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## Synopsis

### OEDIPUS THE KING

#### Prologue

*Oedipus the King*, the first tragedy of a triad that includes *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*, narrates the struggle of Oedipus, king of Thebes. He confronts a mysterious pestilence which kills his subjects and robs their harvests.

#### First Episode

The priest of Zeus calls on the king for a solution. The puzzling answer which Oedipus's brother-in-law Creon brings from the oracle of Apollo speaks of expelling defilement from the land by driving out a cherished person.

As Oedipus seeks to root out the person who taints Thebes with blood-guilt, he begins to investigate the death of Laius, the former king, whom Oedipus declares he has never met. The chorus urges Oedipus to question Tiresias, the blind prophet, but Tiresias delays in answering the king's summons. When the prophet arrives in Thebes, Oedipus is annoyed at his tardiness. The king antagonizes the elderly seer into delivering a blatant accusation—that the king himself is the guilty man. In Tiresias's estimation, Oedipus is a man who sees but is blind to the truth of his two crimes, incest and murder.

#### Second Episode

When Oedipus and Creon squabble over pointless accusations of envy and jealousy, Jocasta urges both men to control their tempers. She reveals to them an oracle that caused her first husband to fear the destiny of a son who would murder him at a crossroads. Fastening their infant's ankles together, Jocasta took her doomed child to be abandoned on a hillside so the kingdom might not suffer the fate that was prophesied. Oedipus's eyes gradually open to his crime as details fall

into place—the crossing of the roads from Delphi and Daulia in Phocis, the tall white-haired man, and the time of the killing. Oedipus reviews his own heritage: the son of Polybus of Doria and Merope of Corinth, he left home after hearing Apollo's oracle at Delphi predict incest and murder as his destiny.

#### Third Episode

As Oedipus and Jocasta await the corroborating testimony of a herdsman who witnessed Laius's murder, they receive the unexpected news of Polybus's death. The messenger eagerly soothes Oedipus's troubled mind with information which ironically assures the king's downfall—Polybus adopted Oedipus, an abandoned child, after a shepherd found him. The shepherd who nurtured the foundling comes forward to complete the tragic tale. Thus, Oedipus knows the entire story of his past.

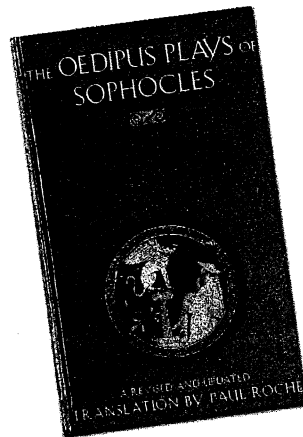
#### Epilogue

The conclusion takes place offstage, where Jocasta hangs herself. Oedipus, now in possession of the truth, removes the golden pins from his wife/mother's dress and spears the pupils of his eyes. He begs Creon for a speedy death to end his troubles or else exile from the disgrace of his catastrophic crimes. Oedipus does not worry about the safety of his grown sons, but he requests that Creon provide a home for Ismene and Antigone, Oedipus's small daughters. The tragic hero, devoid of all hope and grieving for his daughters, resigns himself to his fate.

### OEDIPUS AT COLONUS

#### Prologue

In early April at Colonus, a mile northwest of the Acropolis, Oedipus, old and feeble, wanders the road two decades after blinding himself. He leans on his daughter Antigone as he enters the sanctuary of the Eumenides, the place where, according to Apollo, the old man will die. A stranger courteously alerts him to leave holy turf. Oedipus insists that he will never go. He



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begs an audience with Theseus, king of Athens. The stranger departs to tell citizens that Oedipus has arrived.

Embittered, Oedipus prays to the furies and asks their compassion. He seeks a place to rest from his wandering, a place to die. The chorus sizes up the intruder and guarantees his safety in the sacred grove. Oedipus reveals to them that he is the pariah, son of Laius. The chorus recoils and commands him to vacate the grove. Antigone intervenes; the chorus is courteous, but insistent that the old man must go. Seeking justice, Oedipus summarizes the tragedy of his life. The chorus refers him to the authorities.

### First Episode

Ismene, Oedipus's younger daughter, gallops up to report news of her two brothers: Eteocles has seized power and banished Polyneices. According to the most recent oracle, the Thebans will embrace Oedipus in his last days. His grave will bless others. She alerts Oedipus to expect Creon, who wants to facilitate the oracle that will bring fortune to Thebes.

Oedipus regrets that his sons carry on the doomed struggle for the throne he abdicated. The chorus pities the old man and explains how to pour holy libations and pray to propitiate the Eumenides, the "kindly ones." To spare her father the effort, Ismene carries out the ritual.

The chorus continues probing Oedipus's wretched life. He sighs and recounts the ill fortune that led him to murder Laius and marry his wife, who was Oedipus's mother. Without suspecting the enormity of his crime, Oedipus sired four children by incest, but assures his listeners that he sinned without knowing of his relationship to Laius.

### Second Episode

The noble Theseus, accompanied by troops, arrives and ponders Oedipus. Having wandered far and faced danger and mortality, Theseus can comfort the old man. Oedipus thanks him for his compassion and vows to bless Athens, but declines to explain how he can make such a magnanimous promise. For himself, Oedipus requests burial.

Oedipus explains to Theseus how Polyneices has traduced the state. Theseus confers citizenship on Oedipus and extends an invitation to his home. Oedipus declines; Theseus offers to shield him from

Creon. The chorus intones a paeon to Colonus.

### Third Episode

When Creon enters, he reassures the nervous Athenians and urges his brother-in-law Oedipus to return to Thebes to assuage his former subjects. On behalf of Antigone, the unbetrothed daughter who lives like a street urchin, Creon stresses that Oedipus should end his wanderings. Oedipus accuses Creon of deception and warns him that Apollo's prophecy is unshakeable.

Creon retorts that he has taken Ismene into custody and will do likewise to Antigone. The chorus is outraged at his high-handedness. Creon threatens to attack the city if he comes to harm. Theseus stirs the citizens to action and scolds Creon for disgracing his city. Creon makes excuses and displaces blame onto the sinful Oedipus. Oedipus justifies his actions as the work of fate. Theseus arrests Creon. The chorus raises a victory song.

Theseus restores the two daughters to Oedipus and reports that a stranger from Argos who prays before Poseidon's altar claims to be Oedipus's kin. The old man deduces that the newcomer is Polyneices. Antigone begs her father to forego judgment and receive him. The chorus sympathizes with the elderly man's dilemma.

### Fourth Episode

Polyneices regrets the squalor that degraded Oedipus and his daughters. He summarizes his own tragic position and declares he will lead Argos's soldiers against Thebes to reclaim the throne. Oedipus declares him a reprobate and predicts that his cabal will fail. After he curses his son, Antigone advises Polyneices to abandon the grand plan to retrieve Thebes. With the prediction that his family will never see him again, Polyneices departs.

Anticipating a new turn in Oedipus's multiple sufferings, the chorus awaits new events. Oedipus quivers at the sound of thunder, the preface to his death. Quickened by the presence of god, he summons his daughters and Theseus. The chorus prays for the old man as death approaches.

### Fifth Episode

A messenger reports that the daughters purified their father with holy water. At the second peal of thunder, he consoled them. God's voice encouraged the old man to accept the end. He left his girls in Theseus's hands

and disappeared. Antigone longs for the comfort of home. She and Ismene implore Theseus to reveal their father's burial site, but Theseus is bound by an oath of secrecy. Antigone concerns herself with Polyneices's threat of war on Thebes.

**ANTIGONE**

**Prologue**

The forthright daughter of Oedipus, the self-blinded king of Thebes, and of Jocasta, who hanged herself when she learned of her sin of incest, Antigone is a proud princess. She values godliness over the pratings of her uncle Creon, a shallow man who seized his brother-in-law's throne.

**First Episode**

Creon refuses burial to Polyneices, the brother of Antigone and Ismene. Polyneices lies dead at the hands of his brother Eteocles. Polyneices died in combat when seven enemy kings attacked Thebes in an act of anarchy. Before the citizens of Thebes, Creon declares that Polyneices intended to burn the city and temples and kill and enslave its citizens.

**Second Episode**

When a tremulous guard reports that someone has disobeyed his edict by performing burial purification over her brother's remains, Creon threatens the sentries with public flogging if they don't name the culprit. Creon declares that a law-breaker is an outlaw and a stateless person. The guard returns with Antigone, Creon's niece. He confronts her; she admits guilt. He charges her with a capital crime. She replies that God established laws of burial. Ismene, the older sister, confesses complicity with Antigone and urges Creon to relent.

**Third Episode**

Even though Antigone is betrothed to Creon's son Haemon, Creon stubbornly refuses any concessions to members of the family. Haemon intercedes for Antigone, but Creon vows that he will keep his relatives in check as an example to other rebellious citizens. Haemon angrily rushes away, vowing never to see his father again. Creon is unmoved and ghoulishly describes how Antigone will be buried alive in a stone dugout.

**Fourth Episode**

Antigone considers herself friendless in the face of death caused by an unjust and ill-advised law. Creon threatens any citizen who refuses his commands.

