

## 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### Lesson 14, School Days 90-94

#### ***Oedipus the King* by Sophocles:**

1. Read the introductory pages.
2. Read the play, answering comprehension questions as you read.

#### **Comprehension/Discussion Questions:**

1. What shocking prophecy did the oracle make concerning the son of King Oedipus?
2. What did the servant do with the baby instead of leaving him to die?
3. What does laurel sprigs symbolize. (see line 93-94)
4. Why did the king and queen of Corinth call the baby Oedipus?
5. Describe a road-rage episode involving Oedipus.
6. Describe the monster that was terrorizing Thebes.
7. What did the Sphinx do if you got her riddle wrong?
8. What must happen before the deadly plague will end?
9. What did Aristotle say about “Oedipus the King”?
10. What improvements, or at least changes, did Sophocles make in Greek drama?
11. What is the literal meaning of the Latin term *deus ex machina*, and why did the term come to signify artificiality in sub-par predictable dramas and other literature?
12. Describe the manner in which ancient Greek drama was presented to the audience.
13. Describe the opening scene for part one of Oedipus the King.
14. What clue in footnote five suggests that these people live in a culture of vicious savagery and superstitious mumbo jumbo?
15. Summarize Oedipus’ solution to the riddle.
16. Explicate the meaning of line 321.
17. Why was Teiresias so reluctant to answer Oedipus’ questions?
18. Who does Oedipus begin to suspect is behind Teiresias’ words?
19. What does the tale (line 545) say about the creepy navel of earth?
20. Why did King Creon show up at King Oedipus’ house
21. What finally makes Oedipus believe he had killed his own father?
22. **A Brief lesson in Dramatic Irony:** Dramatic irony takes place when the audience watching a play understands what’s going on, but the characters within the play do not know or understand what is going on. Carefully read through lines 788-805. Notice how Jocasta has no clue at this point concerning the background story and her sordid role in it. However, the audience knows exactly what is happening. This is a perfect example of Dramatic Irony.
23. What full realization comes over Oedipus in lines 825-829?
24. How were Oedipus’ fears confirmed in lines 836-837?
25. How did Oedipus come to be at that fateful place where he killed his own father?
26. **(Inference:)** Why does Oedipus grasp so desperately at the plural word robbers in line 938?

27. In line 998, Oedipus seems to be blaming the gods for his brutal and senseless mass murder. What are the dangers of blaming God for our own mistakes and sins?
28. What do we learn from the “child of fortune” footnote from line 1185?
29. How can you tell that the old herder did not want to tell what he knew?
30. Who did the old herdsman say had given him the baby?
31. In the somewhat bawdy lines 1329-1330, how do the metaphorical words “furrows plowed” and “bear you” suggest his incest with his own mother?
32. And how do the words in line 1334 pertain to him?
33. Lines 1367-1370 summarize the incestuous relationship at the core of the drama. Oedipus is both guilty and complicit because he slew five innocent men in an episode of senseless road-rage. Jocasta, however, seems less to blame, but she also bears some culpability. Explain why she would have killed herself.
34. In line 1401, when the chorus chants, “So it has broken,” those words announce the climax or denouement of the play. Ancient Roman and Greek theater is often quite melodramatic. What was melodramatic about this climax.
35. What is the significance of line 1594?
36. List some of the social and personal struggles Oedipus foretells for his poor daughters in lines 1598-1614?

