin by adding words from the Launch Text such as *sensed*, *observe*, and *gaze*. Continue to add words as you complete this unit.

**Tool Kit**  
Word Network Model









ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

# What does it mean to see?

We can see a beautiful sight, but we can also see the truth in something. When we say, "I see," do we really mean "I understand"? You will work with your whole class to explore the concepts of blindness and sight. The play you are going to read presents insights into the many ways we can see—or not see—ourselves and the world around us.

## Whole-Class Learning Strategies

Throughout your life, in school, in your community, and in your career, you will continue to learn and work in large-group environments.

Review these strategies and the actions you can take to practice them as you work with your whole class. Add ideas of your own for each step. Get ready to use these strategies during Whole-Class Learning.

STRATEGY	ACTION PLAN
Listen actively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate distractions. For example, put your cell phone away.</li> <li>• Keep your eyes on the speaker.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Clarify by asking questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you're confused, other people probably are, too. Ask a question to help your whole class.</li> <li>• If you see that you are guessing, ask a question instead.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Monitor understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice what information you already know and be ready to build on it.</li> <li>• Ask for help if you are struggling.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Interact and share ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share your ideas and answer questions, even if you are unsure.</li> <li>• Build on the ideas of others by adding details or making a connection.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

© Pearson Education, Inc., or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

## CONTENTS

### LITERATURE AND CULTURE

#### Historical Context

##### Oedipus the King

What is it about Greek mythology and culture that has fascinated people throughout history?



### ANCHOR TEXT: DRAMA

#### Oedipus the King, Part I

*Sophocles, translated by Nicholas Rudall*

Can Oedipus, a good king who loves his people, save them from a terrible plague?



### ANCHOR TEXT: DRAMA

#### Oedipus the King, Part II

*Sophocles, translated by Nicholas Rudall*

Do the king's own choices destroy him, or is his fate inevitable?

▶ MEDIA CONNECTION: Oedipus the King

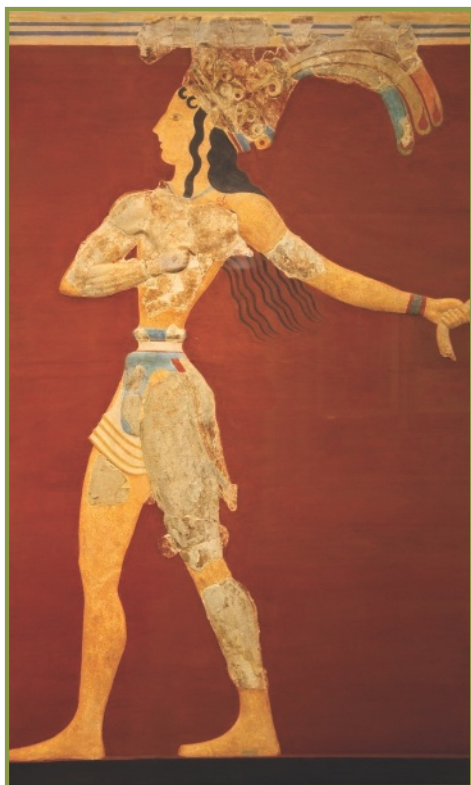


### PERFORMANCE TASK

#### WRITING FOCUS

#### Write a Nonfiction Narrative

The Whole-Class reading and its related media tell the story of a great king who learns to see the truth about himself. After reading and listening, you will write a nonfiction narrative that develops a central idea about sight and self-knowledge.



^ This fresco depicting the Prince of Lilies is a beautiful example of Minoan art. It appears on a wall in the Minoan Palace of Knossos on the Greek island of Crete.

## Historical Context

### Ancient Greece

The cultural and political influence of ancient Greece extended throughout the Mediterranean and into central Asia.

**The Earliest Greeks** More than one thousand years before the birth of Sophocles, the playwright who wrote *Oedipus the King*, a people that we call the Mycenaeans (my suh NEE uhnz) began to settle throughout the Greek mainland, which juts down from Europe into the Mediterranean Sea. They established strongholds in Thebes, Pylos, Athens, Mycenae, and elsewhere, building thick-walled palaces decorated with bronze metalwork. From the Minoans (mih NOH uhnz), a sophisticated people who lived on the southern Greek island of Crete, they learned about writing, and they recorded palace business and other transactions on clay tablets. Many of these tablets have survived. The writings reveal a complex society that included administrative officials, priests, slaves, tradesmen, craftsmen and artisans, and an active warrior class. At the top of the social pyramid in each stronghold was a wanax, or king.

In about 1450 B.C., Minoan civilization collapsed, and the Mycenaeans became the dominant culture on Crete. Their influence spread throughout the Mediterranean islands and into western Asia Minor, or present-day Asian Turkey. On one of their most famous military ventures, the Mycenaeans successfully attacked the city of Troy in northern Asia Minor. We know that conflict as the Trojan War, which later became the subject of Homer's epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It was among the last of the Mycenaean military successes. Soon afterward, Mycenaean civilization collapsed into a period called the Greek Dark Ages. The art of writing was lost, and the kingdoms broke down into small tribal units.

**Reemerging From Darkness** In about 850 B.C., a vibrant Greek culture began to reemerge, spurred by flourishing trade throughout the Mediterranean. Along with the economic boom came a resurgence of arts and learning capped by

© Pearson Education, Inc., or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Homer's masterful epics. Although Homer composed in the oral tradition, the Greeks soon began writing again, this time adapting the Phoenician writing system into the first true alphabet. They also began regrouping into city-states, or cities that functioned independently, just as countries do. By 500 B.C., the two most powerful city-states were Sparta, on Greece's Peloponnesian (pehl uh puh NEE shuhn) peninsula, and Athens, which stood east of Sparta in an area called Attica. Sparta was a monarchy with a powerful ruling council and a strong military tradition. Athens developed a government in which decision-making was shared by all adult males (other than slaves). It was, in short, the world's first democracy.

**The Rise and Fall of Athens** From 490 to 479 B.C., Athens and Sparta fought as allies in the Persian Wars, when the powerful Persian Empire (present-day Iran) twice tried to invade Greece. Despite Sparta's military prowess, it was Athens that led two important victories: the Battle of Marathon in the beginning and the Battle of Salamis later. These victories helped usher in a Golden Age of prosperity and achievement for Athens. Led by the statesman Pericles (PEHR uh kleez), Athens became a great intellectual center, attracting artists, poets, scientists, and philosophers. Impressive new buildings were constructed, and civic festivals grew more splendid. Among those who contributed greatly to this cultural flowering was Sophocles: playwright, government official, and—briefly—general in the Athenian military.

Unfortunately, Pericles' foreign policy aroused the resentment of other Greek city-states. In 432 B.C., Sparta and its allies joined against Athens and its allies in what became known as the Peloponnesian War. Athens was defeated, and for a time, Sparta, and later Thebes, exerted control over the Greek world. In the end, however, it was Philip of Macedon, a monarch from a kingdom to the north of Greece, who rose to ascendancy. Philip's son Alexander would embark on an amazing series of military conquests that would spread Greek influence all the way into central Asia. His exploits would earn him the title by which he is still known today: Alexander the Great.

#### QUICK INSIGHT

According to legend, after the Battle of Marathon, an Athenian soldier raced 26 miles back to Athens to share news of the victory. He then collapsed and died. The 26-mile race known as a marathon originated in his honor.

- ✓ The Parthenon, a temple dedicated to the goddess Athena, appears in the foreground of this photo of the Acropolis in Athens. The temple is among the most important surviving structures from Greece's Golden Age.





## Ancient Greek Theater

An art form rooted in religious ritual gave rise to plays of enduring power.

**Religious Foundations** Greek theater was rooted in Greek religion, which was based on a belief in many gods. Each god was associated with one or more aspects of nature or human behavior. Poseidon (puh SY duhn), for example, was the god of the seas, while Apollo was the god of light. Athena (uh THEE nuh) was the goddess of wisdom, while Aphrodite (af ruh DY tee) was the goddess of love. Zeus (zoos) ruled over all the gods, yet even he was not all-powerful. Like human beings and lesser gods, Zeus could not alter fate.

The gods are key characters in Greek mythology, the set of stories the Greeks told to explain the world around them. In these myths, the gods often behave like human beings at our worst—they are angry, jealous, and petty. They are even deceitful and often vengeful. They are especially quick to punish human beings guilty of hubris (HYOO brihs), or excessive pride.

**From Ritual to Art** Theater in ancient Greece originated at annual festivals called Dionysia (dy uh NY see uh), which were dedicated to Dionysus, the god of wine. At these festivals, a **chorus**, or group of singers, honored Dionysus by chanting hymns called dithyrambs (DIHTH uh ramz). According to legend, at one festival a poet named Thespis stepped away from the chorus. He began a dialogue with the chorus leader while role-playing figures from the Greek myths. Thus, drama was born. The playwright Aeschylus developed the dramatic form further by adding a second actor, and the playwright Sophocles later introduced a third player to the stage.