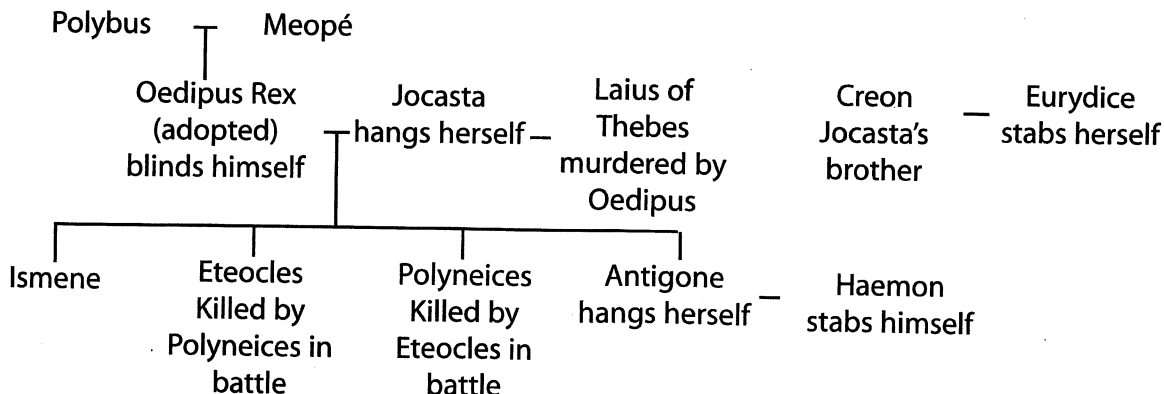
**Fifth Episode**

Creon encounters Tiresias, the blind prophet, who reports a terrible omen of screaming, clawing birds picking Polyneices's corpse. The seer implores the king to free Antigone before it is too late, but Creon sneers at the prophecy. Tiresias angrily departs from the king's rudeness. After the leading citizen adds his voice to the growing cry for clemency, Creon relents and hurries to bury Polyneices and set Antigone free.

**Epilogue**

A messenger reports how Haemon rushed to his love, who hanged herself with a linen noose. Unable to endure his loss, he menaced his father with a sword, then drove it into his own body. Without a word, his mother Eurydice departs and, bewailing the death of Megareus, her first son, plunges a dagger into her body at the altar. A chastened Creon ends the play in shock that his pride has doomed both family and rule. A wreck of his former self, he asks to be led away.

**Character Genealogy**



## A Timeline of Greek Drama

- ca. 700 B. C. Greek drama begins as part of seasonal festivals honoring Dionysus.
- ca. 535 Thespis becomes the first actor in the Western world.
- 533 Athens holds the first state's dramatic competition.
- 499 Aeschylus produces his first play.
- 486 The state holds the first comedy competition.
- 484 Aeschylus wins his first top prize.
- 471 Aeschylus wins a second top prize.
- 472 Aeschylus, *The Persians*.
- 468 Aeschylus loses to Sophocles.
- ca. 468-467 Aeschylus, *The Seven Against Thebes*.
- 463 Aeschylus, *The Suppliants*.
- 458 Aeschylus's *Oresteia* earns a top prize.
- ca. 456 Aeschylus, *Prometheus Unbound*.
- ca. 447 Sophocles, *Ajax*.
- 441 Sophocles, *Antigone*.
- 438 Euripides, *The Cyclops and Alcestis*.
- 435 Pericles builds the Theater of Dionysus at Athens.
- 431 Euripides, *Medea*.
- ca. 428 Euripides, *The Heracleidae*.
- 428 Euripides, *Hippolytus*.
- ca. 427 Euripides, *Andromache*.
- 425 Euripides, *Hecuba*.
- Aristophanes, *The Acharnians*.
- 424 Aristophanes, *The Knights*.
- 423 Aristophanes, *The Clouds*.
- 422 Aristophanes, *The Wasps*.
- ca. 422 Euripides, *Heracles*.
- 421 Aristophanes, *Peace*.
- Euripides, *The Suppliants*.
- 417 Euripides, *Ion*.
- 415 Euripides, *The Trojan Women*.
- 414 Aristophanes, *The Birds*.
- 413 Euripides, *Electra*.
- ca. 413 Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*.
- 412 Euripides, *Helena*.
- 411 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*.
- ca. 410 Euripides, *The Phoenician Women*.
- ca. 409 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, *The Trachinian Women*, and *Electra*.
- 409 Sophocles, *Philoctetes*.
- 408 Euripides, *Orestes*.
- 405 Aristophanes, *The Frogs*.
- 405 Euripides, *The Bacchae* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*.
- ca. 401 Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*.
- 393 Aristophanes, *The Ecclesiazusae*.
- 388 Aristophanes, *Plutus*.

- 360 Lycurgus adds 17,000 seats to the Theater of Dionysus.
- 316 Menander, *Dyskolos*.

## Timeline of the Action

- in Oedipus's infancy** Jocasta abandons him to spare Laius, her husband, from being murdered.
- immediately** A shepherd rescues the three-day-old child.
- in boyhood** Oedipus grows up as foster son of Polybus of Doria and Meropé of Corinth.
- in youth** Oedipus leaves home to avoid an oracle predicting murder and incest in his future.
- as an adult** He murders an unidentified man at the crossing of the roads from Delphi and Daulia in Phocis.
- later** He marries the widowed queen of Thebes and sires two sons—Eteocles and Polyneices—and two daughters—Antigone and Ismene.
- during Oedipus's reign** When Apollo's oracle indicates that defilement from a valued person is causing a plague, Oedipus investigates.
- later** Tiresias the prophet declares Oedipus guilty of murder and incest. Jocasta hangs herself immediately.
- after** Oedipus blinds himself and leaves his kingdom to wander with Antigone as his guide.
- 20 years later** In early April, Antigone leads Oedipus to Colonus to die at a sacred grove.
- immediately** Ismene reports that Eteocles has seized power and banished his brother Polyneices.
- shortly** Theseus gives Oedipus Athenian citizenship and safe harbor from Creon's retribution.
- immediately** Creon arrests Ismene. He stresses that Oedipus should end his wanderings by returning to Thebes.
- as a result** Theseus arrests Creon and restores the two daughters to Oedipus.
- meanwhile** Polyneices poses as a stranger from Argos. He prays before Poseidon's altar.

<b>afterward</b>	and claims to be Oedipus's kin. Polyneices declares he will lead Argos's soldiers against Thebes to reclaim the throne.
<b>immediately</b>	Oedipus predicts that Polyneices will fail.
<b>as a result at Oedipus's death</b>	Oedipus curses Polyneices.  At the sound of thunder, Oedipus leaves his girls in Theseus's hands and disappears.
<b>following his death</b>	During a civil war over the Theban throne, Eteocles and Polyneices kill each other in combat.
<b>night before the battle</b>	The Argive army withdraws from Thebes.
<b>after the battle</b>	Creon accords a state funeral to Eteocles, but leaves the traitor Polyneices's remains to rot unblest.
<b>immediately after</b>	Antigone and Ismene discuss their sacred duty to Polyneices.
<b>after noon</b>	A sandstorm closes the guards' eyes when Antigone performs rites over Polyneices.
<b>later</b>	A guard divulges that someone buried the corpse.
<b>immediately</b>	Creon has Antigone arrested and condemns her to death.
<b>as a result</b>	Tiresias appears to denounce Creon for planning to execute a Theban princess.
<b>shortly</b>	Creon rescinds his execution order, but finds Antigone killed by hanging.
<b>immediately</b>	Haemon tries to retaliate, then kills himself with a sword.
<b>meanwhile</b>	Eurydice retreats to the palace and stabs herself.
<b>afterward</b>	Creon regrets his losses and asks to be led away.

### Author Sketch

Second in importance of the three great Athenian tragedians, Sophocles won his audiences through craftsmanship and creative genius. Born around 496 B. C. in Greece's golden age, he was the



handsome, poised son of Sophilus, a successful armorer and native of Colonus, a suburb of Athens. Possessed of winning qualities, the playwright—optimistic, athletically gifted, and sociable—earned respect for his appearances on the stage.

Sophocles was well read in Homer and Greek myth. He studied music under Lamprus and, at age 16, led the chorus in celebration of the Greek victory at Salamis in 480 B. C. He fathered four sons, the playwright Lophon, Meneclides, Stephanos, and Leosthenes, by his first wife, Nicostrata; Theoris, his second wife, bore a fifth son, Ariston, father of Sophocles's grandson and namesake. At age 28, the playwright defeated Aeschylus for the first prize in tragedy, and from that day on never took a prize lower than second place.

In addition to his literary acumen, Sophocles appears to have remained active most of his 90 years. He earned the rank of general the same year that he wrote *Antigone*, the third of the Theban Trilogy. He served under his friend Pericles in the Samnian War from 440 to 439 B. C. and later under Nicias. Returned to civilian life, he was elected imperial treasurer, conducted healing rituals as Aesclepius's priest and represented the state on foreign embassies. His nickname, the Attic Bee, captures the nature of his talent, for it was the honey from his words that earned him a place among the greatest classical authors.

### Sophocles on Page, Stage and Screen

"Count no man blessed in his life until/He's crossed life's bounds unstruck of ruin." These concluding words from the first tragedy of Sophocles's classic *Theban Trilogy* capture the philosophy of fifth-century Greece. Although never as forceful or poetic as Aeschylus, Sophocles won fame and honor for his graceful, mellifluous lyrics and wise, sensible analysis of human failings. His chief desire was to reveal moral dilemma and the workings of fate. The shaping of destiny was to him a product of the individual's character and the whims of chance. Despite the lack of religious themes and divinities in his plays, his belief in an earthly punishment for the sin of excessive pride undergirds his outlook. For his classic humanism, Edith Hamilton called him the "quintessence of the Greek."

The most notable of Sophocles's innovations was the addition of a third actor to Greek drama and the increase of the chorus from twelve to fifteen members.