**Vocabulary Study Guide for Sophocles, Quiz A:**

**Corinth:** Ancient Greek city known for excellent pottery

**Thebes:** name of ancient cities in Greece & Egypt

**Oedipus:** Greek, meaning swollen feet

***Deus ex machina:*** Latin term signifying an artificial plot twist

**sleek:** smooth; glossy; graceful

**murmur:** low, continuous sound

**Dionysus:** Greek god of wine, drama, fertility

**chorus:** group of actors speaking in unison

**fidelity:** loyalty

**inscrutable:** impossible to understand or analyze

**pestilence:** deadly or virulent epidemic

**induced:** caused to happen; persuaded

**blight:** disease; decay

**dispatch:** kill; send off

**invoke:** summon or call upon a higher power or spirit

**prophecy:** prediction about the future

**countenance:** look on someone's face

**malignant:** very harmful

**tragic flaw:** fault or weakness of a dramatic character (e.g. Achilles' heel)

**tragedy:** literature depicting someone's downfall

**prologue:** initial brief explanation of background and conflict

**parodos:** opening song

**odes:** emotion-filled choral poems sung between scenes

**Cadmus:** mythical founder and first king of Thebes

**Vocabulary for Sophocles, Quiz A:**

___ <b>Corinth:</b>	a. name of ancient cities in Greece & Egypt
___ <b>Thebes:</b>	b. initial brief explanation of background and conflict
___ <b>Oedipus:</b>	c. caused to happen; persuaded
___ <b><i>Deus ex machina:</i></b>	d. group of actors speaking in unison
___ <b>sleek:</b>	e. opening song
___ <b>murmur:</b>	f. Greek, meaning swollen feet
___ <b>Dionysus:</b>	g. literature depicting someone's downfall
___ <b>chorus:</b>	h. disease; decay
___ <b>fidelity:</b>	i. loyalty
___ <b>inscrutable:</b>	j. impossible to understand or analyze
___ <b>pestilence:</b>	k. emotion-filled choral poems sung between scenes
___ <b>induced:</b>	l. mythical founder and first king of Thebes
___ <b>blight:</b>	m. Ancient Greek city known for excellent pottery
___ <b>dispatch:</b>	n. smooth; glossy; graceful
___ <b>invoke:</b>	o. deadly or virulent epidemic
___ <b>prophecy:</b>	p. Latin term signifying an artificial plot twist
___ <b>countenance:</b>	q. look on someone's face
___ <b>malignant:</b>	r. kill; send off
___ <b>tragic flaw:</b>	s. low, continuous sound
___ <b>tragedy:</b>	t. fault or weakness of a dramatic character (e.g. Achilles' heel)
___ <b>prologue:</b>	u. Greek god of wine, drama, fertility
___ <b>parodos:</b>	v. very harmful
___ <b>odes:</b>	w. prediction about the future
___ <b>Cadmus:</b>	x. summon or call upon a higher power or spirit