By the time Sophocles was writing, plays had become great spectacles performed in a large outdoor amphitheater with thousands in attendance. The amphitheater was built on a slope with seating that rose in a semicircle from the performing area, or **orchestra**. There was no curtain, but painted scenery could be hung at the back. Performers wore large masks that allowed the same actor to perform different roles.

At the Dionysia, prizes were awarded to the best playwright. By 501 B.C., the three-day festival featured work by three competitors. Each playwright presented a **tetralogy**, or group of four plays, on a different day. The plays usually included a bawdy drama called a **satyr** (SAYT uhr) **play**, as well as three tragedies. About fifteen years later, a separate competition for comedies was added.

**Dramatic Structure** Greek plays are verse drama, in which the dialogue takes the form of poetry. Typically, the plays follow a consistent format. They open with a **prologue**, or exposition, that presents the background of the conflict. The chorus then performs a **parados** (PAR uhd uhs), or opening song. This is followed by the first scene. Additional songs, called **odes**, divide scenes, as a curtain does



^ This mask depicts Dionysus, the god of wine, adorned with full beard and a grapevine crown.

### QUICK INSIGHT

From the name of Thespis, the first actor, comes the English word *thespian*, an elegant term for an actor. The Greek word for an actor, however, was *hypokrites*, meaning “someone acting a part.” That term, of course, is the origin of our word *hypocrite*.



in most modern theater. At the end of a tragedy, the chorus performs a **paean** (PEE uhn) of thanksgiving to Dionysus. The tragedy then concludes with an **exodus** (EHKS uh duhs), or final scene.

The chorus is central to the production, providing key background information and commentary on the action. Chorus recitals often divide into a **strophe** (STROH fee) and an answering **antistrophe** (an TIHS truh fee). During the strophe, the chorus sings while twisting or dancing from right to left. During the antistrophe, the chorus moves in the opposite direction. Some odes have a concluding stanza, or **epode** (EHP ohd), when the chorus may have stood still. To help propel the plot, the chorus leader, or **choragos** (koh RAY guhs; also spelled *choragus*), often exchanges thoughts with the rest of the chorus as well as with the actors.

#### QUICK INSIGHT

*Strophe* is Greek for “twist.” Originally, a catastrophe was simply the ending, or final plot twist, of a play. Because the endings of Greek tragedies involved disastrous events, the word has come to have its current meaning of a disastrous outcome.

## The Theater of Dionysus in Athens

The earliest dramas were likely performed in the Agora, or marketplace, in Athens. Later, the Theater of Dionysus (shown here as it appears today) was built on the slope of the Acropolis, the upper part of the city where other important buildings also stood. Stone seating was not used at first; instead, theater-goers probably sat on wooden benches.





^ This Roman bust of Aristotle is based on a fourth-century B.C. Greek bronze.

## Aristotle and Greek Tragedy

In *Poetics*, Aristotle examined the mechanisms that make tragedy so compelling for audiences. His work remains the most influential discussion of drama the world has seen.

**Fundamentals of Tragedy** In his landmark work *Poetics*, the Greek philosopher Aristotle (ar ih STOT uhl; 384–322 B.C.) provides a famous examination of tragedy. He describes a *tragedy* as a serious play recounting related events in the life of a person of high rank or importance who is brought low and often meets his or her doom. The main character, called the *tragic hero* or *protagonist*, experiences this reversal of fortune as a result of what the Greeks called *hamartia* (hah mah TEE uh), a *tragic flaw* or profound error in judgment. When a tragic flaw is involved, it usually takes form as *hubris*, or excessive pride. Fate, too, plays a decisive role in ensuring the tragic hero's downfall. In addition, the protagonist may face an *antagonist*, a rival character whose opposition contributes to his or her downfall.

Although the plot and its outcome are central to a tragedy, the events come as no surprise to most audience members. Greek audiences knew the myths upon which the plays were based; they knew what would happen. Nevertheless—according to Aristotle—the audience becomes caught up in the action because the play arouses their feelings of pity and fear. At the end of the play, explains Aristotle, the audience experiences a *catharsis* (kuh THAHR sihs), a cleansing or release of these emotions. Aristotle believed that the best plays engender fear and pity through the story and characters, not through the spectacle of the production itself.

**Three Masters** Three playwrights are considered the grand masters of Greek tragedy: Aeschylus (EHS kih luhs; c. 525–456 B.C.), Sophocles (SOF uh kleez; 496–406 B.C.), and Euripides (yoo RIHP uh deez; 480–406 B.C.). Between them, the three won first prize forty-two times in the annual drama competitions at Athens. Aeschylus, the pioneer of tragedy, is praised especially for his poetic language. Sophocles is most famous for his character development and insight into human nature. Euripides is noted for his efforts to address social concerns and humanitarian themes in his plays.

**Sophocles (496–406 B.C.)** Although he lived and wrote more than two thousand years ago, Sophocles is still considered one of the finest and most influential playwrights who ever lived. He won first prize at the annual Dionysia in Athens twenty-four times; never once did he place below second.

### QUICK INSIGHT

Aristotle was the pupil of another famous Greek philosopher, Plato (PLAYT oh; c. 427–c. 347 B.C.), who himself studied under yet another famous Greek philosopher, Socrates (SOK ruh tee; c. 470–399 B.C.). Aristotle had a famous pupil too—Alexander the Great, whose conquests spread Greek culture throughout Europe, North Africa, and much of Asia.

**A Golden Time to Live** Sophocles grew up in a prosperous family in Colonus, near Athens. At sixteen, he was one of the young men chosen to perform in a choral ode celebrating the Athenian victory over the Persians at Salamis, the event that marks the beginning of Athens's golden age. Throughout his long life, he remained a leading figure of that era. Admired for his good looks and athleticism, he was also a talented musician and a frequent contributor to Athenian public life. He served for a time as a city treasurer and also as a general in the conflict with Samos, an island that revolted against Athens in 441 B.C. Late in life, he was elected to a special committee to investigate the disastrous failure of the Athenian military expedition to Sicily.

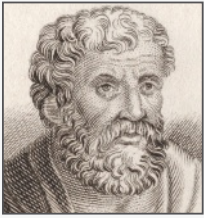
**A Leading Light** It was in theater, however, that Sophocles truly shone. His career as a dramatist began in 468 B.C., when he entered the annual Dionysia and beat the celebrated dramatist Aeschylus to take first prize. Over the next 62 years he wrote more than 120 plays, seven of which have survived. Among the most celebrated are *Oedipus the King*, the tragedy Aristotle considered the best example of the form, and *Antigone*, the story of Oedipus' daughter. Sophocles is known for strong female characters and for his insight into human nature. He is credited with introducing a third actor to drama and also with the practice of using painted scenery. He died two years before Athens surrendered to Sparta in the Peloponnesian War, the event that marks the end of Athens's Golden Age.



◀ This painting by the nineteenth-century French artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres depicts Aeschylus (with scroll) Sophocles, and Euripides. The work is a study for a much larger work entitled *The Apotheosis of Homer*.



About the Playwright



**Sophocles** (496–406 B.C.) was one of three Classical Athenian playwrights who together created the basic theatrical conventions of Greek tragedy, the foundation of drama in Western civilization. The other two were Aeschylus and Euripides. Before these three great dramatists, Greek theater consisted of static recitations performed by a chorus and a single actor. Aeschylus added a second actor, creating the possibility of true dialogue. When Sophocles added a third actor, complex relationships emerged in Greek drama.

**Tool Kit**

First-Read Guide and Model Annotation

**STANDARDS**

**Reading Literature**

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

# Oedipus the King, Part I

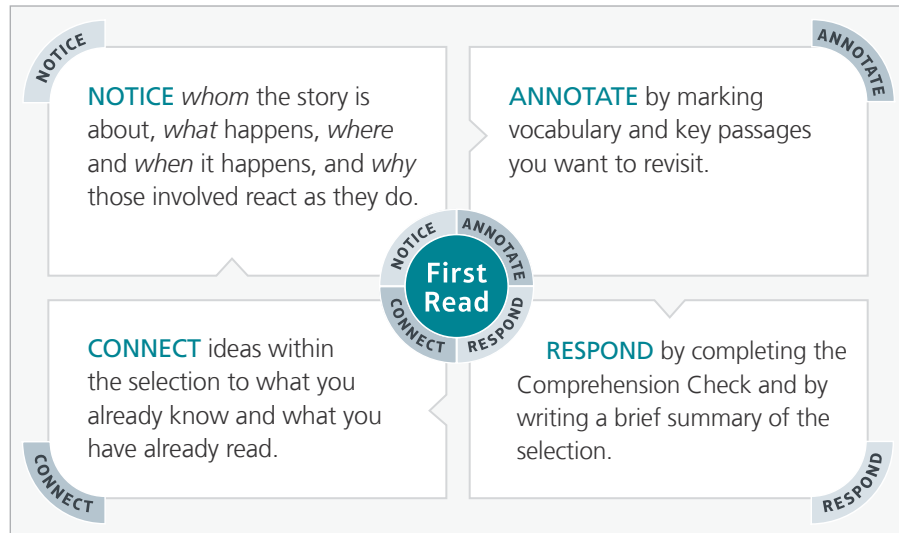
You will encounter the following words as you read *Oedipus the King*, Part I. Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (3).