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He produced significant change in theater by pioneering scene painting and realistic tragic masks, abandoning the controlling theme for the tetralogy, and introducing the heroic maiden and the ingenuous young male. His innovations offered a new flexibility not found in older, more conservative stylists. Also, he was the first to write plays to suit talents of individual actors. Out of some 125 plays attached to his name, only seven survive, all from his most mature work. From citations and critiques, literary historians acknowledge that he also wrote *Ajax* (ca. 447 B. C.), *Epigoni*, *Electra* (409 B. C.), *Philoctetes* (409 B. C.), *Trachinian Women* (409 B. C.), *Eriphyle*, *Mysians*, *Aleadai*, *Odysseus*, *The Deaf Satyrs*, and *The Capture of Troy*. Surviving in fragments are *The Searchers*, *The Progeny*, *Inachus*, and *Niobe*.

From classical Greek, the triad has gone through frequent translation into modern European languages, in particular, Robert Fitzgerald's version of *Oedipus at Colonus* in 1941 and David Grene's translation of *Oedipus the King* in 1942. The most successful include an Italian version of *Antigone* by Luigi Alamanni in 1533, a French version by Jean-Antoine de Baïf in 1573, and another resetting by German playwright Friedrich Hölderlin in the late eighteenth century. English lyric poet Thomas Watson published an English translation in 1581.

*Antigone* suited the tenor of the 1940s. The German playwright Bertold Brecht and the French playwright Jean Anouilh both used the tragic Theban princess as a model of resistance to the fascism that caused World War II. Parisian audiences interpreted the tragic heroine as a symbol of the French Resistance, brave patriots who sabotaged the work of Nazi occupation forces. In 1962, Greek actress Irene Papas gave a stunning performance as *Antigone* in a Greek film, currently available with English subtitles.

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### General Objectives

1. To experience and read aloud from a Greek tragedy
2. To identify and explain dramatic conventions, particularly character flaw, literary foil, conflict, situational irony, and decorum
3. To envision discreet staging of multiple deaths
4. To enumerate varied images and allusions to Greek mythology
5. To evaluate constraints on females in a patriarchal society
6. To enumerate poetic devices that play a major role in the dialogue
7. To explain circumstances that heighten horror
8. To examine the structure of Greek drama
9. To locate and analyze examples of wrong-headedness
10. To characterize the moral purpose of classical drama

## Specific Objectives

1. To place *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone* in the canon of Greek tragedies
2. To explain the roles of sentry, guide, soldiers, oracle, and messenger
3. To discuss the importance of royalty in the plots
4. To account for Antigone's decision to break the law and Eurydice's and Haemon's suicides
5. To determine why Ismene and Antigone lack guidance
6. To analyze the anarchy that cost Polyneices his life
7. To explain why Creon chooses to dishonor his nephew's body
8. To discuss Sophocles's concept of a woman's place in the family and in a royal dynasty
7. To contrast Creon's relationships with nieces, son, wife, guard, prophet, the Athenian king, nephews, future daughter-in-law, and citizens
8. To predict the effect of events on the Theban dynasty
9. To isolate the theme of pride and its results in the lives of the characters
10. To discuss the tone of the choral speeches
11. To analyze types of family dysfunction
12. To account for reactions to Apollo's oracles
13. To determine the role of the supernatural
14. To characterize Jocasta's and Eurydice's sufferings
15. To assess the nature of Oedipus's struggle with opposing forces

## Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Sophocles's style, present the following terms and applications to the play:

**Character Name** a method of displaying or revealing character traits, attributes, or attitudes through the choice of symbolic names, which may contain a descriptive term, for example, "Swollen Foot," the translation of Oedipus's name to indicate the fearful situation of the exposed baby whose ankles had been pierced and tied together. Other translatable names in the play include Jocasta (shining moon), Haemon (skillful), Creon (ruler), Tiresias (he who delights in sights), Ismene (knowledgeable), Antigone (in the mother's place), and Laius (cattleman).

**Dilemma** a plot that depicts human characters in dire predicaments which they must resolve by making some

sacrifice. Oedipus must save his adoptive parents by leaving home; Antigone must choose between breaking the law of Thebes or disobeying a divine injunction. Creon must choose whether to bend his edict against the burial or enforce a law that will set the tone of social order. For selfish reasons, he chooses to quell anarchy, the political situation that caused Eteocles to kill Polyneices.

**Foil** a character whose presence in a literary work offsets or enhances the contrasting traits of another character, for example, Tiresias and Creon or Creon and Theseus. The foil serves as an opposite or as a standard by which another character is measured, a situation found in *Antigone*. Unlike Eteocles and Polyneices, Antigone must play the role of the dutiful sister, which she debates with Ismene. Unlike Creon, Antigone knows the cost of law-breaking, which she has observed from the death of her mother and self-blinding of her father for committing incest. Surrounded by foils, she truly stands alone.

**Hamartia** the missing of the mark, a Greek archery term that applies to the weakness or character flaw in the prominent, noble, or royal protagonist of a tragedy. Because of King Creon's stodgy insistence on retribution to the disobedient, he robs himself of family and of the respect of his son and subjects.

**Irony** an implied discrepancy between what is said or done and what is meant, as in Oedipus's hunt for a killer and his discovery that the killer is himself. Also ironic is his belief that he has escaped prophecy and eluded killing his father by leaving the two people he has always assumed were his natural parents. A physical irony is his demand to see the truth and his deliberate blinding when he finally knows the details of Laius's death.

**Tragedy** a serious drama in which the main character, usually a prominent, noble, or royal person, loses status or dies as a result of some human failing, which the Greeks called by the archery term hamartia, a missing of the mark. In the case of Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, human failing applies to the central character's wicked display of temper, his arrogance in thinking he can escape fate, and the resulting murder of Laius over a trivial matter. The overtones of Oedipus's downfall affect the entire family, particularly his suicidal wife and their two motherless girls.

## The Importance of Setting

The milieu of *Oedipus the King* is difficult to recreate for modern audiences. In the era Sophocles is depicting, Greece was not a nation, but a collection of small, disconnected kingdoms. The relationships of neighboring royalty were significant to people who lived largely isolated from each other. Long journeys were necessary, but perilous. Trips to Delphi were important to people who wanted to know the future. The route from Oedipus's home north over the Isthmus of Corinth to Thebes covered rocky terrain and out-of-the-way spots where danger lurked. On the day of the murder, Oedipus's reaction to Laius was not uncommon in a time when people had to be prepared for danger while traversing an unknown land. Another factor in the killing, identity, would have been obscured by the fact that royalty was not so different from ordinary people as it has been in past centuries.

The action of the play itself, like most Greek drama, is more psychological than physical. The characters stay at the court of Thebes while determining how to solve the murder of Laius and rid the area of suffering. Playgoers must imagine the setting in which the infant Oedipus lay pierced with a thong through his ankles after his mother abandoned him to die. Likewise, during the first play's denouement, Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus's blinding take place out of the audience's sight to preserve the decorum of the stage. Thus, there is little movement about the setting as the characters act out catastrophe.

The rule of decorum and the emphasis on royal characters limit settings in the remaining two plays. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Sophocles deliberately conceals the supernatural events surrounding Oedipus's death and burial and forces Theseus to keep it all secret. By revealing Creon threatening the aged wanderers and, in *Antigone*, at his royal palace interacting with two motherless nieces, Antigone and Ismene, the playwright particularizes the callousness of a king who ignores how others feel. The arrival of the sentry and his hesitance to explain how the law was broken derive more meaning from the intimidating trappings of a kingly palace, a place where guards must use caution in word and deed.

Sophocles makes words describe the offstage events. Polyneices summarizes in few words how he allies with Argos by a royal marriage and how he collects armies to march against Thebes. The sentry's testimony characterizes the setting in the field, where a sandstorm sweeps

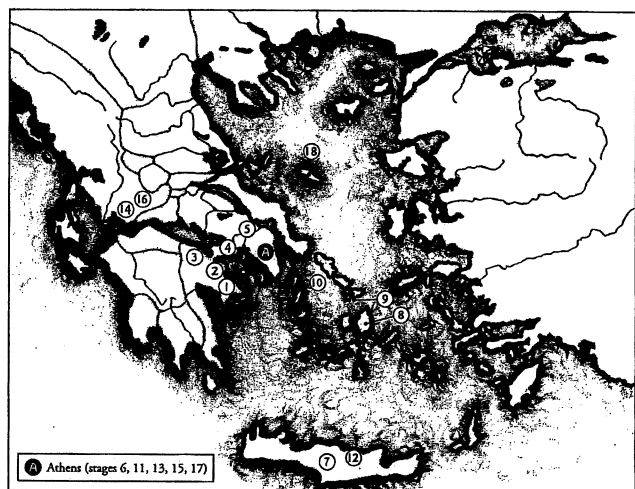
over the guards, who cluster on a hill away from the smell of the rotting corpse. Their dismay on finding the corpse buried suggests that they fear reporting a broken law to Creon.

When Antigone returns from her traditional task of anointing her brother's mangled remains, she leaves the bleak environment, stench of carrion, and stony-faced guards and returns to a stony king, her uncle. His pomposity, exacerbated by annoyance at her, suits a lordly setting that reminds him of his rule over Thebes. To hang onto power, he must prevent further anarchy, starting with his defiant niece.

As the scene shifts to a description of the rocky cave where Antigone hangs herself and Haemon chooses suicide over living without his beloved, the brief appearance of Eurydice softens the royal setting with a mother's perspective. For good reason, she chooses to kill herself by the altar, as though offering herself as propitiation to the gods who are angry at Creon's arrogance. As Creon realizes his loss of wife, son, and future daughter-in-law, the setting becomes a prison of inflexible law from which he asks to be led.