**Vocabulary Study Guide for Sophocles, Quiz B:**

**mumbo jumbo:** deceptive, superstitious ritual and language

**Sphinx:** winged female Thebes monster that ate all who couldn't answer her riddle

**strophe:** note sung by dramatic chorus when they are moving from right to left

**anti-strophe:** answering note sung by dramatic chorus when they are moving from left to right

**pytho:** another name for Delphi, home of Apollo's oracular shrine

**Delian Healer:** Another name for Apollo since he had power to cause/prevent plagues

**Phoebus:** another name for Apollo

**Pytho:** nickname for Delphi where Apollo's main temple was situated

**Western God:** glow of the setting sun

**Daughter of Zeus:** Athena

**War God:** Ares

**Amphitrite:** Sea God and wife of Poseidon

**Lycean King:** Name for Apollo in his role as god of light

**Thracean Sea:** what is currently the Aegean Sea

**God with the turban of gold:** Dionysus

**Dionysus' nickname:** Bacchic god with the wind flushed face:

**Evian One:** Bacchus (AKA Dionysius)

**Maenad company:** Female followers of Bacchus

**Pythos God:** yet another name for Apollo

**invoke:** summon a higher power

**ordinance:** law; command;

**Tiresias:** prophet blinded because he saw Athena bathing

**sluggard:** lazy or idle person

**compulsion:** forced action

**Vocabulary for Sophocles, Quiz B:**

- |                                     |                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ___ <b>mumbo jumbo:</b>             | a. summon a higher power                                         |
| ___ <b>Sphinx:</b>                  | b. Bacchic god with the wind flushed face                        |
| ___ <b>strophe:</b>                 | c. Sea God and wife of Poseidon                                  |
| ___ <b>anti-strophe:</b>            | d. another name for Apollo                                       |
| ___ <b>pytho:</b>                   | e. deceptive, superstitious ritual and language                  |
| ___ <b>Delian Healer:</b>           | f. another name for Delphi, home of Apollo's oracular shrine     |
| ___ <b>Phoebus:</b>                 | g. lazy or idle person                                           |
| ___ <b>Pytho:</b>                   | h. Name for Apollo in his role as god of light                   |
| ___ <b>Western God:</b>             | i. Dionysus                                                      |
| ___ <b>Daughter of Zeus:</b>        | j. another name for Apollo since he had power over plagues       |
| ___ <b>War God:</b>                 | k. law; command                                                  |
| ___ <b>Amphitrite:</b>              | l. Ares                                                          |
| ___ <b>Lycean King:</b>             | m. glow of the setting sun                                       |
| ___ <b>Thracean Sea:</b>            | n. note sung by chorus when moving from right to left            |
| ___ <b>God with turban of gold:</b> | o. forced action                                                 |
| ___ <b>Dionysus' nickname:</b>      | p. yet another name for Apollo                                   |
| ___ <b>Evian One:</b>               | q. winged female monster that ate all who couldn't answer riddle |
| ___ <b>Maenad company:</b>          | r. what is currently the Aegean Sea                              |
| ___ <b>Pythos God:</b>              | s. answering note sung by chorus when moving from left to right  |
| ___ <b>invoke:</b>                  | t. prophet blinded because he saw Athena bathing                 |
| ___ <b>ordinance:</b>               | u. Athena                                                        |
| ___ <b>Teiresias:</b>               | v. nickname for Delphi where Apollo's main temple was situated   |
| ___ <b>sluggard:</b>                | w. Female followers of Bacchus                                   |
| ___ <b>compulsion:</b>              | x. Bacchus (AKA Dionysius)                                       |

**Vocabulary Study Guide for Sophocles, Quiz C:**

**prophecy:** prediction of the future

**begrudge:** be reluctant to grant or allow something

**several:** respective, as used here

**suppliants:** humble petitioners

**balking:** stubbornly refusing to do something

**chide:** scold

**complotter:** fellow conspirator

**calumnies:** malicious lies

**calamity:** extreme misfortune leading to disaster

**contrivance:** scheme

**suborn:** convince someone to commit perjury

**quack:** fraudulent pretender

**kith:** friends, neighbors, acquaintances, coworkers

**kin:** people with whom you are blood relatives

**Cithaeron:** mountain where baby Oedipus was abandoned

**stumbling block:** hindrance/belief that gets in the way of understanding

**countenance:** facial expression; approval

**sower:** seed planter

**Pegasus:** mythical winged horse

**auger:** fortuneteller; prophet

**foreboding:** sense of doom

**manifestly:** clearly proven with evidence

**obstinacy:** stubbornness

**despotic:** tyrannical

**Vocabulary for Sophocles, Quiz C:**

___prophecy:	a. stubbornness
___begrudge:	b. seed planter
___several:	c. tyrannical
___suppliants:	d. friends, neighbors, acquaintances, coworkers
___balking:	e. fellow conspirator
___chide:	f. extreme misfortune leading to disaster
___complotter:	g. be reluctant to grant or allow something
___calumnies:	h. prediction of the future
___calamity:	i. stubbornly refusing to do something
___contrivance:	j. mountain where baby Oedipus was abandoned
___suborn:	k. humble petitioners
___quack:	l. facial expression; approval
___kith:	m. convince someone to commit perjury
___kin:	n. scold
___Cithaeron:	o. sense of doom
___stumbling block:	p. hindrance/belief that gets in the way of understanding
___countenance:	q. fraudulent pretender
___sower:	r. malicious lies
___Pegasus:	s. respective, as used here
___auger:	t. scheme
___foreboding:	u. people with whom you are blood relatives
___manifestly:	v. mythical winged horse
___obstinacy:	w. clearly proven with evidence
___despotic:	x. fortuneteller; prophet



