

Oedipus reader's log

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		Section
Questions	Reader's Commentary	Prologue
1. Describe the dramatic purpose of the Prologue.	The prologue sets the atmosphere of Oedipus Rex and gets the reader interested.	-
2. How does Oedipus characterize himself in line 8?	He sees himself as famous to all men.	-
3. Describe the conditions in Thebes as depicted by the Priest in lines 25-30.	There is a disease infecting the fruit and cattle of their land, and women in labor are losing their children.	-
4. How do the suppliants view Oedipus in lines 31-34, 40, and 46?	They are thankful for him because he freed them from the tribute they were paying	-
5. What is a Sphinx? What is the answer to the riddle, " What has one voice and four feet, two feet, and three feet? " Who answers the riddle?	A winged monster of Thebes, having a woman's head and a lion's body. Man as an infant, he crawls on all fours; as an adult, he walks on two legs, and, in old age, he uses a 'walking' stick. Oedipus answers the riddle.	-
6. What request does the Priest	They beg Oedipus for help, to help	-

make of Oedipus in lines 41-42 and 53?	their state. So now, you best of men, raise up our state. ”	
7. Define dramatic irony. Then, explain its function in lines 60-61.	The irony is understood by the audience/readers but not by the characters in the story. The audience would have already known Oedipus' fate when hearing those lines, while the priest/Oedipus had no idea of what really happened.	-
8. Review lines 95-107 once more. What does Apollo say must be done to rid Thebes of its pollution?	“ Lord Phoebus clearly orders us to drive away from the polluting stain this land has harbored” they have to find who killed Laius.	-
9. What were the circumstances surrounding Laius's death (refer to lines 114-123)? Furthermore, what motive does Oedipus assign the murderer (lines 124-125)?	All of the messengers died that went with Laius except for one man. Oedipus says that the men are robbers.	-
10. Explain the irony present in Oedipus's resolution (lines 137-141).	Oedipus is talking about what the killer might do; while unbeknownst to him he's actually the killer.	-
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Questions	Reader's Commentary	Parados
11. Discuss the Chorus's reaction to Apollo's advice to the city of Thebes (lines 154-157).	The chorus is frightened and is asking what they have to do for Zeus. "What obligation will you demand from me, a thing unknown".	-
12. Describe the conditions in the city as recounted by the Chorus (lines 170-182).	Everyone is unhappy, and many of the townspeople have died or are dying.	First Episode
13. Why does Oedipus seek the counsel of Teiresias (lines 278-287)?	He can see into things like Lord Apollo.	316-344
14. What is Teiresias' reaction to Oedipus's request (lines 316-344)?	He doesn't want to tell Oedipus anything.	353-371
15. How does Oedipus view Teiresias? What ironies exist in their conversation? Refer to lines 353-371.	Oedipus views Teiresias as a liar, he thinks what he's saying is wrong. Oedipus calls Teiresias blind, and eventually, Oedipus will be blind.	-
16. In lines 385-389, Oedipus	He thinks Creon has betrayed him.	-

begins to harbor suspicion about Creon. What is this suspicion? Why is this important?	However, Oedipus is wrong, and won't see the important truth that is in front of him.	
17. What superior trait does Oedipus claim over Teiresias in lines 390-398?	Oedipus claims he has wit, while Teiresias only has "the birds".	-
18. In lines 413-425, Teiresias reveals the truth to Oedipus about his lineage. What does Teiresias predict will be Oedipus's fate? Refer to lines 417-423; 452-460.	Teiresias says that Oedipus will go blind and that his cries will not be heard. Also, he says he will be poor.	First Stasimon
19. Discuss the Chorus's view of Teiresias's accusations against Oedipus. Refer to lines 483-495; 504-511.	They cannot confirm or deny them, the chorus is very confused.	-
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Questions	Reader's Commentary	Second Episode
20. How does Creon defend himself against Oedipus's accusation of conspiracy (lines	Creon says he's much happier not being king and that when you're a king	-

