

9.2.2

Lesson 4

Introduction

In this lesson students will explore the passage “Oh sweet speaking voice of Zeus,” through “My fearful heart twists on the rack and shakes with fear” (lines 182–185) and “You pray. But if you listen now to me” through “more so than in all other men” (lines 249–355) from *Oedipus the King*. In this excerpt, the Chorus appears for the first time, and the Chorus Leader discusses with Oedipus the mystery of Laius’s murder.

Guided by a series of scaffolded questions, students will consider how the prophet Teiresias develops their understanding of the central idea of this text. This analysis continues to build foundational understandings necessary for the unit-wide engagement with how Sophocles develops the role of fate in Oedipus’s guilt. At the end of this lesson, students will capture their learning with a Quick Write about the development of a central idea.

For homework students will call upon the understanding of the relationship between gods and men that they developed in this lesson to answer the following question: If “no man has power to force the gods to speak against their will” (lines 328–329), how do men receive messages from the gods? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word

	choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
RL.9-10.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
W.9-10.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. a. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>The learning in this lesson will be captured through a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students will answer the following prompt based on the close reading (citing text evidence and analyzing key words and phrases) completed in the lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What role does Teiresias play in this excerpt? How does this role shape a central idea?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should identify that Teiresias is a “prophet,” which means he is closer to the gods than even Oedipus is as the “first of men” (line 38). The introduction of Teiresias builds upon the central idea of the tension established between the power held by gods and the power held by men, since Teiresias seems to fall somewhere in an in-between space—he is not a god but seems to possess the authority of the gods. He is the “next best” thing. <p>This assessment encourages students to build foundational understandings necessary for engagement with this unit’s central idea of the role of fate in Oedipus’s guilt. Exploration of the complex relationship between the power of the gods and the power of men encourages a multifaceted analysis of the role of the gods (fate) and the role of humans in the crime of Laius’s murder later in the unit.</p>

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zeus (n.) – the supreme deity of the ancient Greeks, the god of the heavens Pytho (n.) – another name for the city of Delphi, where the shrine of Apollo is located Cadmeians (n.) – another name for citizens of Thebes rack (n.) – an implement of torture intent (n.) – the thing that you plan to do or achieve Labdacus (n) – Laius’s father mute (adj.) – not able or willing to speak ally (n.) – a person or group that gives help to another person or group wretched (adj) – very unhappy or very bad or unpleasant dispatched (v.) – to have sent (someone or something) quickly to a particular place for a particular purpose
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> oath (n) – a formal and serious promise to tell the truth or to do something prophet (n) – a person who speaks for God or a deity, or by divine inspiration

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.5, WR.9-10.9.a Text: <i>Oedipus the King</i>, lines 182–185 and 249–355 Learning Sequence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Lines 182–185 and 249–355 Reading and Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 15% 55% 10% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Checklist and Rubric (refer to 9.2.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
	Plain text (no symbol) indicates teacher action.
	Bold text (no symbol) indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text (no symbol) indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
①	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction to Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.2. In this lesson students will find key details, and analyze how these details develop their understandings of the complex relationship between human and divine knowledge.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they defined the course of action Oedipus has vowed to take in *avenging* Laius and the evidence they used to support their definition.

- ▶ Students talk in pairs about their response and offer examples of the evidence they chose to support their definition.
- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - “This polluting stain I will remove” (lines 165–166)
 - “must be punished” (line 125)

- “we could find many things, if we possessed some slender hope to get us going” (lines 144–145)
- “seeking vengeance for this land” (line 164)

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they can apply their focus standard CCRA.R.6 to their text. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard (CCRA.R.6) to their AIR text from the previous lesson’s homework.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

15%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (What role does Teiresias play in this excerpt? How does this role shape a central idea?) Explain to students that this is the lesson assessment and the focus for today’s reading.

- ▶ Students read the assessment and listen.

① Display the Quick Write assessment for students to see.

Have students listen to a masterful reading of the text from “Oh sweet speaking voice of Zeus,” through “My fearful heart twists on the rack and shakes with fear” (lines 182–185) and “You pray. But if you listen now to me” through “more so than in all other men” (lines 249–355). Focus student annotation with the following prompt:

Annotate this passage for any references to the gods.

① Consider reviewing the vocabulary terms Apollo, Zeus, Pytho, Pythian, with students before beginning this activity.