WORD	YOUR RANKING
proclamation	
decree	
edicts	

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

## First Read DRAMA

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.



## BACKGROUND FOR THE PLAY

**The Theban Plays** *Oedipus the King* (or *Oedipus Rex*) is one of three surviving plays by Sophocles centering on the Greek myth of Oedipus (EHD ih puhs), king of Thebes; the other two are *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*. Known as the Theban plays, they are now often published as a chronological trilogy, with *Antigone* last. However, Sophocles did not write the plays for the same Dionysia, and he apparently wrote *Antigone* first.

**The Oedipus Myth** The myth of Oedipus was well known to Greek audiences; in fact, Aeschylus wrote several earlier plays about it, although only his *Seven Against Thebes* has survived. In the myth, a prophecy informs Laius (LAY uhs; also spelled *Laïos*), king of Thebes, and his wife Jocasta (yoh KOS tuh; also spelled *locaste*) that their son will grow up to kill his father and marry his mother. Horrified, they send the infant off to be destroyed, but he is instead saved and adopted by a couple from Corinth. When the child, called Oedipus, grows up, he learns of the prophecy. Believing the warning refers to his adoptive parents, he flees in order to protect them. At a crossroads, he quarrels with and kills a stranger. Then, on the road to Thebes, he discovers the city is being plagued by a monstrous sphinx. In Greek mythology, the sphinx is a creature with a lion's body, bird's wings, and a woman's head. Waiting near the entrance to the city, the sphinx poses a riddle to all those who approach and eats anyone who cannot answer. The sphinx refuses to abandon its hold on the city until someone can solve the riddle. Oedipus does so, thereby saving the city and becoming a hero. As compensation, the recently widowed queen marries him, and he becomes king. It is several years after this point in the larger story that the play *Oedipus the King* begins.

### QUICK INSIGHT

The famous riddle that Oedipus answered was “What has four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?” The answer is a human being—crawling as a child, walking upright as an adult, and using a cane in old age.



# Oedipus the King

Sophocles

translated by Nicholas Rudall

## CHARACTERS

Oedipus

Priest of Zeus

Creon, brother of the queen

Teiresias, a prophet

Jocasta, the queen

Messenger

Shepherd of Laius

Second Messenger

Chorus of Theban elders

Antigone, daughter of Oedipus

Ismene, daughter of Oedipus

Boy

**Oedipus.** My children, you who live in the heart of this our city, living sons of ancient Cadmus,<sup>1</sup> why have you come to these sacred altars? Why do you bring garlands<sup>2</sup> and kneel in supplication<sup>3</sup> to the gods?

- 5 The city is laced with the breath of incense.  
The air quivers with lamentation and with prayer.  
My children, I did not want to hear your desires from messengers.  
Therefore I have come in person to hear you speak—I, Oedipus your king.
- 10 *(to a Priest)* You there, since you are the eldest, speak on their behalf.  
Tell me what is troubling you. Do you come in fear?  
Do you seek a blessing from the gods?  
Tell me. Never doubt that I will help you in every way I can.
- 15 I am moved and touched to find you suppliant here.

**Priest.** Oedipus, great king of Thebes! You see before you clinging to the altar's steps men of all ages. Here are boys too young to be alone. Here are priests weighed down with time, priests of Zeus<sup>4</sup>—as I am. Here are young men as yet unmarried.

- 20 And thousands more, olive wreaths in their hair, throng the public squares. They huddle before the two shrines of Athena<sup>5</sup> and at Apollo's<sup>6</sup> temple where the god speaks in the glowing embers of his fire. Your eyes see the truth: Thebes is drowning in a deadly sea, is sinking beneath the waves of death.
- 25 There is a blight that eats the budding fruits of the earth.  
Our cattle die. Women give birth to stillborn children. A deadly plague consumes our city, strikes like bolts of lightning, burns our flesh, and ravages the house of Cadmus. My lord, we are plunged into darkness. Death alone grows fat upon our agony.
- 30 We have come to you to offer our prayers.  
We know you are no god.  
But of all men you are the most wise in the ways of god.  
You saved us from the Sphinx,<sup>7</sup> who sang her doom from the stone of her breast.
- 35 You saved us from her plague. You knew no more than we, we could not teach you.  
But you saved us when a god touched your mind.  
Therefore, great King of Thebes, we turn to you.  
Save us. Heal us. Listen to the gods. Listen to the minds of mortals.
- 40 Your wisdom saved us long ago.  
It can save us now when troubles seethe again.  
You are the pinnacle of nobility, give us back our lives.  
Remember that we call you the Liberator.  
Remember that we love you for your courage long ago. Let not
- 45 the world remember you as the king who once was great but then fell from greatness.

## NOTES

- 1. Cadmus** (KAD muhs) mythical founder of Thebes, the city Oedipus rules.
- 2. garlands** (GAHR luhndz) *n.* chains of flowers, branches, and leaves. In ancient Greece, garlands were offered to the gods by those asking favors from them.
- 3. supplication** (suhp luh KAY shuhn) *n.* humble prayer or request.
- 4. Zeus** (zoos) Greek god of the sky, king of the gods and ruler of the world.
- 5. Athena** (uh THEE nuh) Greek goddess of wisdom, war, and crafts.
- 6. Apollo** (uh POL oh) Greek god of the sun, prophecy, and disease.
- 7. Sphinx** (sfihngks) monster in Thebes with the head of a woman, the wings of a bird, and the body of a lion that could kill any traveler that could not solve her riddle. Prior to the events of this play, Oedipus defeated the Sphinx by solving her riddle and became king of Thebes for doing so.

8. **Menoceus** (meh NIH see uhs)  
Theban statesman and soldier  
of renown.

9. **laurel** (LAWR uhl) *n.* leaves  
of the laurel tree, used to  
show honor.

Save the ship of state from the storm.

Once, years ago, you turned our unhappiness to joy.

You can do it once more.

50 You rule this land. No man disputes your power.

But rule over the living, not the dead.

When no men throng the streets, the city walls are nothing and  
our proud ships mere empty shells.

**Oedipus.** Oh my poor children. I understand the passions that

55 brought you here.

I know that you are plagued with sickness. Yet sick as you are,  
not as sick as I.

What each of you suffers is your own pain, no one else's.

But I suffer for you, for my city, and for myself.

60 I was not asleep. You are not waking me.

I have been weeping for a long time.

I have paced my restless room thinking, thinking.

In the end I found a remedy and I have put it to work:

I have sent Creon, son of Menoecus,<sup>8</sup> brother of the queen, to

65 Delphi. There at Apollo's oracle he will learn, if he can, what

I must do or promise to do to save the city.

I have been counting the days and I am troubled. For he should  
have returned.

What can be keeping him? This is the day! He should be here.

70 But whenever he returns I will do what the god orders.

**Priest.** Your promise is given in good time. They say that Creon  
is here.

**Oedipus.** Oh Lord Apollo, may his news shine as bright as the  
hope on his face.

75 **Priest.** The news must be good. He is crowned with laurel,<sup>9</sup> a  
wreath thick with berries.

**Oedipus.** We shall soon know. See where he comes.

*(Creon enters)*

**Oedipus.** Oh brother, Prince of Thebes, what answer do you  
bring us from Apollo?

80 **Creon.** A powerful answer. Our deep agonies will be healed if  
they are treated right.

**Oedipus.** What did the oracle say? Your words are ambiguous. I  
still hover between hope and fear.

**Creon.** Do you wish me to speak in public in front of all these

85 men? I will of course. But should we not go inside?

**Oedipus.** Let them hear. For I suffer for them more than for myself.

**Creon.** Then I will tell you what I heard. In plain words, the  
oracle commands us to expel from Thebes an old pollution. We  
are sheltering a thing that is killing us and is beyond cure.

90 We cannot let it feed upon us any longer.



**Oedipus.** What pollution? How are we to expel it from our midst?

**Creon.** By exile or by death. Blood must answer for blood.  
A murder blew the deadly plague breath on our city.

**Oedipus.** A murder? Whose? Did the god not name the man?

95 **Creon.** My lord, Laius once was our king before you came to  
rule over us.