## Map of Greece

Source: *Voyages in Classical Mythology* by Mary Ellen Snodgrass, used with permission.



1. Troezen 2. Epidaurus 3. Corinth 4. Megera 5. Eleusis 6. Athens 7. Crete 8. Naxos  
9. Delos 10. Aegean Sea 11. Athens 12. Knossos 13. Athens 14. Calydon 15. Athens  
16. Aetolia 17. Athens 18. Scyros



## Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about the Theban plays, Sophocles, Greek drama and mythology, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

### Articles

Gillett, Grant, and Robin Hankey. "Oedipus the King: Temperament, Character, and Virtue," *Philosophy & Literature* 29, no. 2 (October 2005): 269-285.

Marlowe, Sam. "Antigone at Hell's Mouth," *Times* (5 November 2005).

### Audiocassette

*Antigone*, Pacemaker Classics  
*Oedipus Rex*, Harper Caedmon

### Books

*The Firebrand*  
*The King Must Die*  
*The Last of the Wine*  
*Pope Joan*

### CD-ROM

*DIScovering Authors*, Gale Group  
*"Favorite Greek Myths,"* The Writing Company

### Essay

Mary Ellen Snodgrass, "Sophocles" from *Greek Classics*  
Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"

### Internet

The Ancient Greek Theatre Page  
<http://anarchon.tripod.com/index/GREEKTH.html>.  
A Historical Chronology of Ancient Greece  
<http://www.cis.vt.edu/ClassicalStudies/Chronology.html>.  
Hotlist of Ancient Greece  
<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/listancientgr.html>.  
*Oedipus the King*  
<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/oedipus.htm>.

### Map

Map of Ancient Greece  
<http://library.advanced.org/10805/greekmap.html>.  
*Voyages in Classical Mythology*, Mary Ellen Snodgrass

### MultimediaKit

"Archetypes in Life, Literature, and Myth," The Writing Company  
*Mythology*, Filmic Archives

### Plays

*Antigone* (French)  
*An Enemy of the People*  
*J. B.*  
*King Lear*  
*The Lion in Winter*  
*Medea*  
*The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*

### Poems

"Demeter," Olga Broumas  
"The Destruction of Sennacherib," George Gordon, Lord Byron  
"Now Nobody Will Want to Listen to Songs" and "To the Muse," Anna Akhmatova  
"Ozymandias," Percy Bysshe Shelley  
"The Pomegranate," Eavan Boland  
"Ulysses," Alfred, Lord Tennyson  
The Wine of Cyprus, Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### Poster

"Greek Mythology," The Writing Company  
"Introducing Mythology," The Writing Company

### Reference

*The Aching Hearth: Family Violence in Life and Literature*, Sarah Munson Deats and Laretta Tallent Lenker  
*The Greek Way*, Edith Hamilton  
*A History of Greek Literature*, Albin Lesky  
*A History of the Ancient World*, Chester G. Starr  
*The Life of Greece*, Will Durant  
*Women of Classical Mythology*, Robert Bell

### Short Story

"Persephone," Meridel Le Sueur

### Videos/Films

*Art in Ancient Greece*, Filmic Archives  
*Bacchus, the God of Wine*, Filmic Archives  
*Henry V*  
*Homer's Mythology: Tracing a Tradition*, The Writing Company  
*The Lion in Winter*  
*Medea*, Filmic Archives  
*The Odyssey*  
*Phaedra*

## Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone* should include these aspects:

### Themes

- suffering
- prophecy
- puzzles
- family
- fate
- contention
- arrogance
- patriarchy
- dilemma
- audacity
- disobedience
- loss
- regret

### Motifs

- civic peace disrupted by a plague
- respect for a royal family
- the use of supernatural powers to solve a crime
- a family tragedy that has no solution
- self-imposed punishment
- civil war and its aftermath
- performing ancient family ritual
- a pattern of family disintegration
- discounting of prophecy

## Related Reading

Maxwell Anderson, *Anne of the Thousand Days*  
Jean Anouilh, *Andromache*  
Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* and *The Birds*  
Marion Zimmer Bradley, *The Mists of Avalon* and *The Firebrand*  
Donna Cross, *Pope Joan*  
Euripides, *The Trojan Women* and *Medea*  
John Gardner, *Grendel*  
James Goldman, *The Lion in Winter*  
Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler* or *A Doll's House*  
Robin Morgan, *The Burning Time*  
Mary Renault, *The King Must Die* and *The Last of the Wine*  
Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*  
William Shakespeare, *Othello* and *King Lear*  
Mary Stewart, *The Crystal Cave* and *The Hollow Hills*  
Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*  
T. H. White, *Once and Future King*  
August Wilson, *Fences*

## Media Versions of Sophocles's Oedipus Plays

### Audiocassette (abridged)

*Antigone*, Pacemaker Classics

### Audiocassette (unabridged)

*Antigone*, Harper Caedmon

*Oedipus Rex*, Harper Caedmon

### Audio CD

*King Oedipus*, Audite, 2001

### Audio Download

*Oedipus the King*, Naxos Audio Books

*Oedipus the King and the Nature of Greek Tragedy*,

Arnold L. Weinstein (lecture)

### Casebook

*Oedipus: A Folklore Casebook*, Lowell

Edmunds

### DVD

*Antigone: Rites of Passion*, 2001, starring

Bertram Ross

### French version

*Antigon*, Jean Anouilh

### Large Print

*Antigone*, Ulverscroft

### Video (subtitled)

*Antigone*, 1962, starring Irene Papas

*Oedipus*, 1967, directed by Pier Paolo

Pasolini

### Video Discussion

*Antigone*, Thomas Klise

## Sophocles's Surviving Works

*Ajax*, ca. 447 B. C.

*Antigone*, 442-441 B. C.

*The Trachinian Women*, ca. 409 B. C.

*Oedipus the King*, ca. 429 B. C.

*Electra*, ca. 409 B. C.

*Philoctetes*, 409 B. C.

*Oedipus at Colonus*, 401 B. C.

## Meaning Study

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the play. Explain each in context. Play and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. A procession of children, youths, and elders, all holding olive branches wreathed in white wool, are marshaled by a priest onto the palace steps and group themselves around the altar of Zeus. (*Oedipus the King*, pp. 3-4)

*(The posture of the suppliant recurs in ancient literature, designating the social distance between ruler and subjects or between human and god. Only by shedding pride do suppliants expect mercy or aid from the almighty.)*

2. For it was you, coming to the Cadmus capital,/Who disentrall'd us from the Sphinx (her greedy dues):/that ruthless sorceress who sang. (*Oedipus the King*, p. 6)  
*(The Sphinx of Thebes, a monster which bore the body of a lion and the head and torso of a woman, strangled passersby who could not answer the following riddle: What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening? Oedipus correctly answered "man." The riddle refers to stages of life in which humankind crawls, walks, and leans on a cane. Oedipus's reward was the throne of Thebes and marriage to Queen Jocasta.)*
3. It was no man asleep you woke—ah no!—/But one in bitter tears and one /perplexed in thought, found wandering./Who clutched the only remedy that came:/to send the son of Menoecus, Creon—/my own Jocasta's brother—/to the place Apollo haunts at Pythia/to learn what act of covenant of mine/could still redeem the state. (*Oedipus the King*, p. 7)  
*(The Pythia, the high priestess of Apollo's oracle at Delphi, attained great stature as a solace for sick and troubled suppliants who visited her shrine in hopes of finding solutions to their earthly complaints. She served as the god's mouthpiece and deliverer of answers to questions and prayers.)*
4. A weapon, quick!/Where is the brideless bride?/Find me that double breeding ground/where sown the mother, now has sown the son. (*Oedipus the King*, p. 70)  
*(Jocasta bewails the status of her two sons and two daughters, the offspring of her son/husband Oedipus, who is both the children's father and their brother.)*
5. But here comes our king, Theseus son of Aegeus,/bent upon your bidding. (*Oedipus at Colonus*, p. 120)  
*(Theseus has also endured family tragedy. Aegeus, the king of Athens, drowned himself when his son Theseus returned from a successful battle with the Minotaur on Crete. The king despaired because his son forgot to remove his black sail, a prearranged signal that his expedition was a failure. The body of water in which Aegeus died was named in his honor the Aegean Sea.)*
6. I've told you once, old man, no need to ask again;/nor shall I brag. But be sure of this:/Your

life is safe while any god saves mine. (*Oedipus at Colonus*, p. 156).

*(Theseus protects Oedipus because the king expects to receive a heavenly blessing on Athens if Oedipus ends his days in the city in peace and is buried there.)*

7. This stranger passing down/Through palisades of gloom/Toward those prairies of the dead/His stygian home. (*Oedipus at Colonus*, p. 174)  
*(Oedipus prepares for death, which the chorus mentions metaphorically as a passage over the Styx, a river that encircles Hades. The souls of the dead pay Charon, the boatman, for passage across the river with coins placed in the mouths or on the eyes of their corpses.)*
8. All's ordained past all denying. (*Oedipus at Colonus*, p. 185)  
*(A prevalent theme in Greek literature is the inevitability of fate. For all his suffering, Oedipus has no chance of avoiding the tragedy he lives. Likewise, Jocasta could not stop the crimes that the gods intended for her infant son.)*
9. You'll not catch me putting traitors up on pedestals/beside the loyal and true. (*Antigone*, p. 199)  
*(Shortly after a threat to his power, Creon reveals his uncertainty of rule by fearing he will lose the throne of Thebes. Disturbing his serenity are mutters of treachery.)*
10. Insolent pup! A woman's lackey! (*Antigone*, p. 224)  
*(Creon's macho behavior indicates a major difference between him and his son Haemon. For Haemon's devotion to his fiancée Antigone, Creon offers only insults.)*

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Defend your answers by referring to passages in the plays.