- ▶ Students listen to a masterful reading, reading silently, and annotating to the focusing prompt, according to the protocols established in 9.1.1.

🗨 Student annotations may include:

- “Oh sweet speaking voice of Zeus” (line 182)
- “golden Pytho” (line 183)
- “as the Pythian god has just revealed to me” (lines 281–282)
- “an ally of the god” (line 283)

- “it’s for Apollo...to state who did it” (lines 326–327)
- “no man has power to force the gods to speak” (lines 328–329)
- “Our lord Teiresias, I know, can see into things, like lord Apollo” (lines 333–334)
- “our god-like prophet” (line 354)

Pose the following question for full class discussion:

According to Oedipus and the Chorus, what knowledge do the gods possess?

- Student responses should indicate an understanding that Oedipus and the Chorus believe that the gods hold the knowledge of Laius’s murder, “it’s for Apollo...to state who did it” (lines 326–327) Students may also point to the Chorus’s assertion that “Our lord Teiresias, I know, can see into things, like lord Apollo” (lines 333–334) to indicate that the gods possess the ability to see things that men cannot. Some students may point to the Chorus’s question “Oh sweet speaking Zeus...what is your intent?” to indicate a possible tension between the knowledge possessed by humans, and the knowledge held by the gods (lines 182–184).

- ① Exploration of the complex relationship between the knowledge held by the gods and the knowledge available to men prepares students to engage with complex ideas of predestination in the crime of Laius’s murder later in the unit. This analysis is integral to developing an understanding of the role of fate in Oedipus’s guilt.

Instruct students to annotate their texts using the code CI to mark the evidence used in their responses to the question above. Remind students that as they annotate for central idea, they are beginning to identify textual evidence to be used in the lesson assessment as well as the Mid- and End-of-Unit Assessments, which address the development of central ideas in the text. This focused annotation supports students’ engagement with W.9–10.9.a, as they draw evidence from the text to use in their writing.

Activity 4: Lines 182–185 and 249–355 Reading and Discussion

55%

Group students into pre-established heterogeneous groups of four. Read aloud from “Oh sweet speaking voice of Zeus” through “My fearful heart twists on the rack and shakes with fear” (lines 182–185). Remind students that they should record their observations in their class notes or on their text, thinking about where they identify emerging central ideas, since that is a focus of this lesson. Remind them to use the code CI for their annotations or notes.

- ▶ Students follow along in their text.

Pose the following questions for students to discuss in their groups:

To whom is the Chorus speaking? How does this mode of address compare to the interactions Sophocles has structured thus far in the drama? Hint: Consider the stage directions prior to the Chorus's speech.

① This exploration of the Chorus's brief prayer prompts students to differentiate the power held by Oedipus as the king of Thebes and the power held by the average citizen of Thebes (i.e. the Chorus). As King Oedipus has a different relationship to the gods than most humans, which is developed through an understanding of the position of the citizens of the city in relation to their king.

- 💬 Students should respond that the Chorus is speaking directly to the god Zeus, rather than to another on stage character as in all previous interactions (students may point to Oedipus's comment "you pray" as further evidence). As is evidenced by the stage directions "Oedipus and Creon go into the palace," the god Zeus is not on stage. The Chorus is alone on stage while delivering this speech.

How does the Chorus describe the gods? What is the cumulative effect of these words?

- 💬 Student observations should include that the Chorus uses the words: *sweet*, *golden*, and *fearful* (lines 182–185). This combination of dissimilar adjectives suggests a tension—the Chorus is praising the gods but is also scared of them.
- ① Consider offering students a definition of *rack* as "an implement of torture," to help students make meaning of the image the Chorus creates through the statement "My fearful heart twists on the rack" (line 185), as well as a definition of *intent* as the thing that the god plans to do or achieve.

How does the effect you identified further develop your understanding of the relationship between humans and gods?

- 💬 Student observations should indicate that the effect of tension created by the use of dissimilar adjectives in the same sentence reinforces the understanding that the gods have a complicated and tense relationship with people. They are both "sweet" to humans and "fearful" at the same time. Some students may infer from this inconsistency that the people are confused about the reasons behind the gods' actions.

Lead a brief full class discussion of student observations.

Read aloud from “You pray. But if you listen now to me” through “to have a son had not been disappointed” (lines 249–305). Instruct students to annotate this passage for instances where Oedipus asserts his authority. Hint: Consider both commands that Oedipus gives and the way Oedipus refers to himself.