**Oedipus.** I know. I never saw the man, but others told me of him.

**Creon.** He was murdered. Apollo demands that we take  
revenge upon the man who killed him.

100 **Oedipus.** Where are the killers? How, after so many years, can  
we find a clue to solve the crime?

**Creon.** Apollo said the killer is amongst us. We must search and  
be aware of everything.

105 **Oedipus.** Where was he killed? In the palace or outside the city  
or in some other country?

**Creon.** He told us that he was going to the shrine of a god. He  
never came home again.

**Oedipus.** Was there no witness . . . some attendant to tell what  
happened?

110 **Creon.** They were all killed. Except for one.  
He escaped, but his terror made him forget all but one thing.

**Oedipus.** What was that? That one thing may be the key that  
unlocks this whole mystery.

115 **Creon.** He said a band of highwaymen<sup>10</sup> attacked them.  
They were outnumbered and the king was killed.

**Oedipus.** Strange that highwaymen should be so bold . . . unless  
they were bribed by some faction from the city.

120 **Creon.** We considered that. But when Laius was killed the city  
was besieged with other troubles. There was no time for  
vengeance.

**Oedipus.** What troubles could have stopped you from finding  
the killer of your king?

**Creon.** The Sphinx. Her riddles stopped our ears and brought  
destruction.

125 **Oedipus.** Once again I must bring the darkness into the light.  
Apollo is right to show, as you do, this concern for the dead.  
I will obey his command. I will stand by your side. I will avenge  
this country's loss.

130 It is my duty. I do it not for some unknown friend but for myself.  
We must expel this evil.  
Whoever killed King Laius might be the death of me—who knows?  
It might happen even now.  
It is in my own interest to avenge your slaughtered king.

## NOTES

### CLOSE READ

**ANNOTATE:** In line 93, mark the words Creon uses to describe how the murder affected the city.

**QUESTION:** Why does the playwright use a metaphor, or imaginative comparison, to describe the arrival of the plague?

**CONCLUDE:** What is the effect of Creon's describing the plague in this way?

10. **highwaymen** *n.* robbers.



My children, leave the altar's steps. Raise the olive branches to  
 135 the sun.  
 Call the elders of Thebes to gather here. Tell them I will do all  
 that is in my power.  
 With the god's help we will be saved. Without it we are lost.

**Priest.** Rise up, my children. We came to hear just this. And our  
 140 king has given his word.  
 Apollo has sent us an oracle.  
 May he walk among us and heal us and drive this plague from  
 our city.  
*(all exit)*

**Chorus.** Oh sweet voice of Apollo  
 145 You bring the truth of Zeus  
 To Thebes from your shrine of gold.  
 What do you say to us?  
 My heart trembles with fear.  
 Apollo, God of Healing, hear us!  
 150 Do you cast upon us a grief unknown before  
 Or in the circle of time awaken a remembered doom?  
 Immortal voice, golden child of Hope, speak to us.  
 We pray to Athena. Daughter of Zeus, defend us.  
 We pray to Artemis<sup>11</sup> of Thebes, her sister.  
 155 Come to us now, throned on high above your people.  
 We pray to Apollo, distant archer.  
 Once, when we were in the jaws of death,  
 You drove the burning plague from us.  
 Come to us now, defend us.  
 160 You three powers of heaven,  
 Descend and save us.  
 Ah what griefs uncountable are ours.  
 Our people are sick and dying.  
 No man has the will to fight the god of death.  
 165 The gentle earth lies barren.  
 Women in labor groan in vain.  
 Body falls upon body  
 Swifter than the flight of birds  
 Swifter than the wave of fire  
 170 Racing to the shores of Night.  
 Corpses litter the city streets.  
 Death feeds upon death.  
 Infection breeds,<sup>12</sup> and there is  
 No time to mourn the uncountable dead.  
 175 Old gray women flock to the altars,  
 Weep, and rend the air with prayers  
 And cries of grief:  
 Apollo, heal us!

NOTES

**11. Artemis** (AHR tuh mihs) Greek goddess of the moon and the hunt, twin sister of Apollo.

**12. Infection breeds** disease multiplies and spreads.

13. **Dionysus** (dy uh NY suhs) Greek god of ecstasy, the theater, and wine.

**proclamation** (prok luh MAY shuhn) *n.* official announcement

Athena, golden child of Zeus,  
 180 Turn your shining face upon our pain.  
 The War god stalks our streets,  
 No sword in hand and yet we die.  
 Fire encircles our screams.  
 Send him to the Ocean's depths  
 185 Into the waves that kill the flames.  
 What life survives the night  
 Dies in tomorrow's sun.  
 Zeus turn your fire upon him,  
 With lightning strike the god of War.  
 190 Apollo, stretch tight your golden bow  
 Loose your arrows in our defense.  
 Artemis, race across our hills  
 In a blaze of saving light.  
 Dionysus,<sup>13</sup> God of Thebes,  
 195 Come to us with your shock of golden curls,  
 Flushed with wine in the whirlwind  
 Ecstasy of your followers.  
 Destroy the loathsome god of Death  
 In the conflagration of your joy.  
 (*enter Oedipus*)  
 200 **Oedipus.** I hear your prayer. Listen to me and I will teach you  
 how to heal.  
 You will find comfort and relief.  
 I knew nothing of this story of Laius's death, knew nothing of  
 the deed itself.  
 205 How could I therefore solve a crime alone?  
 But now, since I became a citizen after the murder, I make this  
**proclamation** to all my fellow Thebans: If anyone knows the  
 man who killed King Laius, I order him to tell me everything.  
 He must not be afraid for his long silence. No, I promise that he  
 210 will not be punished with death but may leave this land in  
 safety. If any man knows that the killer was a foreigner, let him  
 speak out at once.  
 He shall have my thanks and a rich reward. But if you remain  
 silent and attempt to protect yourself or a friend and ignore my  
 215 commands, hear what I will do:  
 I forbid the people of this country, where I am king, ever to  
 harbor the killer or speak to him. Give him no place at your  
 prayers or sacrifices. Hound him from your homes. For he it is  
 who defiles our city. This the oracle has shown to me.  
 220 And I hereby join with the god as champion of our murdered king.  
 I lay this curse upon the killer, whether he acted alone or with  
 accomplices:  
 May your life be a searing agony!

This curse I even turn upon myself. For if it turns out that the  
225 killer breaks my bread and shares my hearth,<sup>14</sup> I too must suffer.  
This is my command. Obey it for my sake, for Apollo, and for  
our country, which lies barren and diseased through the anger  
of heaven.

Let us suppose the oracle had not spoken.

230 Should the murder of your king, your noble king, go unavenged?  
This pollution had to be purged clean.

And now that I sit upon that great man's throne, possess his  
wife, his bed, fathering children as would he if he had lived,  
I will be his avenger. For had not fate cut him down he might

235 have produced a son, a brother to my children.

I now will become that son, as though in truth I were, and I will  
hunt the killer down.

Vengeance for Laius, son of Labdacus, descendant of great  
Cadmus and King Agenor!<sup>15</sup>

240 If any men disobey my commands, may the gods make their  
crops wither in the fields, may they never see the fruit of their  
loins, may they rot on earth. But to you who are loyal to me and  
approve what I have done, I pray that Justice and all the gods  
look kindly upon you forever more.

245 **Chorus.** I swear to you my lord that I accept your commands.  
I did not kill the king nor do I know who did.  
My advice is this . . . Apollo posed the question . . . he should  
give the answer and tell us who the murderer is.

**Oedipus.** Your advice is well taken. But no man can force the  
250 gods to speak against their will.

**Chorus.** May I then suggest a second plan.

**Oedipus.** And a third if need be.

**Chorus.** My lord, if any man can speak with the god it is  
Teiresias. He might bring us to the light.

255 **Oedipus.** I have already done it. Creon suggested it. And I have  
sent for him. I am surprised he is not here.

**Chorus.** My mind is stirring now. Rumors from long ago. Mere  
gossip.

**Oedipus.** Tell me. I want to know everything.

260 **Chorus.** It was said that he was killed by travelers.

**Oedipus.** That is what I heard. But no one knows the man who  
saw him die.

**Chorus.** Well, if he knows what fear is, he will run in terror of  
your curse.

265 **Oedipus.** A man who can do a thing like that is not afraid of  
words.

## NOTES

**14. hearth** (hahrth) *n.* home.

**15. King Agenor** (uh GEE nawr)  
mythical king of Phoenicia,  
believed to have trained the  
Greek hero Achilles.

## CLOSE READ

**ANNOTATE:** Mark the  
punctuation that suggests  
hesitation in lines 245–248.

**QUESTION:** Why does the  
playwright, or translator,  
indicate that these words  
should be spoken with  
hesitation?