**Vocabulary Study Guide for Sophocles, Quiz D:**

**besotted:** stupefied; foolish; drunken

**knave:** untrustworthy person

**rogue:** dishonest scoundrel

**titillate:** tiniest bit

**obscure:** dark

**conjecture:** guesswork

**dramatic irony:** when the audience knows something the characters don't know

**rankled:** caused to have long-lasting anger & resentment

**taxed:** put a strain/burden on

**infamies:** circumstances of notorious disgrace/dishonor

**goad:** cattle prod

**twixt:** between

**unclean:** immoral

**malignant:** with the intent or likelihood of causing harm

**taint:** trace of dishonor

**begotten:** given birth or sired

**insolence:** bold disrespectfulness

**glutted:** overfed

**surfeit:** excessive supply or diet

**smite:** strike hard

**impiety:** lack of holiness

**Pan:** mountain shepherd god who danced and played pipe

**consonant:** in harmony/agreement

**dirge:** somber funeral tune

**Vocabulary for Sophocles, Quiz D:**

___ <b>besotted:</b>	a. untrustworthy person
___ <b>knave:</b>	b. mountain shepherd god who danced and played pipe
___ <b>rogue:</b>	c. between
___ <b>tittle:</b>	d. dark
___ <b>obscure:</b>	e. lack of holiness
___ <b>conjecture:</b>	f. put a strain/burden on
___ <b>dramatic irony:</b>	g. tiniest bit
___ <b>rankled:</b>	h. cattle prod
___ <b>taxed:</b>	i. given birth or sired
___ <b>infamies:</b>	j. strike hard
___ <b>goad:</b>	k. somber funeral tune
___ <b>twixt:</b>	l. excessive supply or diet
___ <b>unclean:</b>	m. trace of dishonor
___ <b>malignant:</b>	n. caused to have long-lasting anger & resentment
___ <b>taint:</b>	o. dishonest scoundrel
___ <b>begotten:</b>	p. overfed
___ <b>insolence:</b>	q. stupefied; foolish; drunken
___ <b>glutted:</b>	r. in harmony/agreement
___ <b>surfeit:</b>	s. immoral
___ <b>smite:</b>	t. bold disrespectfulness
___ <b>impiety:</b>	u. circumstances of notorious disgrace/dishonor
___ <b>Pan:</b>	v. when the audience knows something the characters don't know
___ <b>consonant:</b>	w. with the intent or likelihood of causing harm
___ <b>dirge:</b>	x. guesswork

**Vocabulary Study Guide for Sophocles, Quiz E:**

**purge:** cleanse of guilt or sin

**infamous:** disgraceful

**denouement:** climax of a drama or other story

**imprecations:** curses; swear words

**brooches:** decorative clasps to pin on clothing

**melodramatic:** characterized by grossly exaggerated emotions and plot turns

**stayed my hand:** ceased an action before it is accomplished

**festered:** rotted; swelled with pus

**glade:** clearing in a forest

**deign:** be willing to stoop to an underling's level

**vilely:** wickedly

**parricide:** murder of one's own father

**beseech:** beg; humbly request

**Vocabulary for Sophocles, Quiz E:**

- |                            |                                                                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| ___ <b>purge:</b>          | a. be willing to stoop to an underling's level                  |
| ___ <b>infamous:</b>       | b. decorative clasps to pin on clothing                         |
| ___ <b>denouement:</b>     | c. murder of one's own father                                   |
| ___ <b>imprecations:</b>   | d. cleanse of guilt or sin                                      |
| ___ <b>brooches:</b>       | e. characterized by grossly exaggerated emotions and plot turns |
| ___ <b>melodramatic:</b>   | f. beg; humbly request                                          |
| ___ <b>stayed my hand:</b> | g. ceased an action before it is accomplished                   |
| ___ <b>festered:</b>       | h. climax of a drama or other story                             |
| ___ <b>glade:</b>          | i. rotted; swelled with pus                                     |
| ___ <b>deign:</b>          | j. disgraceful                                                  |
| ___ <b>vilely:</b>         | k. clearing in a forest                                         |
| ___ <b>parricide:</b>      | l. curses; swear words                                          |
| ___ <b>besech:</b>         | m. wickedly                                                     |

**Vocabulary Quiz Keys for Sophocles "Oedipus, The King:"**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
m	e	h	q	d
a	q	g	a	j
f	n	s	o	h
p	s	k	g	l
n	v	i	d	b
s	j	n	x	e
u	d	e	v	g
d	f	r	n	i
i	m	f	f	k
j	u	t	u	a
o	l	m	h	m
c	c	q	c	c
h	h	d	s	f
r	r	u	w	
x	i	j	m	
w	b	p	i	
q	x	l	t	
v	w	b	p	
t	p	v	l	
g	a	x	j	
b	k	o	e	
e	t	w	b	
k	g	a	r	
l	o	c	k	