### Plot

1. Explain why Oedipus needs supernatural help. *(In Oedipus Rex, as the priest of Zeus describes, Thebes suffers a pestilence that threatens the citizens and its harvests. Oedipus, like other leaders of his time, seeks the aid of Apollo, the god of prophecy. The king sends Creon to Delphi to petition the Pythia for a solution to the disease that saps the kingdom. When Oedipus learns that someone in the kingdom must be banished to rid the land of blood guilt for Laius's death, the king presses for answers from Tiresias, the blind seer.)*

*The role of prophet and diviner was standard in ancient times. Kings often kept men like Tiresias on retainer to read and interpret natural signs, such as patterns in the flights of birds or unusual peals of thunder. After receiving information about the future, Oedipus discovers that he must look to the past for a way to cleanse Thebes. In examining his destiny, he discovers that both he and Jocasta tried to flee an ill fate. She failed to rid herself of a son doomed to kill his father; Oedipus, who faced the likelihood that he would murder his father, fled Polybus and Meropé, his loving adoptive parents. In all innocence, he committed the crime that caused the pestilence, then set about reconstructing his infancy and childhood to fill in the blanks.)*

**Character**

2. How does Oedipus reveal the hardships of his life? *(According to Theseus, Oedipus does not have to recount his life story. The wandering blind man is already a known figure in ancient Greece for the sorrows that have dogged his existence. Already deprived of his wife/mother Jocasta and the kingdom of Thebes, he has deliberately blinded himself, ironically upon facing the truth about his crime of killing Laius, the former king of Thebes. Doomed to exile, Oedipus wanders the land, led by Ismene and Antigone, the two sisters/daughters whom his punishment deprives of a normal life.*

*When Oedipus arrives in Colonus at the sacred grove of the Eumenides, he awaits an easeful death and the end of his earthly wretchedness. In revealing the hardships of his life to Theseus, Oedipus gains a friend and supporter who promises to be his shield and protector. However, there is nothing more to threaten Oedipus. The peal of thunder that calls him to death is a welcome sign that the gods have ended their multiple torments. Embracing the summons, Oedipus leads Theseus to the secret place where the old man's life and troubles end.)*

**Conflict**

3. Why does Creon choose to execute his nieces? *(Creon has survived a threat to kingship. Apparently insecure on the throne that he seized after Oedipus went into exile, Creon feared for his realm when Polyneices and Eteocles mustered the Seven against Thebes in a doomed rebellion. With the two sons of Oedipus dead, the king/uncle turns his attention to the remaining two family members, Ismene and Antigone, who have already suffered an unusual amount of ill fortune for girls so young in years. He is shocked and outraged to learn that the deliberate disobedience against his edict concerning burial for Polyneices comes from a girl, Antigone, who is both his niece and future daughter-in-law.*

*Antigone's strength and character infuse Ismene with the courage to confess that she, too, helped to break the law by sprinkling holy wine and dust over Polyneices's carrion remains. The defiance of the remaining two children of Oedipus and*

*Jocasta presses Creon to reconsider his edict requiring death for the two lawbreakers. In a partial softening of the law, the king exonerates Ismene, but preserves his command, setting an example before his subjects of even-handed laws that affect both royalty and his subjects. In view of Antigone's royal birth, he rescinds the order for public stoning by having her immured in a stone vault, a death that will arrive naturally when she starves or suffocates.)*

**Action**

4. Describe how Haemon faces his adamant father. *(Haemon appears to delight Creon as an obedient son willing to observe his father's example to learn the course of law issued from an autocratic ruler to the people of Thebes. As events turn lethal, Haemon realizes that unbending royal power can have devastating results. Haemon abandons his dream of marriage to Antigone and, instead, follows her to their mutual death chamber.*

*In a glimpse of the kind of leader he might have made, Haemon defies his father. Too late to rescue his beloved, Haemon turns to face Creon, the hard-handed father and king who forced Antigone into a capital crime. Angered to the point of madness, Haemon menaces his father with a sword, thus threatening to commit both regicide and the murder of his parent, the crimes that doomed Oedipus. A pathetic character with no viable options, Haemon chooses to stab himself in the side and die clasping his lost love in a final embrace.)*

**Character Development**

5. Describe the change in Oedipus from king to homeless old man. *(In his first appearance in the trilogy, Oedipus is a strong, self-important king, strutting about in his efforts to rid the kingdom of the impurity that causes a pestilence. Jocasta urges him to cease probing, but his curiosity about the past is overwhelming. As the light shines more fully on the abandoned infant with heels pierced and bound by a thong, Oedipus is fascinated to play out the additional details and to determine how his departure from Meropé and Polybus placed him directly in the way of ill fate.*

*In full realization of his crime, Oedipus rashly rips out his eyes, as though ending his view of a terrible past. Blind and helpless, he falls into the care of his two pathetic sisters/daughters, the former princesses of Thebes, who are condemned to wander with their despised father in a pathless exile. When Oedipus returns to the stage in Oedipus at Colonus, he has rid his heart of some of the ardor and vengefulness of his youth. More content with a grievous destiny, he longs for an end to earthly trials. With a touch of grace, he promises a blessing on Theseus in exchange for a secret burial on holy ground. In his final moments, Oedipus speaks the words of an old man who has lived through*

unspeakable horror and loss and wants only the peace of the grave as his lot.)

**Structure**

6. Explain how Tiresias alters the execution scene of Antigone.

*(At the trilogy's end, Creon persists in his plan to execute Antigone for breaking his law. Tiresias, the blind seer led by a boy, wanders onto the stage. Unbidden, Tiresias offers advice about the human dilemma of teetering on the edge of fate. He identifies screaming birds at the altar as a disturbance in nature similar to the pestilence that once threatened Thebes. As a royal prince lies rotting on the plain, the putrefaction spread by dogs and carrion birds defiles gifts to the gods. For this reason, Tiresias believes that the gods turn deaf ears on humankind.)*

*Tiresias is in a position to offer advice. In a climate of heavenly disorder, he reminds Creon that a king is no different from other men who err. The old seer puts into strong terms the law concerning burial: What victory could a citizen win by burying Polyneices. Creon wraps himself in pious rage and accuses Tiresias of selling his prophecies. When the king lords rank over the seer, Tiresias retorts that he secured the throne from Creon. Pressured to the extent of his patience, Tiresias foretells the suffering that Creon must face within his own household.*

*Tiresias's metaphor phrases Creon's double crime against Oedipus's children in stark terms. Antigone, a royal princess, has gone to a living grave. Polyneices, her brother, lies dead and unburied. Warning that the Furies stand ready to punish Creon with the powers of hell, Tiresias embroiders the scenario with terrifying details—days of wailing and curses hurled at the king. As the elderly seer wanders on his way, the chorus echoes their unease that Creon may have gone too far in exercising kingly power.)*

**Motivation**

7. Explain why Theseus intervenes for Oedipus.  
*(The powerless old Theban who arrives at the sacred grove in Colonus lures Theseus, a pious, humanistic king who knows the stories about Oedipus's blindness that circulate through Hellas. Before the newcomer can ask for aid, Theseus extends agape—the Greek term for grace, the gift that doesn't have to be earned or deserved. He displays compassion for Oedipus and asks how he can be of service. A surprising contrast to Creon, who hugs power like precious goods, Theseus is faithful to the Greek concept of the host-guest relationship, which requires charity and good will.*

*Like a generous host, Theseus humbles himself as a simple mortal and listens to Oedipus's offering of a blessing on Athens. To Theseus, it seems odd that a man so bereft of worldly goods and*

*power can benefit the king of Athens. As Oedipus states his situation, he impresses on Theseus the divine command that the king of Attica give refuge to the old man and keep his promise about an honorable burial. Moved to accept the arrangement, Theseus immediately confers citizenship on the stateless nomad, making him a permanent charge to shield and protect. In answer to Oedipus's qualms, Theseus displays his piety and altruism by declaring Oedipus's arrival as the gift of Apollo.)*

**Interpretation**

8. Explain why the Oedipus cycle has survived as a cornerstone of world literature.  
*(Greater than a single tragedy or classic drama, Sophocles's Oedipus cycle brings to a close the harrowing destiny of an ill-fated man, Oedipus Rex. Once king by chance, he loses all to that same destiny and wanders sightless and dependent for the rest of his days. To the playgoer or reader, the story of Oedipus's twisted life is a pattern against which to compare other literary sufferings, from the trials of Job to Thomas Hardy's wretched Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, from Shakespeare's King Lear to Thornton Wilder's Willy Loman. As a touchstone, the life story of Oedipus and his doomed family sets in stark terms how easily the slide from power drops the proud king to the pit of despair.*

*If Oedipus's story had ended with suffering, it would never have gained its place among other world dramas. Sophocles carefully delineates the old man's death and his wise acceptance of catastrophe as a lot not to be avoided but embraced as Apollo's will. Acknowledging that all life recedes into a frail corpse in a grave, Oedipus takes on the glory of martyrdom as he extends to Theseus and the kingdom of Athens a touch of blessing.*

*The trilogy can't end with the old king's demise. The failings of his offspring extend into one more generation the unwise choices that lead one son to exile his older brother and impel Polyneices's to lead an army against Thebes to reclaim the doomed dynasty vacated by his father. In death, the two boys leave two sisters to live out the remaining anguish of the cycle. With some of the spunk of her father and her uncle, Antigone chooses her battles by defying Creon and performing basic sprinklings of ritual wine and prayers over Polyneices's remains. A simple ceremony, yet unlawful, it nets her a death sentence—public stoning, the same execution exacted against thieves and criminals. Too late, Ismene opts to join Antigone in open defiance of the over-proud Creon, but by that point, no one takes Ismene seriously. The family of Oedipus and Jocasta winds down to three dead children and one surviving daughter, who lacks the character of her forebears to make the family line great once more.)*