**CONCLUDE:** What effect  
do these lines have on  
the reader? On a viewing  
audience?

This eighteenth-century drawing depicts the blind seer Teiresias being led by a boy.

NOTES



**Chorus.** But here comes one who can capture him.  
Here is Teiresias, whose mind is fired by the god and in whom  
truth lives and breathes.

*(enter Teiresias, led by a boy)*

270 **Oedipus.** Teiresias our prophet, you understand all things—the  
hidden mysteries of the wise, the high things of heaven, and the  
low things of the earth.

Though your eyes cannot see, you know of this plague that  
infects our city.

275 We turn to you—our one defense—our shield.

No doubt the messengers told you what Apollo said in his reply to us:

One course alone can free us from this plague . . . we must find the murderers of King Laius.

280 We must execute them or expel them from this land.

Therefore give us freely of your gift of prophecy.

Save yourself, your country, and your king.

Save all the people from this pollution of spilled blood. We are in your hands.

285 There is no greater honor than for a man to serve his fellow men.

**Teiresias.** Alas! It is a miserable thing to be wise when wisdom brings no reward. I had forgotten that ancient truth. Otherwise I would not be here.

**Oedipus.** What is wrong? Why this melancholy mood?

290 **Teiresias.** Let me go home. Do not keep me here. It would be best if you bear your burden and I mine.

**Oedipus.** For shame!

No true-born Theban would withhold his gift of prophecy from the country that he loves.

295 **Teiresias.** Your words, my king, lie far from the truth. I am afraid that I, like you, will not speak true.

**Oedipus.** Oh speak! Hold nothing back. I order you to tell us what you know.

We are your suppliants.

300 **Teiresias.** Yes . . . but you do not know what you are asking me. I will never reveal my miseries . . . or yours.

**Oedipus.** What!! You know something but will not speak? Will you betray us and destroy the state?

305 **Teiresias.** I will not hurt myself or you. Why ask from me what I will never tell?

**Oedipus.** You are a wicked man. Your silence would anger a lifeless stone.

Will nothing loosen your tongue, melt your heart, shake you out of this implacable silence?

310 **Teiresias.** You blame me but you do not see yourself. In your anger you turn on me.

**Oedipus.** Who could be calm when he heard you scorn the desperation of our city?

**Teiresias.** Well, whether I will speak or not, what will be will be.

315 **Oedipus.** That is true. And your duty is to tell me.

**Teiresias.** I have nothing more to say. You can rage to your heart's content.

**decree** (dih KREE) *n.* decision made by an authority

### CLOSE READ

**ANNOTATE:** Mark the repeated word in lines 339 and 340.

**QUESTION:** Why does the playwright repeat this word?

**CONCLUDE:** What effect does this repetition have?

**Oedipus.** Yes, I am angry and *I* will not be silent! I will speak what is on my mind.

320 I think it was you, yes you, who planned the murder.  
Yes—and did it all—except the actual killing.  
And if you were not blind you would have done that too.

**Teiresias.** Is that so? Then hear me! I call upon you to obey the words of your own **decree**.

325 From this day on do not speak to me or to these citizens.  
*You* are the killer. *You* bring the pollution upon Thebes.

**Oedipus.** Hold your slanderous tongue.

You taunt me and think because you are a prophet you will go scot-free.

330 **Teiresias.** I *am* free. For my strength lies in the truth.

**Oedipus.** Who made you say this? You didn't find this accusation through your art.

**Teiresias.** You made me speak. You provoked me against my will.

335 **Oedipus.** I made you speak?? Then speak again. Make clear your charges.

**Teiresias.** Did you not understand the first time? Will you provoke me yet again?

**Oedipus.** I half understood your meaning. Speak again.

340 **Teiresias.** I say you are the murderer of the man whose murderer you seek.

**Oedipus.** You will regret repeating so foul a slander.

**Teiresias.** Must I go on and inflame your anger even more?

**Oedipus.** You can say all you want. It will be a waste of breath.

345 **Teiresias.** I say that you are living in darkest shame with the closest of your family.  
And you know nothing of your sin.

**Oedipus.** Do you think that you can keep on spewing out your filth and get away with it?

**Teiresias.** Yes, if there is strength in truth and truth does not die.

350 **Oedipus.** Truth lives in other men but not in you.  
For you, in ear, in mind, in eye, in everything are blind.

**Teiresias.** Poor fool! You lay words upon me which soon all men will lay upon you.

355 **Oedipus.** You are a child of endless darkness, and you have no power over me or any man who can see the light of the sun.

**Teiresias.** True, I have no such power over you. Your fate is in the hands of Apollo.

**Oedipus.** Is this plot yours alone or was it Creon's idea?

**Teiresias.** Not Creon. You bring destruction upon yourself.



360 **Oedipus.** Wealth! Power! The art of being a ruler!  
Kingship! The admiration of one's subjects!  
What envy these things breed—if Creon, Creon whom I trusted,  
who was my friend, seeks in secret to overthrow me.  
All for this position of majesty which the city gave to me though  
365 I did not seek it.  
He has bought the services of this charlatan, this fraud, this  
scheming beggar-priest.  
With *money* in his hands his eyes can see. But his art is stone blind.  
You there! Tell me! When did you ever prove that you were a  
370 true prophet? When the Sphinx was destroying the city with her  
riddles, why could you not save these people?  
The riddle could not be solved by guessing.  
It needed the true art of prophecy. And you were found wanting.  
Neither the birds of the air nor the configurations of the stars<sup>16</sup>  
375 could help you.  
It was I, I who came here, Oedipus, an ordinary simple man.  
I stopped the mouth of the Sphinx. I did not need omens.  
I needed only my native wit. And you seek to overthrow me?

## NOTES

**16. the birds . . . the stars** Augury, the study of the flights of birds, and astrology, the study of the movements of stars and planets, were believed to tell the future to those who practiced them.



In a 1945 stage production, Oedipus, played by Laurence Olivier, accuses the prophet Teiresias. The chorus watches in the background.

17. **Cithaeron** (suh THEE ruh)n  
mountain range in Greece.

- You hope to reign with Creon in my place?
- 380 You will regret it, you and your friend Creon.  
If it weren't for your age you would feel the pain that your treachery deserves.
- Chorus.** You both are angry. But now is not the time for fury.  
We must decide how we can best obey the oracle.
- 385 **Teiresias.** You are the king. But I have the right to speak my mind freely.  
In this I too am a king. I have no master but Apollo. I am his servant.  
You cannot accuse me of being allied with Creon.
- 390 This is my answer: since you mocked my blindness, know that though you have eyes you cannot see how low you have fallen. You do not know in whose house you live, no, nor with whom. Who is your father, who is your mother? You do not know. In ignorance you live as an enemy to the living and the dead.
- 395 But the curse of your parents one day will drive you wounded from this land.  
Those eyes that now see clear day will be covered with darkest night.  
Your cries will echo on every hill. Cithaeron<sup>17</sup> will ring with
- 400 your moans. For you will know that the marriage hymns that welcomed you to Thebes were a dirge of mourning for your ill-fated return.  
All this will come to pass—and more—before you find your children and yourself.
- 405 Curse me then. Curse Creon. No mortal will be punished more horribly than you.
- Oedipus.** Must I endure his insolence? Damnation fall upon you! Get out of my sight!  
Never set foot in my house again!
- 410 **Teiresias.** I would never have come if you had not ordered it.
- Oedipus.** I did not know you would play the fool.  
Otherwise you would have waited a long time to be called.
- Teiresias.** The fool? Ha! Your parents thought me wise enough.
- Oedipus.** My parents? Who were they? Speak.
- 415 **Teiresias.** This day will give you a father and lead you to your grave.  
**Oedipus.** You know only how to speak in the darkness of riddles.
- Teiresias.** I thought you were the man who could unlock a riddle's secret.
- 420 **Oedipus.** Yes! Mock me for the skill that made me great.
- Teiresias.** A greatness that will be your ruin.
- Oedipus.** I saved this city!

**Teiresias.** It is time to leave. Come boy.

**Oedipus.** Yes, take him away. Leave me in peace.

425 Your presence here disturbs my world.

**Teiresias.** I go. But first I will tell you why I came. I am not afraid of you.

You cannot do me harm.

Hear me: the man you seek with your **edicts** warrants and  
430 decrees—the man who killed the king—that man is here.

You think of him as foreign-born. But he is a Theban.

His good fortune will turn to sorrow. Though he has eyes, he will be blind.

Though he wear purple,<sup>18</sup> he will wear beggar's rags.

435 Leaning upon his staff, he will tap the earth that leads him into exile.

To his children he will be both brother and father.

