

# Oedipus rex and the theme of blindness assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

After reading or viewing this play, it is apparent that there are a few different themes, though the one which will be discussed in this essay is the theme of blindness. The theme of blindness is shown through the blind prophet, through Oedipus blindness in realizing the truth, and finally through Oedipus stabbing his own eyes to the point of blindness. The first way that blindness is portrayed in this play is through Tiresias, who is a blind prophet.

He is called to the city of Thebes by Oedipus in hope that he can provide some information about the murder of the previous king, Laius. Oedipus asks Tiresias to speak what he knows, and at first he is hesitant. He eventually gives in, and explains that it is Oedipus who is the murderer of Laius. This enrages Oedipus, who becomes angry with Tiresias and begins to criticize him for his blindness saying "O you are blind in mind and ears as well as in your eyes. This comment is quite humorous to the audience because it does not truly describe Tiresias, but Oedipus instead. The next way that the theme of blindness is shown is through Oedipus blindness in realizing the truth of his life. He was given hints by numerous people, yet was still oblivious to the reality. Oedipus first hint was when a drunken man accused him of being a bastard child. Next was the prediction from Phoebus, who said that he was "fated to lie with his mother and doomed to be the murderer of his father. His next clue was from Tiresias, who claimed that he was the murderer of the former king Laius yet that was still not enough. Following Tiresias was the messenger, who told Oedipus that the parents who raised him were not his real parents. Finally, it all clicked when the herdsman came and confirmed that Oedipus was in fact the child of Laius, and that is when he realizes that the oracle's predictions were correct. One would think that after

a few hints that Oedipus would put the pieces together and realize the truth, however that is not the case.

These clues that Oedipus overlooked all contributed to the proof that he was blind to the facts of his life. The final way that the theme of blindness is portrayed in this play is through Oedipus becoming blind at the end of the story. When Oedipus finally realized the truth about his past, he rushed inside of his house, and did a horrendous thing. It is described in the play, stating that " He tore off the brooches and lifting them high dashed them on his own eyeballs and he struck his eyes again and yet again with the brooches.

It is ironic that in the end, Oedipus ends up being literally blind, because throughout the story, the audience is focused on the aspect of Oedipus being mentally blind about his past. As it has been proven through this essay, the theme of blindness in the story of Oedipus is shown through the blind prophet, through Oedipus' blindness in realizing the truth, and through Oedipus himself becoming blind at the end of the story. By displaying the element of blindness in these three different ways, Sophocles creates not only a strong theme, but a sense of symbolism and foreshadowing also.

He shows that the meaning of blindness can be deeper than just being able to physically see things; it can include being blind in emotion, spirit, and in knowledge, as we have seen through the life of Oedipus. It can also be said that the blindness of the prophet was a foreshadowing of the story's ending. As was said before, this play is well written, and is such a perfect example of a tragic plot. Because of these reasons, it is no wonder that " Oedipus the

King” is still being discussed and analyzed to this day, and it will be no surprise if it continues to be this way in the future.