**Comparative Literature**

9. How does Oedipus's death parallel that of Moses?  
*(Just as Oedipus walks with divinity in his final hours in the sacred grove at Colonus, Moses, the biblical leader of his people climbs the mountain to talk face to face with God. Like Oedipus, Moses, the outsider from Ur, is a failed leader who has displayed pride, arrogance, disobedience, and a decline in faith while leading the Hebrews out of bondage in Egypt. Significant to the comparison of leaders is Moses's fateful sin, cited in Numbers 20:1, when he raises his rod to strike a rock.*

*Punishment for the two sinners is similar. Oedipus, denied the kingdom of Thebes that he besmirches with impurity, must wander the earth until death calls him. For Moses, failure to comply with divine command costs him the Promised Land, to which he has led his followers but cannot himself enter. Robbed of earthly glory, both men look grimly toward death as the end that awaits all humankind. In both stories, the power of god and fate ends dramatic stories of men who rise high and suffer a precipitous descent back to common soil in token of their failings.)*

**Language**

10. Discuss the sermon that Haemon delivers to the older generation.  
*(Sophocles puts into the mouth of Haemon a suitable comeuppance for Creon. At first, the boy vows that he wants to please Creon. Haemon implores his father to bend enough to express his humanity. Haemon warns that his father is wrong to believe himself incapable of wrong. With some gift for words, the young prince describes the fate of trees that refuse to bend to the flood and are ripped from their moorings. With some intuition about his father's faults, Haemon urges that Creon give up anger and let himself feel the peril that awaits the family.*

*The wisdom of young Haemon presages a king in the making, a boy who has observed his father's failings long enough to identify the fate that awaits a man who refuses to listen to reason. Creon, who is angry that his own son schools him in decision-making, rejects Haemon's insistence that the city of Thebes bears no grudge against Antigone for her actions. The argument develops heat as Creon refuses to be catechized by a boy. In reference to Antigone's threat to Thebes, Haemon retorts that tyranny destroys the voices of Theban citizens.*

*When Haemon ends their public brawl by accusing his father of impiety, Creon is beyond patience. He tongue-lashes Haemon for his love and devotion to a woman. The king works himself into such a frenzy that he threatens to kill Antigone before Haemon's eyes. The face-off ends with Haemon in control of his emotions and Creon beside himself. By the end, three deaths reduce the king to self-abasement. He declares himself guilty of destroying his own family.)*

**How Language Works**

Sophocles generates appropriate and self-revelatory comments for his characters in dramatic situations.

1. In a controlling metaphor of sight and blindness, Tiresias confronts Oedipus for mocking the old seer's handicap: "I say that you and your most dearly loved/Are wrapped together in a hideous sin, blind to the horror of it."
2. The chorus of *Oedipus Rex*, noting the fall of a great man, describes the downfall that is inherent in human failings: "Oh the generations of man!/His life is vanity and nothingness."
3. In total abasement, Oedipus finds the strength in *Oedipus at Colonus* to confront Creon as though he were a godless snake: "You brazen hypocrite! You'd stop at nothing./Twisting every righteous motive to your ends!/You'd trap me, would you, in your cruel coils a second time?"
4. Antigone, over-proud of her decision to smash Creon's edict, lords over her sister the sanctity of the crime: "There's your chance to prove your worth,/or else a sad degeneracy."
5. When Creon faces Eurydice's death, he speaks simple lines devoid of his previous bombast: "High and mighty words and ways/Are flogged to humbleness, till age,/Beaten to its knees, at last is wise."

**Across the Curriculum**

**Law**

1. Compose wills for Haemon, Oedipus, Eteocles, Antigone, Eurydice, Jocasta, Laius, and Polyneices. Suggest how they would have left their worldly goods to express changes of heart toward family and loyalty to the realm.
2. State a formal law refusing burial rites to rebels and traitors of Thebes.

**Religion**

1. Explain how Greek drama grew out of the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility, and how theatrical companies added masks, scenery, dance, and choral ode to speaking parts.

- Using Tiresias as a model, create an extended definition of *seer*. Explain how his knowledge of the past and future increases his value as an adviser to royalty, yet makes him a pariah.

#### Literature

- Using *Oedipus the King* as an example, compose an extended definition of tragedy or tragic hero. Characterize the importance of a character flaw to catastrophes.
- List and explain mythological, literary, historical, and geographical allusions in the three plays. For example, refer to comments about nymphs, Cephisus, Cronus, Persephone, Poseidon, Aegeus, Ares, Aphrodite, Tartarus, Hephaestus, Delphi, Cithaeron, the Sphinx, Labdacus, Polydorus, Hades, Eumenides, Pythia, Cadmus, Agenor, Zeus, Athena, Artemis, Dionysus, oracle, and Apollo.
- Contrast several translations of a major speech in one of the plays, such as lines describing human happiness, Theseus's welcome to Oedipus, or Haemon's denunciation of his father's rule. Note how line length, rhythm, diction, and stress vary in the different versions.
- Read or view a more modern tragedy, for example, Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Henrik Ibsen's *A Man of the People*, Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, August Wilson's *Fences* or *The Piano Lesson*, Archibald MacLeish's *J. B.*, or Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. In an oral composition, compare modern methods of playwriting with those of Sophocles.
- Read *The Birds*, *Lysistrata*, or another of Aristophanes's comedies. Analyze how his subject matter, action, style, tone, and purpose differ from those of Sophocles.
- Lead a debate on the value of interlinking plots in the triad. Explain how the mounting tragedies in one family impact Ismene, the remaining princess. What effect do multiple tragedies have on Creon, the ruler who survives his family's losses?

#### Geography

- Create a bulletin board contrasting settings described or mentioned in the text. Include Corinth, Athens, Colonus, Phocis, Dirce, Arcadia,

Aetolia, Daulia, Pelops, Delphi, Doria, Cithaeron, Cephisus, Sipylus, Sardis, Ismenus, Argos, Eleusis, Delos, Attica, Thebes, Thrace, Lycea, Cyllene, Parnassus, Helicon, Ister, Phasis, Bosphorus, Polar, Peloponnesus, Edonia, Phrygia, Etna, and Thessalia. Using a variety of dramatic settings, trace Oedipus's life from the ominous oracle, birth to Jocasta and Laius through his adoption, kingship, wanderings, and secret death and burial.

- Compose a list of Greek plays and epics and their settings, as with *Oedipus the King* in Thebes, Homer's *The Iliad* in Troy, Aristophanes's *The Birds in Heaven*, and Homer's *The Odyssey*, which travels about the Mediterranean world before concluding at Pylos. Note whether the places are real or imaginary, particularly the entrance to the underworld. Locate real settings on a map along with the literary titles. Place a star on Sophocles's birthplace.

#### Psychology and Ethics

- Propose personality types for the roles of Oedipus, Creon, Tiresias, Ismene, Haemon, and Jocasta. Explain why temperament and demeanor enhance the drama of a royal family trying to solve an old, but troubling crime. Note the clash of points of view concerning the ritual burial of Polyneices. Propose body language to display innocence, determination, and vengeance.
- Apply the term "coming to knowledge" to the final scene of each tragedy. Explain the price paid by Oedipus and his wife and children, who were once the royal family of Thebes. Determine why Oedipus's punishment benefits Creon, yet leads to Creon's multiple sorrows.
- Discuss the psychological problems faced by couples in a royal marriage. Compose advice to Jocasta concerning Oedipus's past history and his intention to solve the riddle of the Sphinx. Discuss how these emotional drives place stress on their marriage.
- Determine the evolving relationship between Creon and his two young nieces, Ismene and Antigone. Summarize how this strained kinship develops into additional suffering and tragedy.
- Lead a discussion of suicide. Explain why Jocasta, Eurydice, Antigone, and Haemon choose to end their lives at crucial points in the action. Contrast their deaths with those of Polyneices, Eteocles,

Laius, Polybus, and Oedipus.

6. Compose a lecture on emotional disturbance as characterized by the Eumenides. List home diagnosis, complications, and treatment for severe traumas like those that Ismene and Creon suffer.

**Math and Computers**

1. With a group, list and explain terms that express these important names and concepts: recompense, scapegoat, batten, circumspect, primeval, abetting, alliance, diplomacy, duplicity, trochaic, iambic, *Requiescat in pace*, caparisoned, jeopardize, lamentation, Tartarus, mongering, order-in-council, Argive, interdict, unsepulchered, desecrate, gadding, Bacchantes, panoplies, Pallas, Pythian oracle, and Sphinx.
2. With a group, design a brochure, website, frieze, or poster series detailing the distances from Thebes to Corinth, Colonus, Athens, and Delphi. Use estimated speeds of foot travel to determine how long it took messengers and other pedestrians to reach their destinations over rocky terrain.
3. Use historical data to determine the height, width, and depth of the Theater of Dionysus in Athens. Include figures on how many people could sit to view a play. Contrast these figures with those for other theaters throughout the ancient world, particularly in Epidaurus, Syracuse, Taormina, Rome, Arles, and Pompeii.

**Research**

1. Outline the life of Tiresias. Explain why he has suffered misery and why he is a worthy choice of adviser to kings.
2. Determine why and how city officials awarded playwrights for their work.
3. Write an encyclopedia entry on suicide. Add details that explain why a disillusioned spouse, lover, niece, or parent would end life rather than survive tragedy in the family.