To her who gave him birth both son and husband.

440 And to his father he will be both killer and the man who shared his bed.

Go in now and think upon my words.

If you find that I have not spoken truth, then you can say I have no gift for prophecy.

*(exit Oedipus, Teiresias, and Boy)*

**Chorus.** The Oracle at Delphi has spoken.

445 But who is the man who took the blood of kings?

Who is this man of unspeakable darkness?

He must fly like the wind's swift steeds.

For on his heels Apollo races

In the blinding light of his father's fire.

450 And ever on his track the Furies<sup>19</sup> follow hard

Like hounds scenting blood.

Parnassus!<sup>20</sup> Blinding peak of snow!

You flash to earth the icy will of the gods.

Find the killer. Find the man who roams

455 Like a bull in the forest's shadow,

Raging in the haunting dark as his doom hovers,

Ready to strike.

There is nowhere to hide from the light

Of Apollo's shrine,

460 When voices divine hunt him down.

The man skilled in the beating of the wings of birds

Troubles me deeply. Is there truth in his art?

I am lost. I have no words. I can see neither

Past nor future. I am adrift on the wind.

465 There was no quarrel ever that I knew

Between our royal house and Polybus, father of our king.

There is no proof. How then can I question his honor

## NOTES

**edicts** (EE dihkts) *n.* commands from a public authority

**18. purple** color worn by the rich and important, especially royalty.

**19. the Furies** feared Greek goddesses of vengeance; punishers of the guilty.

**20. Parnassus** (pah NAS uhs) sacred mountain within sight of the oracle at Delphi.

And in a feud of blood pursue this untracked murder?  
Zeus and Apollo know all things,

470 Know the ways of mortal men.  
But that a prophet knows more than I,  
What proof is there? One man may possess  
More wisdom than another. So how can I—  
Without the truth before my eyes—cast blame  
475 Upon my king?

He saved our city from the Sphinx  
Was tested hard and shone like gold.  
To my mind he is wise and guilt-free.

*(enter Creon)*

**Creon.** My fellow citizens, I have come here to lodge a protest.  
480 I have heard that Oedipus has accused me of a grievous charge.  
If he thinks that I have harmed him—by my actions or in  
words—in this present crisis then I put no value on my life in  
face of this dishonor. For I am not being accused of some minor  
private mistake.

485 I am charged with being a traitor to the state and to you, my  
friends.

**Chorus.** The king was angry. His words were rash. He was not  
thinking when he spoke.

**Creon.** Did anyone dare to suggest that I had urged the seer to  
490 bring false charges?

**Chorus.** Such things were mentioned. I do not know why.

**Creon.** How did he look? Surely he must have been  
out of his senses when he made this hideous accusation?

**Chorus.** I do not know. It is not for me to judge the behavior of  
495 my king.

*(enter Oedipus)*

**Oedipus.** You there! What are you doing here?  
Do you have the gall to come near my palace?  
There is no doubt in my mind that you planned to kill me and  
usurp the throne.

500 Tell me, did you think I was a fool or a coward?  
Is that why you hatched this plot against me?  
Did you think I was too stupid to see your slithering  
treachery—too frightened not to fight back?  
You are the fool if you think you can get the crown without the  
505 support of friends.

A crown must be fought for or bought.

**Creon.** Now you listen to me. You have spoken. It is your turn  
to hear me.

**Oedipus.** Oh yes, you have a silver tongue.

510 But how can I learn anything from my deadliest enemy?

**Creon.** First, I would prove that those words are not true.

**Oedipus.** That you are not my enemy?

**Creon.** You are headstrong and stubborn. Change your ways.

**Oedipus.** And you are a fool if you think a man can betray his  
515 family and get away with it.

**Creon.** That is a fair statement. But what betrayal are you talking about?

**Oedipus.** Did you or did you not advise me to summon Teiresias?

**Creon.** I did. I would do it again.

520 **Oedipus.** How long has it been since Laius . . .

**Creon.** Laius . . . ? What are you talking about?

**Oedipus.** . . . since Laius left this earth in bloody violence?

**Creon.** I don't know . . . It was many years ago.

**Oedipus.** Was Teiresias the city's prophet at the time?

525 **Creon.** Yes. Skilled then as now, and deserving his reputation.

**Oedipus.** Did he speak of me then in any way?

**Creon.** Not to my knowledge. No.

**Oedipus.** Was there no search, no formal inquiry?

**Creon.** Of course. But nothing was discovered.

530 **Oedipus.** Why did our prophet not tell his story then?

**Creon.** I do not know. And since I don't, I will hold my tongue.

**Oedipus.** There is one thing you know and could speak of.

**Creon.** What is that? I will tell you everything.

**Oedipus.** That it was *you* who made Teiresias accuse me of  
535 Laius's death.

**Creon.** If he accused you, you are the only one who knows of it. But let me question you now.

**Oedipus.** Proceed. Prove me a killer if you can.

**Creon.** You married my sister. Is that correct?

540 **Oedipus.** Why would I deny it?

**Creon.** And as your wife and queen, she shares the throne?

**Oedipus.** She has all her heart's desires.

**Creon.** And with the two of you I have a third share of power?

**Oedipus.** Yes. And it is that which makes you a traitor.


545 **Creon.** Not true. Now begin to reason logically as I have. Would any man choose the troubles, the anxiety of power if he had that power but without the responsibility? I certainly would not. I have no longing for the *name* of king. I prefer to *live* like one.

### CLOSE READ

**ANNOTATE:** Mark the italicized words in lines 545–550.

**QUESTION:** Why does the playwright, or translator, emphasize these words?

**CONCLUDE:** What is the effect of this emphasis, especially in clarifying Creon's reasoning?



This 2002 stage production of the play presents another vision of the Chorus.

NOTES

Any sensible man would feel the same way. All my needs, all  
550 that I want, *you* provide.  
I have nothing to fear.  
But if I were king I would have to do things which I did not want.  
So why should I seek the crown rather than the pleasant,  
untroubled life I now lead?  
555 I am not mad. I need no greater honors than I have now.  
I am welcome everywhere . . . people greet me everywhere.  
Those who want a favor from you are kind to me.  
I know how to get what they ask of me.  
So should I exchange this comfortable life for one like yours?  
560 That would be insane. And I am not mad.  
Nor was I ever tempted by the thought or shared in any intrigue.  
If you doubt me, go to Delphi, learn if what I have said is true.  
The god will speak the truth.  
If you find that I conspired with Teiresias, then condemn me to  
565 death.  
I will join with you in my own condemnation.  
But do not find me guilty on mere suspicion, without appeal.  
You cannot on a whim judge a good man bad, a bad man good.  
A man should offer up his precious life rather than betray a  
570 friend.  
In time you will know the truth. Time alone unlocks the secrets  
of true justice.  
A wicked man is discovered in the passing light of a single day.  
**Chorus.** His words are carefully chosen. This demands discretion.  
575 There should be no rush to judgment.



**Oedipus.** But he . . . did he not rush into his schemes, his plots?  
I must be as quick to counter him. If I do nothing, he will  
overthrow me.

**Creon.** So what is your intent . . . to send me into exile?

580 **Oedipus.** Exile? *No!* I want you dead.  
I want the world to see the punishment that treason brings.

**Creon.** You still resist the truth? You will not believe me?

**Oedipus.** Why should I?

**Creon.** Then you are a fool.

585 **Oedipus.** For protecting myself?

**Creon.** In the name of justice, believe me!

**Oedipus.** You are a wicked, evil man.

**Creon.** What if you are wrong?

**Oedipus.** I must still be king.

590 **Creon.** Even if you are wrong?

**Oedipus.** Oh my city, my city.

**Creon.** It is my city too!

**Chorus.** My lords, keep your peace. I see the queen.  
Jocasta is coming from her chambers. It is time, oh it is time.

595 For she alone can resolve this quarrel.

*(enter Jocasta)*

**Jocasta.** You are fools! Why do you shout in anger like this?

## NOTES

Do you have no shame? The city is dying, and here you fight like petulant children.

*(to Oedipus)* Come into the house.

600 And you, Creon . . . go now.

No more of this quarreling over nothing!

**Creon.** Over nothing? You are wrong, my sister.

Your husband will send me into exile or to my death.

605 **Oedipus.** That is what I will do. For I have caught him, caught him plotting against my life.

**Creon.** *No!* Let me die amongst the damned if I ever wished you harm!

**Jocasta.** Oh believe him, Oedipus!

In the name of the gods, believe him when he swears.

610 For my sake and for these our citizens.

**Chorus.** Listen to her, my lord. I beg you listen to her.

**Oedipus.** What do you want me to do?

**Chorus.** Trust Creon. He has never spoken like a fool.

And now he has sworn before the gods.

615 **Oedipus.** Do you know what you are asking of me?

