

What are the main
character traits of
oedipus? essay
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At the beginning of Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus is overly confident, and with good reason. He is notorious for being the one who saved Thebes from the curse of the Sphinx and become king virtually overnight. He announces his name proudly as though it were a healing charm to others by saying “ my children, I am here, famous Oedipus.” Oedipus acts very swiftly, and he seems to be very confident even through the very end of the play where he calls upon his brother Creon and his mother Tiresias. Oedipus threatens to banish them both from Thebes, and goes into the palace to stab out his own eyes. Then Oedipus demands to Creon that he is to be exiled from the city when he finds out what truly happened to Laius. Throughout the play Oedipus is constantly busy and in motion. It seems that he is trying to keep up with the pace of his own fate even when it is out of his reach at times.

Oedipus is famous for his insight and his quick comprehension of what is going on, but he discovers that he has been blinded from the truth for several years. Then ironically Oedipus blinds himself so he wouldn't have to look at his children and siblings because of the shame that he has went through. Oedipus is distinguished for his compassion, his sense of justice, his swiftness of thought and action, and his honesty. At this early stage in the play, Oedipus represents all that an audience could desire in a citizen or a leader. He continually shows his concern for the health and well-being of all of his people, and his people show him respect because he previously freed Thebes from the sphinx. He is so serious about the punishment for the killer of Laius Oedipus says even if the murderer turns out to be someone close to himself he wont hesitate to banish them from Thebes. Yet, Oedipus is so blinded to catch the killer he doesn't realize that he is in fact the killer.

This comes up when he is insistent that Tiresias tells him who the killer is. When he refuses to let it be known he then accuses Tiresias of killing Laius. This is when Tiresias then tells Oedipus that he is the reason for the plague. This is when Oedipus' traits begin to work against him, which makes his personality begin to shift when he begins to change his view on Tiresias by calling him scum and asking questions that are doing nothing but accusing rather than seeking answers to what he wants to know.

The confidence and quick thinking of Oedipus are beginning to work against him because his quick decisions are being expressed in rhetorical questions that only accuse rather than seek answers. But Tiresias laid the truth out in front of Oedipus but he took what Tiresias said as an attack, so the conversation only confirmed what Oedipus already believed. Later the chorus serves as a reminder that oracles have a purpose when they speak, and they are inspired by the gods who control man's fate. Throughout the play, the Chorus has been desperate for the plague to end and for stability to be restored to the city.

The chorus goes on to talk about things that were used in Oedipus's success are now leading into his failure. The chorus does this by focusing mainly on the sexual aspect of his actions like how they both plowed the same "furrows" as each other, which is a metaphor for Oedipus and his father sharing Jocasta's vagina. Then, images of earth and soil and shown in the play to represent the work that goes into the land, and drinking of the blood of family members. Oedipus's crimes are presented as a kind of disease on the land that is symbolized by the plague at the beginning of the play.

Oedipus has become like the blind prophet because he is unable to see <https://assignbuster.com/what-are-the-main-character-traits-of-oedipus-essay-sample/>

physically, but he now acquired an insight on the situation like the blind prophet. Oedipus now has no concern with his physical self, just the torment that goes along with knowing the truth.

The traits of Oedipus are used by the gods to show how his personality which once served him and the people was then turned on him to eventually figure out that he was cause of the plague. Throughout the play Oedipus has behaved knowingly and honorably, he has also been sincere in all of his actions. The people of Thebes trust Oedipus's judgment because he seemed to mean what he said and to try to do what he believes is right. His punishment of blindness and exile seems just, therefore, because he inflicted it upon himself. Oedipus' traits were being used by the gods as a sort of maze with barriers to unlock the knowledge of the truth. This deems Oedipus as the reason why the plagues infected the land and the people of Thebes.