583-604)?	you have to live in fear.	
21. What does Jocasta do in lines 639-697?	Jocasta learns of what Oedipus wants to do to Creon and she stops him.	-
22. How does Jocasta assure Oedipus that is not guilty of the king's death, lines 707-722?	She tells him what the gods said. That it would be Laius' son who killed him and that Laius' sent his son away.	-
23. Why is Oedipus disturbed and frightened by Jocasta's comments in lines 726-745?	He realizes that he is the person who murdered Laius', meaning he is Laius' son and has an incest relationship with his wife/mother.	-
24. Return to lines 758-764. What happened to the one witness to the king's death?	The witness begged to be sent off to where the animals graze.	-
25. Who does Oedipus believe are his true parents, lines 774-775? Why does he visit the Delphic Circle? What is he told? Refer to lines 779-793.	He thinks Polybus of Corinth is his father. Oedipus goes to Delphic Circle to seek answers about his parents; he's told that his fate was to defile his mother's bed.	-

26. Describe what Oedipus fears most in lines 813-822.	He says he won't be welcomed by anyone.	-
27. How does Jocasta reassure Oedipus in lines 842-858?	She says that Laius was killed by a group of men, and that her son died long ago so the sayings could not be true.	-
28. What request does Oedipus make in lines 858-860?	He requests to see the peasant/witness.	-
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Questions	Reader's Commentary	Second Stasimon
29. What wish does the Chorus express in the first stanza, lines 863-872?	They pray that " fate still finds me worthy".	-
What concern does the Chorus express in the fourth stanza, lines 897-910?	They worry that the prophecies will fail to be fulfilled.	Third Episode

30. Who is Jocasta praying to in lines 911-923?	She is praying to Apollo.	-
31. What news is delivered to Oedipus in lines 924-963? What is his reaction to the Messenger's news? (964-972)? What is Jocasta's reaction (977-983)?	The messenger tells them Oedipus' father has died. Jocasta says not to worship Apollo because he was wrong about the prophecies. Jocasta says that she already foretold of this.	-
32. What additional information does the Messenger provide, lines 1008-1046?	The messenger tells him that Polybus is not his real father and that Oedipus was found with his ankles tied together.	-
33. Why does Jocasta ask Oedipus to refrain from seeking out the Herdsman then leave, lines 1056-1075? How does Oedipus view Jocasta's erratic behavior? Refer to lines 1076-1079.	Jocasta knows that Oedipus is her son, and she doesn't want him to find out. Oedipus makes his own decision, making Jocasta vow to never speak again. Oedipus thinks Jocasta is ashamed of him.	-
34. Discuss the irony surrounding the Messenger's arrival immediately after Jocasta's prayer. Is he truly delivering good news?	The messenger is not truly delivering good news; it's actually news that will hurt both Jocasta and Oedipus. Also, the irony is she her prayer is immediately answered by the	Third Stasimon

	messenger's arrival.	
35. Whom does the Chorus identify as parents to Oedipus? Refer to lines 1098-1101.	The chorus identifies immortal gods as Oedipus' parents.	Fourth Episode
36. Who was the Herdsman employed with? Why is he reluctant to answer questions from Oedipus, lines 1117-1181?	The herdsman was employed with Laius. He's doesn't want to answer because he knows he and Oedipus will suffer.	-
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Questions	Reader's Commentary	Fourth Stasimon
37. What general comment does the Chorus offer based on Oedipus's plight? Refer to lines 1186-1196.	They say that " no mortal man is ever blessed". They pity Oedipus.	-
38. What horrific fact concerning Oedipus's marriage to Jocasta does the Chorus identify in lines 1214 and 1215?	It says that Oedipus and Jocasta are in fact, mother and son.	Exodos

39. What news does the second Messenger announce in lines 1235-1279?	They say that Jocasta killed herself.	-
40. Discuss the symbolism of Oedipus's self-blinding. What does Oedipus intend to do, lines 1290-1291? What prompts these actions?	Oedipus has put a curse on himself, he wishes to be banished to sat he doesn't bear the curse on to the house.	-
41. In the next section of the Exodos, Oedipus joins the Chorus in lamenting his fate. Whom does Oedipus blame in lines 1329-1331?	He blames Apollo.	-
42. What reasons does Oedipus provide for his self-blinding in lines 1369-1385?	He couldn't bear to see his father and mother in Hades or look at his children.	-
43. What requests does Oedipus make of Creon? Refer to lines 1436-1467.	He wants Creon to cast him out where no other person will see him.	-

44. Describe the vision Oedipus has for his daughters' future in lines 1489-1502.	Oedipus thinks his children will be unmarried, and barren for the rest of their lives.	-
45. What moral lesson does the Chorus derive from Oedipus's life? Refer to lines 1524-1530.	“ We cannot call a mortal being happy before he's passed beyond life free from pain. ” You can't call a person happy until they've died.	-

References:

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