► Students follow along in their text, annotating according to the protocols established in 9.1.1.

🗨 Student annotations should include:

- “if you listen now to me” (line 249)
- “I now proclaim” (line 258)
- “I order him to reveal it all” (line 262)
- “Ban him from your homes” (line 280)
- “as the Pythian god has just revealed to me” (lines 281–282)
- “I’m acting as an ally of the god and of dead Laius, too” (lines 283–284)
- “But now I possess the ruling power” (lines 301–302)

Pose the following question for students to discuss in their groups:

What authority does Oedipus claim for himself?

🗨 Student responses should point to Oedipus’s claim to possess “the ruling power” (line 302) and Oedipus’s assertion that he is “an ally of the god” (line 283) with the commands he gives to the people of Thebes to “listen,” “order,” and “ban” to infer that Oedipus is claiming authority over all the people of Thebes, he is claiming the authority of a king (lines 249, 262, 280).

Lead a brief full class discussion of student observations.

Read aloud from “But now I” through “the man who spilled his blood” (lines 301–312).

► Students follow along in their texts.

Pose the following question for students to discuss in their groups:

According to Oedipus, what does he now have that once belonged to Laius? What might this suggest about how Oedipus understands his “strive to do everything I can to find...the man who spilled his blood” (lines 310–312)? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

💬 Student responses may identify the following textual details:

- “I possess the ruling power which Laius held in earlier days” (lines 301–303)
- “I have his bed and wife” (line 303)
- “now I will fight on his behalf” (lines 308–309)
- “as if this matter concerned my father” (lines 309–310)
- Oedipus is establishing two connections between himself and Laius—one of shared position as king and one of shared family connection (“as if the matter concerned my father”, lines 309–310 and “I have his...wife”, line 303) Oedipus feels a responsibility to solve the crime both because it is his duty as the king with the “ruling power” (line 302), and also because he feels some personal connection to Laius to “fight on his behalf” (line 309) because he has married his widow.
- Some students may connect this to Oedipus’s statement from the last lesson’s excerpt, in which he feared that someday “whoever killed this man [Laius] may soon enough desire to...kill me” (lines 167–169) to infer that Oedipus is also solving the crime to serve his own interests.

① It may be helpful to clarify for students what it means that Oedipus has Laius’s “bed and wife”—that he married the late king’s widow when he came into power.

Lead a full class discussion of student observations.

Read aloud from “My lord, since you extend your oath to me” through “more so than in all other men” (lines 323–355).

- ▶ Students follow along in their texts.

Pose the following question for students to discuss in their groups:

How can your understanding of Oedipus’s declaration help you to make meaning of *oath* in this context (line 323)?

- 💬 Students should connect Oedipus’s declaration “I will strive to do everything I can to find...the man who spilled his blood” (lines 310–312) and “I will fight on his behalf” (lines 308–309) to the

Chorus's statement "you extend your oath to me" (line 323), to determine that oath means a strong promise to do something.

Why might the Chorus consider Teiresias "god-like"? How can this help you to make meaning of the word *prophet* (line 354)?

- The Chorus states that a conversation with Teiresias is "the next best" thing to being able to speak to the gods, and that "Our lord Teiresias...can see into things, like lord Apollo" (lines 333–334). From this direct comparison, students should infer that Teiresias is "god-like" because he knows what the gods know. Therefore, a *prophet* is someone who is closer to the gods than most humans, or someone who knows what the gods know.

Lead a full class discussion of student observations.

Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

What role does Teiresias play in this excerpt? How does this role shape a central idea?

Remind students to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.
- ① This prompt encourages students to connect this new information with their analysis of the complex relationship between gods and humans introduced in Lesson 2.
 - ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. Instruct students that for homework they should call upon the understanding of the relationship between gods and men that they developed in this lesson to answer the following question: If "no man has the power to force the gods to speak against their will" (lines 328–329) how do men receive messages from the gods? Remind students to use evidence from

the text to support their response, and to use the Short Response Writing Checklist and Rubric to guide their writing.

Also, students should continue their Accountable Independent Reading. Beginning with this lesson, students will no longer receive an assigned focus standard. Instead, students will choose their own focus standard.

Homework

Call upon the understanding of the relationship between gods and men that you developed in this lesson to answer the following question: If “no man has the power to force the gods to speak against their will” (lines 328–329) how do men receive messages from the gods? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Continue to read your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.