**Chorus.** I do.

**Oedipus.** Then speak on.

**Chorus.** Creon has been your friend. He has sworn an oath.

You should not mistrust his words.

620 You should not seem to be blinded by malice toward him.

**Oedipus.** You understand that what you say means death or exile for me . . . ?

**Chorus.** *No! No!* I swear by Apollo, may I die alone and cursed by the gods if ever meant that!

625 My heart is dying, withering fast when I hear your anger, hear your hate.

**Oedipus.** Then let him go.

And let me die if that is what must be . . . or wander into exile in shame, leaving this Thebes that I love. You, you citizens, you

630 move me to this change of heart. Not he . . . for wherever he goes he will be hated.

**Creon.** You make peace, but your words are full of hate.

Your anger still seethes within your heart.

It will come back, this anger, to haunt you.

635 **Oedipus.** Leave me in peace. Go now.

**Creon.** I go. You misjudged me—these men did not.

*(exit)*



**Chorus.** Lady, take your husband into the palace.

**Jocasta.** Tell me first, what started this quarrel?

**Chorus.** There were rumors. And lies breed anger.

640 **Jocasta.** Were both to blame?

**Chorus.** Both.

**Jocasta.** What was said?

**Chorus.** Ask me no more. Thebes is dying.  
Let sleeping griefs lie in their beds.

645 **Oedipus.** That is strange advice, my friend. I know you are  
thinking of me.  
But why would you try to stop me from doing what I must do?

**Chorus.** My king, I will say this once more.  
I would be called a fool if I abandoned you now. You made this  
650 country great.

And when the winds lashed our city, you brought our ship of  
state into safe harbor.  
There is no one but you . . . no one who can save us.

**Jocasta.** I must ask you, my husband and my king, what made  
655 you so violently angry?

**Oedipus.** I love you . . . love you more than all these citizens. So  
I will tell you.  
Your brother Creon conspired against me.

**Jocasta.** Why? Why? What was the cause?

660 **Oedipus.** He accuses me of murdering Laius.

**Jocasta.** Does he know this or is it some rumor?

**Oedipus.** He is too clever to accuse himself.  
He speaks through the mouth of a prophet . . . one that he has  
bought.

665 **Jocasta.** Then let your conscience rest. Hear me. I have no belief  
in the prophetic art.  
I know. I *know*.

Let me tell you. Once long ago word came to Laius from the  
Oracle at Delphi—I will not say it was from the god himself . . .  
670 probably from his priests.

The word was that Laius would die at the hand of his own  
son . . . my child and his.  
Laius . . . at least this was the story . . . was killed by  
highwaymen in broad daylight.

675 He was killed where three roads meet.

We had a son, but when he was only three days old Laius  
pierced his ankles, left him on a hill to die. He gave the child to  
others, of course, to do this. We knew then that Apollo had  
changed the course of fate.

### CLOSE READ

**ANNOTATE:** Mark the word Jocasta repeats in line 659. Mark the sentence she repeats in line 667.

**QUESTION:** Why does the playwright have her repeat this word and phrase?

**CONCLUDE:** How does this repetition relate to one of the play's key ideas?

Laurence Olivier as Oedipus and Sybil Thorndike as Jocasta in a famous 1945 stage production.

NOTES



- 680 The son would never kill his father.  
The terror of the prophecy would die there on the hills.  
That is what the prophet said, my king.  
Pay it no mind. God alone shows us the truth.
- Oedipus.** A shadow crossed my mind as you spoke. And the  
685 shadow chilled my mind.
- Jocasta.** What was it that touched you?
- Oedipus.** You said that Laius was killed where three roads meet.
- Jocasta.** That was what we were told at the time.
- Oedipus.** Where?
- 690 **Jocasta.** Phocis . . . that is the name of the town . . .  
It is where the road to Thebes divides, and you can go to Delphi  
or Daulia.
- Oedipus.** When?
- Jocasta.** We heard about it just before you came. Just before you  
695 won this kingdom.
- Oedipus.** Oh what a net of death have the gods been weaving  
for me!

**Jocasta.** Oedipus, why are you so troubled?

**Oedipus.** Do not ask me. Not yet. Tell me about Laius—how old  
700 was he?

**Jocasta.** He was tall. His hair was becoming gray. He was about  
your height.

**Oedipus.** I feel that my own curse now begins to descend on me.

**Jocasta.** I am afraid. When I look on you I am afraid.

705 **Oedipus.** Perhaps the seer who has no eyes can see the truth.  
But tell me, tell me all you know.

**Jocasta.** I will tell you everything. But now fear grips my soul.

**Oedipus.** Was the king accompanied by many men—as befitting  
his office or . . . ?

710 **Jocasta.** There were just five men. One was a messenger. There  
was a single chariot.  
He was driving.

**Oedipus.** Aaagh, that is enough, enough.  
Who told you what happened?

715 **Jocasta.** A servant. He was the only one to escape.

**Oedipus.** Is he still one of ours?

**Jocasta.** No. When he came back here and found that you were  
now our king . . . he came to me. He touched my hand . . . he  
begged me to send him to the countryside where the shepherds  
720 tend their flocks. Far from here, he said, I granted him his wish.  
He was a slave, but he had earned this simple gift.

**Oedipus.** Can you get him back here quickly?

**Jocasta.** Of course. But why?

**Oedipus.** I have been too much alone. I have asked too few  
725 questions. I need to talk to him.

**Jocasta.** Then he will be here. But you must talk to me too . . .  
tell me of your fears.

**Oedipus.** I owe you that—oh I owe you that. For I have climbed  
a mountain of fear.

730 And I need to talk to someone. I need to talk to you.  
Polybus of Corinth<sup>21</sup> is my father. My mother is Merope. I grew  
up in Corinth.  
I was a prince.

One day a strange thing happened . . . it affected me deeply . . .  
735 perhaps it should not.

There was a feast.

A man got drunk and shouted to the world that I was not my  
father's son.

I kept quiet that night . . . though it hurt. And I was angry.

21. **Corinth** (KAWR ihnth) city-state  
in ancient Greece.

740 The next day I went to see my father and my mother. I asked  
 them about this.  
 They too were very angry. They said it was the mindless ranting  
 of a drunken fool.  
 I found peace in that. But the suspicion lay there. Always. In my  
 745 mind.  
 I knew that people talked. I could not be still. I had to leave.  
 I said nothing to my parents. I went straight to Delphi, to the  
 oracle. I questioned him.  
 The god was silent. He answered not a word. But then he spoke.  
 750 He spoke of other things.  
 His words were sometimes as clear as the burning sun, full of  
 terror, pain, and things unbearable.  
 He said that I would bed my own mother, that I would breed  
 children from that womb, and that the world would turn away  
 755 in horror.  
 He said that I would kill my own father.  
 I listened. And I fled.  
 From that day Corinth was but a distant land touched by the  
 Western stars.  
 760 I moved onward, ever onward.  
 I never wanted to set eyes upon the horror spoken by the god.  
 And I came here . . . here where Laius was killed.  
 I will tell you all that happened.  
 There were three roads that met where I was traveling. A herald  
 765 came toward me.  
 There was a chariot, horses, and a man who looked like the man  
 you described.  
 He was seated there within it.  
 The groom—who was leading the horses by the reins—forced  
 770 me off the road.  
 The man in the chariot ordered him to do so.  
 As the man lurched toward me I struck him. I was angry.  
 The old man saw this and hit me hard with his scepter.  
 I hit him back! Oh I hit him back! I knocked him out of the chariot.  
 775 He rolled on the ground. I beat him to death. I killed them all!  
 Now if that man . . . if Laius were part of my family . . . where  
 then can I hide . . . escape from my misery? The gods must hate  
 me. No citizen here must shelter me. No man must speak to me.  
 I am anathema.<sup>22</sup>  
 780 I have cursed my pitiful self.  
 Oh think, oh think . . . I have touched you with these hands . . .  
 these hands that killed your husband!  
 I am polluted. I am the embodiment of evil.  
 So I must run . . . run from this city of Thebes.  
 785 But I can never go home to the land that I love . . . never see  
 Corinth again.

22. **anathema** (uh NATH uh muh)  
*adj.* detested or cursed.

I live in terror of killing my father and lying with my mother.  
Ah, this was my destiny when I was born. The gods are cruel,  
savage in their anger.

790 You gods, pity me. You are all powerful. But let me never see  
that day. Oh let me vanish without trace from this earth rather  
than know the fate that makes me loathed amongst mankind.

**Chorus.** We feel your anguish, my lord.  
But until you have questioned the survivor, keep your hopes alive.

795 **Oedipus.** My hopes are dying, but they will await the coming of  
this shepherd.