**Journalism**

1. Arrange an on-camera interview with Tiresias or Theseus. Have someone assume the role of the blind prophet or the Athenian king; have another person be a reporter. Discuss with Tiresias how he feels about his part in the tragedy of Oedipus's family or ask Theseus why he pities Oedipus.

2. Write a newspaper review of the City Dionysia, the great drama festival of ancient Athens. Describe the arrangement of presentations as well as the competition and prizes.

**Economics and Finance**

1. Make a comparative chart of monies used in ancient Greece. Propose a two-sided coin to honor Oedipus and Laius, Apollo and Pythia, or Theseus and Creon. Suggest reasons why few mortal women appear on coins from the period.

**Social Studies**

1. Using desktop publishing or other media, illustrate class differences of the royalty, messengers, prophet, sentry, ladies-in-waiting, priest, boy, and servant classes as well as wanderers, warriors, and shepherds. How do stage roles dignify nobles?
2. Lead a panel discussion of the significance of the term "king" in the time of Laius, Oedipus, Creon, Polybus, and Theseus. Determine why the priest, Pythia, and Tiresias possess a form of power more encompassing than that of royalty.
3. View murals, portraits, pottery, illuminations, bas reliefs, coins, and other art forms typifying the lives of Greeks of the classical period. Comment on the interplay of people of different social, educational, and professional backgrounds at a variety of activities, including dining, traveling by land or sea, walking with children, welcoming royal guests, celebrating, protecting the king and his family, and arming for battle.

**Science and Health**

1. Explain in a theme how a hasty blinding with a sharp object could endanger Oedipus's life from infection, blood loss, or shock. Note the adaptation necessary to sudden loss of vision, particularly use of aural and tactile clues.
2. Give an oral report on the genetic weaknesses of daughters born to Oedipus and his mother Jocasta. Include additional possibilities of abnormality from Jocasta's marriage to Laius, her distant cousin.
3. List difficulties for a messenger in ancient Greece, particularly fatigue, sunstroke, thirst, and the danger of falling, being waylaid by highwaymen, or



angering royalty by delivering unfavorable messages or such disturbing news as the threat of war or the arrival of an adversary.

#### Language

1. Summarize the general and specific meanings of "plague" over time, including the seven plagues of Egypt in Moses's time and the Black Death. Explain the common fear that contagion is a punishment or curse hurled down from heaven by an angry deity.
2. Choose a series of lines from the plays to illustrate Sophocles's skill with poetry, as with "A wise man is flexible, has much to learn without a loss of dignity," "A single person pure of heart, I think, can make atonement for a thousand sinners," and "The looter has been looted, the trapper's in the trap, and stolen goods soon spoil."
3. Explain Creon's last speech. Why does he consider himself weak and foolish? Why does the chorus consider such humbling essential to a person who lives unwisely up to old age? Explain in what way Creon is now wise.

#### Art, Costume Design, and Music

1. Use desktop publishing, plaster of paris, masks, puppets, batik, fabric banners, or other artistic forms to create a gallery of dramatic representations of the characters in the play. Form families into groups, e. g. Creon and Eurydice with Haemon.
2. List dramatic scenes from the play that would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts, particularly the hanging scenes, Antigone's disobedience, the sound of thunder before Oedipus's death, Theseus's welcome of Oedipus to Athens, Oedipus's departure from Thebes, the gathering of seven armies, flashbacks of the murder at the crossroads, the arrival of messengers, Polyneices's war on Thebes, Creon's pride, and Oedipus's blinding.
3. Use desktop publishing or other artistic forms to create a handbill that will catch the eye of prospective audiences of a current reproduction of *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, or *Antigone*. Choose an illustration that intrigues the reader to see the play and learn how it ends, such as tragic

masks picturing Oedipus, Jocasta, and Antigone. Emphasize action, emotion, and contrast in your drawing.

4. Select instrumental, choral, or solo vocal music to delineate the contrast between hopeful scenes, murder, suicide, city uproar, regret, suffering, triumph, loss of a child, rebellion, piety, anticipation, and prophecy.
5. Propose scenes for a mural to illustrate the triad's interconnected plots. Begin with the search for a cure to the pestilence and end with Creon's loss of wife, son, and future daughter-in-law.
6. On paper plates or cardboard, sketch masks to be used by the actors at a high point of one of Sophocles's plays. Emphasize the weaknesses and emotional response of each character in the facial expressions, for example, Ismene's study of her sister during Antigone's confession of disobeying Creon's law.

#### Drama and Speech

1. With a small group, discuss the ancient philosophy of the golden mean, which the Romans stated as "Nothing in excess." How does this trilogy demonstrate the wisdom of the aphorism?
2. Compose an extended definition of drama in which you explain the following aspects: character, setting, plot, theme, tone, mood, aside, tension, strophe, epilogue, soliloquy, monologue, climax, chorus, dilemma, conflict, literary foils, motivation, tragedy, rising action, and denouement.
3. Contrast the rhythm and impact of various styles of rhetoric, including ode, paean, chant, dialogue, lament, and speech. Determine how the chorus contrasts the actors' lines and why these poetic remarks are important moral messages in Greek drama.
4. Draw a floorplan of the theatre at Epidaurus. Label the seats of the priests, altar, theatron, orchestra, skene, proskene, and parados. Place actors for the final scene of *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, or *Antigone*.

**Composition**

1. Compose a short scene in which Oedipus returns from visiting the oracle at Delphi and bids farewell to Polybus and Merope or a scene in which Creon and Ismene console each other after the deaths of the rest of their family. Try to maintain the control and dignified verse style of Sophocles.
2. Compose a guided tour of contrasting settings in the play, particularly Oedipus's burial scene, Antigone's immurement, Polyneices's burial, the crossroads where Laius died, the shepherd's discovery of an abandoned infant, Creon's palace, Polyneices at Poseidon's altar, the battlefield, or the sacred grove at Colonus.
3. Write a letter in which you assume the identity of an ordinary Greek citizen of the fifth century, B. C. Express your feelings about a day you spent at the outdoor theatre. Describe the play you saw, its meaning, and the audience's response to it. Comment on the role of the chorus in differentiating between right and wrong behavior.

**Education**

1. Compose an introduction to classical Greek drama for use in the classroom. Explain how Sophocles's tragic method impacts modern dramatic scenes. Write extended definitions of ode, strophe, envoi, myth, comedy, satire, dithyramb, and tragedy. Include examples of each genre from ancient and modern literature.

**Alternate Assessment**

1. List in chronological order and describe significant events connected with the two troubled families. Mention Polyneices's death in combat, the murder of Laius, the disappearance of Oedipus, Tiresias's predictions, Jocasta's suicide, Oedipus's blindness, Megareus's self-sacrifice, civil war, Creon's losses, Polybus and Merope's adoption of a son, Oedipus's departure from his adoptive parents, Antigone's condemnation to death, Haemon's loss of a fiancée, Theseus's kindness to the exile, a stranger's arrival of the altar in Athens, and Eurydice's suicide.
2. List events from the plays that express strong attitudes toward kinship, love, vengeance, obedience, piety, law, women, anarchy, and loss. Indicate what you think is Sophocles's personal philosophy on each subject.
3. Compose brief definitions of drama, tragedy, and decorum as they apply to *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*. What changes in the cycle would end multiple sufferings?
4. Summarize scenes that depict familial conflict, particularly Eurydice's suicide, Ismene's disapproval of Antigone's decision, Oedipus's anger at Polyneices, Eteocles's killing of his brother, Creon's denunciation of Haemon's fiancée, Haemon's disillusion with his father, Antigone's challenge of her uncle's law, Jocasta's despair at her unintentional incest, and Megareus's decision to sacrifice himself.

## Vocabulary

Complete each of the sentences with pairs of words from the list below. You will have answers left over when you finish.

blasphemous/woebegone  
clement/godhead  
elucidator/pedestal  
harried/banishment  
hedged/sovereignty  
paeon/xanthic  
progeny/menaces  
replete/spinsterhood  
scions/prowess  
unaffrontable/averted

blatant/impiety  
dirge/ensanguined  
emissary/reft  
hatched/scruple  
intuitive/didactic  
pricked/renegade  
ravaging/dauntless  
reprobate/loggerheads  
spurn/overtures  
wiles/cavil

1. Once a king, all \_\_\_\_\_ in by constraint, how could I suit myself with power and \_\_\_\_\_ as now?
2. No, they cared nothing: but watched me \_\_\_\_\_ from my home, my \_\_\_\_\_ proclaimed.
3. No one from here, would ever have pushed into this virgin plot of the \_\_\_\_\_ maidens, whose very name sends shivers, whom we pass with \_\_\_\_\_ eyes.
4. Some \_\_\_\_\_ maybe from heaven caome; or was the adamantine floor of the dead gently \_\_\_\_\_ for him with love?
5. Many a man is \_\_\_\_\_ to anger by a \_\_\_\_\_ son.
6. You \_\_\_\_\_! At open \_\_\_\_\_ with your father!
7. Come, great mystic, Tiresias— \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ master of the finite and the infinite.
8. The thing had \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ in my mind which grew so deep it made me steal away from home to Delphi, to the oracle.
9. Look on this Oedipus, the mighty and once masterful: \_\_\_\_\_ of the riddle, envied on his \_\_\_\_\_ of fame.
10. How could we \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of such a friend.