**Jocasta.** What do you expect from him when he comes?

**Oedipus.** Only this: if his account matches yours, I am cleared.

**Jocasta.** What was it I said that you find important?

800 **Oedipus.** You used the word “highwaymen.” He said that  
highwaymen had killed the king.  
If he still speaks of several killers, then I was not the murderer.  
I was alone.

805 There was no one else. But if he says there was only one, my  
guilt is inescapable.

**Jocasta.** Then take heart. For this is indeed what he said. He  
cannot change his tune now.

I heard it from his mouth as did the rest of Thebes.

810 But even if his story were to change, he cannot make the death  
of Laius conform with the oracle.

Apollo said explicitly that Laius would die at the hands of my son.  
But he, poor child, never shed any blood. He died too soon.

No, from now on I will give not a second’s thought to the words  
of the oracles.

815 **Oedipus.** You may indeed be right. But send for the shepherd  
right away.

**Jocasta.** It is as good as done. Let us go in. I wish only to  
please you.

*(exit Oedipus and Jocasta)*

# Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. As the play opens, what disaster has befallen Thebes?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How did Oedipus become king of Thebes?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. According to the Oracle, what is the solution to the problems Thebes faces?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What does Oedipus accuse Creon of doing?

5.  **Notebook** Confirm your understanding of the text by writing a summary.

---

## Research

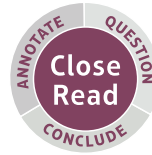
**Research to Clarify** Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the play?

**Research to Explore** Research some of the places mentioned in the play (Corinth, Cithaeron, Thebes, etc.). You may want to share what you learn with the class.



## Close Read the Text

Reread lines 347–351 in the argument between Teiresias and Oedipus. Mark the nouns. What word is repeated? What is the effect of that repetition?



OEDIPUS THE KING, PART I

## Analyze the Text

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE to support your answers.

**Notebook** Respond to these questions.

- (a) Why does Oedipus feel he is the person most affected by the plague that has stricken Thebes? (b) **Interpret** How does this fact affect Oedipus' reception of Creon when Creon returns from Apollo's oracle?
- (a) **Interpret** Why have the leaders of Thebes failed to pursue Laius' killers? (b) **Connect** How does this fact strengthen Oedipus' belief that he can find the murderers? (c) **Analyze** Why does the chorus appeal to Apollo after Oedipus promises to avenge Laius?
- (a) **Classify** Which details in Teiresias' speech in lines 385–406 refer to darkness, vision, and insight? (b) **Compare and Contrast** At the end of Part I, in what different ways are Oedipus and Teiresias both blind? In what ways can both see?
- (a) In lines 665–683, what reasons does Jocasta give for not having faith in prophecy? (b) **Compare and Contrast** At this point in the play, what do both Jocasta and Oedipus seem to believe about their abilities to control their own fates? Explain.

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### Concept Vocabulary

proclamation    decree    edicts

**Why These Words?** The three concept vocabulary words relate to official pronouncements. Find other words in Part I that relate to this concept.

### Practice

**Notebook** To demonstrate your understanding of the concept vocabulary words, write a definition for each one. Then, list one or two synonyms for each word. Refer to a dictionary or a thesaurus as needed.

### Word Study

**Notebook** **Latin Root: -dict-** The word *edicts* is formed from the Latin root *-dict-*, meaning "say" or "speak."

Record three other words that are formed from the root *-dict-*. Write a definition for each word. Then, explain how the root *-dict-* contributes to each word's meaning.

### WORD NETWORK

Add words related to blindness and sight from the text to your Word Network.

### STANDARDS

- Language**
- Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech.
  - Consult general and specialized reference materials, both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.



OEDIPUS THE KING, PART I

## Analyze Craft and Structure

**Structure of Greek Plays** Greek plays are **verse drama**, in which the dialogue takes the form of poetry. Greek tragedies follow a consistent format. Note that some modern translations deviate from strict classical form, observing some—but not all—these conventions.

- They open with a **prologue** that presents background information and describes the conflict.
- The **chorus**, a group of performers who speak and move together as they comment on the play, then enters and performs a **parados**, or opening song.
- The parados is followed by the first scene, which is called an **episode** and contains dialogue among characters.
- Additional songs, called **odes**, are presented at the end of each scene. They serve a function similar to that of the curtain coming down at the ends of scenes in modern theatrical productions.
- Before the final scene, the chorus performs a **paean**, or song of thanksgiving, to Dionysus, the Greek god at whose festivals classical drama originated.
- The tragedy concludes with an **exodos**, or final scene.

### Practice

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE to support your answers.

**Notebook** Respond to these questions.

1. Scan or reread Part I of *Oedipus the King*. Then, use the chart to record information that is provided or action that takes place in each section listed.

SECTION OF PLAY	INFORMATION AND/OR ACTION
prologue, lines 1–143	
parados, lines 144–199	
episode, lines 200–443	
ode, lines 444–478	

2. In addition to singing odes, the chorus may interact with the characters. (a) Reread lines 479–596. How does the chorus intervene in the dialogue between Oedipus and Creon? (b) Review the remainder of the scene that concludes Part I. What is different about the chorus’s words after Jocasta arrives? (c) In what ways does the chorus heighten the dramatic tension?



## Author's Style

**The Greek Chorus** The chorus (a group of performers who speak and move together as they comment on the play) is central to Greek drama. Between each scene or episode of dialogue among characters, the chorus provides key background information and commentary on the action. The chorus's recitals, or odes, often divide into two parts—a **strophe** and an answering **antistrophe**.

- During the strophe, the chorus expresses an initial position on the play's action. The chorus sings while twisting and dancing from right to left.
- During the antistrophe, the chorus responds to the message of the strophe while moving in the opposite direction.
- Some odes have a concluding stanza, or **epode**, when the chorus stands still.
- To help propel the plot, the chorus leader, or **choragos** (also spelled *choragus*), often exchanges thoughts with the rest of the chorus, as well as with the actors. In ancient Greece, the choragos was often a patron who helped pay the costs of producing a play.

### Read It


Reread the ode that begins with line 444. Then, answer the questions.

1. Record your answers in the chart. (a) Which lines make up the strophe? Which lines make up the antistrophe? (b) In the strophe, what main idea does the chorus express about the king's killer? (c) What main idea does the chorus express in the antistrophe?

STROPHE	ANTISTROPHE
Lines:	Lines:
Main Idea:	Main Idea:

2. In which character does the chorus decide to put its faith—Oedipus or Teiresias? Why?

### Write It

 **Notebook** Write a paragraph in which you describe how this ode offers “commentary” on the action of the play.

### EVIDENCE LOG

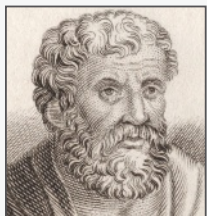
Before moving on to a new selection, go to your Evidence Log and record what you learned from *Oedipus the King*, Part I.

### STANDARDS

**Reading Literature**  
Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.



Playwright



Sophocles

# Oedipus the King, Part II

## Concept Vocabulary

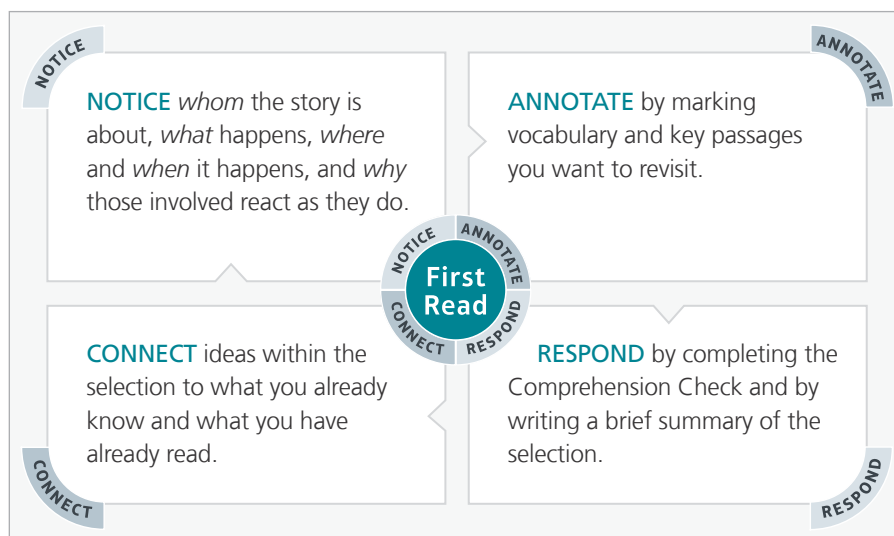
You will encounter the following words as you read *Oedipus the King*, Part II. Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (3).

WORD	YOUR RANKING
oracles	
prophecy	
inexorable	

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

## First Read DRAMA

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.



STANDARDS

Reading Literature

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.