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Identification (20 points)

Identify the following characters.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. regrets Megareus's death.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. clutches the corpse of Antigone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. forbids the burial of a traitor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. hangs herself while wearing gold brooches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. accuses Haemon of supporting Antigone's rebellion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. calls on the wine god to rid Thebes of its disease.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. tries to take part of the blame for Antigone's crime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. calls for tools and speed to save Antigone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. welcomes an exile to Athens.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. kills Eteocles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. recognizes the stranger at Poseidon's altar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. faces Oedipus at the crossroads.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. locates an abandoned child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. blames Oedipus for making his daughter a spinster.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. welcomes thunder.

### Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- \_\_\_ 1. Tiresias responds to the omen of screaming birds.
- \_\_\_ 2. Creon comes to Colonus to force Oedipus back to Thebes.
- \_\_\_ 3. Creon promises stoning to anyone who breaks the law.
- \_\_\_ 4. Ismene gallops to Colonus to warn her father of Creon's law.
- \_\_\_ 5. A messenger reports the death of Polybus at Corinth.
- \_\_\_ 6. Eurydice is not in favor of Haemon's engagement to a rebel.
- \_\_\_ 7. Haemon offers to accompany Antigone to the execution site.
- \_\_\_ 8. Tiresias tells Oedipus how to answer the riddle of the Sphinx.
- \_\_\_ 9. Oedipus violates a sacred sanctuary.
- \_\_\_ 10. Jocasta regrets that her daughters will wander with a blind father.

## Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

### Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

Name the character who makes these comments.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. You moved me from my seat, you must— by all the gods—protect me now.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Stranger, see what you've brought upon yourself! By birth and race you ought to know much better.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. There is no way to tell the character and mettle of a man until you've seen him govern.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. He never gave you life, no more than I.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. You insult us; you insult your very race and native land.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. There ain't no mark of pick or mattock, ground's all 'ard, unbroken.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. No marriage I could make would ever match the good of your abiding counsel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I'm just not made to war against the state.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Her poor remains still in the house, bury them—what tomb you wish.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. As eldest son I claimed my sovereign birthright to your throne.

### Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Account for multiple misfortunes in the household of Polybus, Laius, Oedipus, and Creon.
2. Defend Antigone's decision to break a law.
3. Compare Creon, Oedipus, Jocasta, and Eurydice in their response to bad news.
4. Express Sophocles's attitude toward prophecy.
5. Describe the circumstances that precede Oedipus's arrival at the sacred sanctuary.

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Choose the answer that best completes each statement below. Place the letter of your response in the blank at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. After Antigone confesses,  
A. Creon chooses to ignore Ismene's role in the crime.  
B. Creon charges Ismene with being an accomplice.  
C. the guard claims he did not see the girl at the burial site.  
D. Haemon pleads for her dismissal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A messenger announces that  
A. Jocasta committed suicide in front of the king.  
B. a whirlwind has hidden the corpse in dust.  
C. Polybus is dead.  
D. Creon killed Polyneices and Eteocles in battle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Creon doubts the guard's words and blames him for  
A. taking a bribe.  
B. siding with Antigone.  
C. covering the corpse with dust.  
D. disobeying the decree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Ismene reveals  
A. danger to Thebes.  
B. doubts that the stranger is her brother.  
C. sympathy for Jocasta and Oedipus.  
D. Theseus's reason for welcoming Oedipus to Colonus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Antigone explains to her sister that  
A. she can never marry as long as her father lives.  
B. no one can defy the gods without punishment.  
C. Polyneices is not allowed a decent burial.  
D. their uncle has threatened to stone Oedipus if he returns to Thebes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The token that indicates Oedipus's death is  
A. the oracle at Delphi.  
B. bird sounds.  
C. lack of fire on the sacrifices.  
D. thunder.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Tiresias predicts that  
A. no one will locate Oedipus's grave.  
B. Megareus must die.  
C. Ismene and Antigone will wander with the blind father.  
D. the Furies will repay Creon for his acts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Creon declares that  
A. Tiresias is lying about the Eumenides.  
B. women must be forced to obey.  
C. Theseus has no right welcoming the exile to Colonus.  
D. the chorus is overstating the case for Polyneices's burial.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Creon brags to Thebans that  
A. he has killed the seven who warred on the city.  
B. he will allow no one to be an exception before the law.  
C. Haemon is a loyal son and heir to the throne.  
D. he has ousted the man who brought pestilence to Thebes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Tiresias boldly predicts  
A. that Antigone will wander with Oedipus.  
B. Jocasta's suicide.  
C. that evil will befall Creon.  
D. the oracle that will save Thebes from suffering.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Before his death, Haemon  
A. accuses his father of making a mistake.  
B. tries to stop Antigone from confessing her disobedience.  
C. bids farewell to Eurydice.  
D. apologizes to his father for disrespect.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. In the tomb, Creon sees  
A. how Eurydice killed herself.  
B. Haemon embracing Antigone's body.  
C. the guard cremating the corpse.  
D. Ismene begging Antigone to change her mind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Before Eurydice dies,  
A. she begs Creon to pardon his nieces.  
B. Creon orders her to say no more about Megareus.  
C. her slave women report that she accuses Creon of being a weak king.  
D. she blames Creon for two deaths.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The chorus reminds the audience that  
A. human law comes before oracles and prophecies.  
B. Tiresias deserves respect and obedience.  
C. Creon must stop rebellion in Thebes to protect its citizens.  
D. arrogance is a sin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Creon declares that there is no more evil institution than  
A. fortunetelling.  
B. his own family.  
C. money.  
D. royalty.

## Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

### Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match parts of quotations. Place the letter of your response in the blank at left.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| _____ 1. I am the one who puts                             | A. when all the kingly sway can be enjoyed without?                              |
| _____ 2. I dunno who darned done it neither                | B. and I make do with less.  |
| _____ 3. Who would chose uneasy dreams to don a crown      | C. if she can flout authority and walk away unscathed.                           |
| _____ 4. I come with a gift:                               | D. this fearless Argos in the field against the state of Thebes.                 |
| _____ 5. Such a pregnant rush of light                     | E. in accents that will bring him little joy.                                    |
| _____ 6. Creon is burying one                              | F. never comes without some meaning.   |
| _____ 7. Oh, she's the man, not I                          | G. distress to bring it on a friend.   |
| _____ 8. Home at last,                                     | H. that place you must not tell to any living being.                             |
| _____ 9. And I myself unhelped shall walk before you there | I. where Polyneices lay abandoned still—all mauled by dogs.                      |
| _____ 10. Well, there was a murder, yes,                   | J. so it in't fair to make me take the rap.                                      |
|  | K. but done by brigands in another land.   |
|  | L. to find myself called traitor; traitor to my town, to you, and to my friends. |
|  | M. this my battered body.  |
|  | N. not wed, no broken spell.   |
|  | O. to desecrate the other.   |

### Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill-in the word that completes each statement below. Place your responses in the blanks provided.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ explains to Creon that he lost the toss and had to bring bad news.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ grieves over the death of an older son, Megareus.
3. Antigone hangs herself with a noose of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A stranger arrives at Poseidon's \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Tiresias explains that the din of \_\_\_\_\_ warned him of coming evil.
6. Oedipus angers Tiresias, the blind \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Polyneices seizes the \_\_\_\_\_ of Thebes.
8. Jocasta is certain that \_\_\_\_\_ was murdered by brigands.
9. A messenger terrifies Oedipus with news of the death of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Oedipus's name indicates his \_\_\_\_\_.

### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how Haemon, Ismene, and Antigone suffer for their parents' wrongs.
2. Compare the importance of the shepherd, sentry, and Eurydice as minor characters.
3. Contrast Oedipus as king and exile.
4. Describe the royal households of Thebes.
5. Predict future quarrels between Creon and his subjects.

**VOCABULARY**

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. hedged/sovereignty    | 6. reprobate/loggerheads |
| 2. harried/banishment    | 7. intuitive/didactic    |
| 3. unaffrontable/averted | 8. hatched/scruple       |
| 4. emissary/reft         | 9. elucidator/pedestal   |
| 5. pricked/renegade      | 10. spurn/overtures      |

**COMPREHENSION TEST A****Part I: Identification (20 points)**

- |             |                |              |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Eurydice | 6. chorus      | 11. Oedipus  |
| 2. Haemon   | 7. Ismene      | 12. Laius    |
| 3. Creon    | 8. Creon       | 13. shepherd |
| 4. Jocasta  | 9. Theseus     | 14. Creon    |
| 5. Creon    | 10. Polyneices | 15. Oedipus  |

**Part II: True/False (20 points)**

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F  |
| 2. T | 7. F  |
| 3. T | 8. F  |
| 4. F | 9. T  |
| 5. T | 10. F |

**Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)**

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Oedipus   | 6. sentry      |
| 2. chorus    | 7. Haemon      |
| 3. Creon     | 8. Ismene      |
| 4. messenger | 9. Oedipus     |
| 5. Theseus   | 10. Polyneices |

**Part IV: Essay (40 points)**

Answers will vary.

**COMPREHENSION TEST B****Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)**

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. C  | 11. A |
| 2. A | 7. D  | 12. B |
| 3. A | 8. B  | 13. D |
| 4. D | 9. B  | 14. D |
| 5. C | 10. C | 15. C |

**Part II: Matching (20 points)**


- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. O  |
| 2. J | 7. C  |
| 3. A | 8. N  |
| 4. M | 9. H  |
| 5. F | 10. K |

**Part III: Fill-in (20 points)**

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. sentry   | 6. seer          |
| 2. Eurydice | 7. throne        |
| 3. linen    | 8. Laius         |
| 4. altar    | 9. Polybus       |
| 5. birds    | 10. swollen foot |

**Part IV: Essay (30 points)**

Answers will vary.

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