

9.2.2 Lesson 7

Introduction

In this lesson, students will explore the passage “I will go now. Boy lead me away” through “you can say I lack all skill in prophecy” (lines 536–561) and “Apollo and Zeus are truly wise “through “a troublemaker, an enemy of mine” (lines 598–657). In this excerpt, Teiresias reveals the murderer’s identity in the form of a prophetic riddle, and Oedipus accuses Creon of the crime of Laius’s murder.

Students will explore the affects created by Sophocles’s decisions to reveal key details that shed light on the identity of Laius’s murderer through riddles. Students will continue to consider the development of central idea, as they consider how the musings of the Chorus and Creon refine their understanding of the central idea of the role of fate in the crime of Laius’s murder. Students will continue to build upon their work with W.9-10.9.a as they craft a Quick Write to the following structural prompt: How does Sophocles use the timing of Creon’s entrance into the dialogue to create tension for the audience?

For homework students will respond briefly in writing to a reflective prompt that asks them to review and expand their Quick Write, calling upon evidence from other passages in the text to support their response.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
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.
Addressed 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.
W.9-10.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and

	<p>research.</p> <p>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]”).</p>
L.9-10.4.a	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9–10 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p>

Assessment

Assessment(s)

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.

- How does Sophocles use the timing of Creon’s entrance into the dialogue to create tension for the audience?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response may include the following:

- Students should indicate an understanding that Creon’s entrance into this dialogue creates tension in the drama. Creon’s presence and absence at key moments in this passage makes it so that different characters have different amounts of information about what is happening on stage. For example, the Chorus and the audience learn that Oedipus has accused Creon before Creon himself knows. Creon’s absence means that he can’t respond to Oedipus’s accusations right away. Some students may suggest that Creon’s absence allows Oedipus to turn tentative accusation into a certainty: by the time Creon shows up, Oedipus says Creon is “obviously” and “clearly” guilty (lines 639, 641). This heightens the tension of the play.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- native (adj.) – born in a particular place

- groping (v.) – searching around blindly
- sowed (v.) – implanted (in context, impregnated)
- brutality (n.) – cruelty
- interpreter (n.) – a person who explains the meaning of something
- ascertain (v.) – to make certain or absolutely clear
- confirmed (adj.) – made certain
- censures (v.) – criticizes harshly

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- endeared (v.) – to have caused to become loved or admired
- leveled (v.) – directed forcefully at someone
- allegations (n.) – statements saying that someone has done something wrong or illegal
- reproach (n.) – an expression of disapproval or disappointment
- spurred (v.) – urged a horse forward by digging spurs (a sharp pointed object) into its sides
- rash (adj.) – quickly, without thought of what will happen as a result

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.9-10.5, RL.9-10.2, W.9-10.9.a, L.9-10.4.a • Text: <i>Oedipus the King</i>, lines 598–657 	
Learning Sequence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Lines 536–561 and 598–657 Reading and Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 10% 4. 55% 5. 15% 6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (from 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.
📘	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction to Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by introducing the agenda and sharing the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.5. In this lesson, students will explore the effects created by how Sophocles orders events. Students will also consider how the musings of the Chorus and Creon refine their understanding of the central idea of the role of fate in the crime of Laius's murder.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they revised and expanded their notes from the previous lesson. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they selected new evidence and expanded their notes from the previous lesson.

- ▶ Student pairs discuss examples of evidence they selected to expand and revise their notes.

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they can apply their focus standard 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 to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (How does Sophocles use the timing of Creon's entrance into the dialogue to create tension for the audience?). 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 "I will go now. Boy lead me away" through "you can say I lack all skill in prophecy" (lines 536–561) and "Apollo and Zeus are truly wise" through "a troublemaker, an enemy of mine" (lines 598–657). Focus student annotation with the following prompt:

Annotate for the movement of characters on or off the stage as expressed through dialogue or stage directions.

① Consider pausing at key points in the reading to ask the class outright to whom the dialogue is directed. Prefacing the initial dialogue of the lesson with a question regarding whom Teiresias is speaking to, for example, may mitigate misunderstandings and increase comprehension. In this way, students can also check their understanding as the class moves through the text, lending clarity to subsequent activities.

💬 Student annotations should include some or all of the following details:

- "I'm going But first I shall tell you why I came" (line 540)
- "Go in and think on this" (line 559)
- "[Exit Teiresias led off by the Boy. Oedipus turns and goes back into the palace]" (after line 561)
- "[Enter Creon]" (after line 611)
- "That I cannot bear, so I have come here" (line 615)
- "But he's approaching from the palace— here he comes in person" (lines 636–637)
- "How did you get here? Has your face grown so bold you now come to my own home—" (lines 637–639)

Lead a brief class discussion of student annotations.

① Students will return to these initial annotations in the context of a deeper structural analysis later on in this lesson.

Activity 4: Lines 536–561 and 598–657 Reading and Discussion

55%

Organize students into groups of four, according to established protocols. Instruct groups to read aloud from “I’m going. But first I shall tell you why” through “you can say I lack all skill in prophecy” (lines 539–561).

- ▶ Students read aloud in groups.

① Alternately, consider instructing students to whisper read in their groups to promote fluency.

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

What contradictions does Teiresias construct, or create, in this passage?

① Ensure students understand the meaning of *contradiction*. If not, offer the definition “a proposition, statement, or phrase that asserts or implies both the truth and falsity of something.”

💬 Student responses should include some or all of the following contradictions:

- “he is a stranger...but he will prove to be a native Theban”
- “He will be blind, although he now can see”
- “He will be poor, although he now is rich”
- “he will turn out to be the brother of the children in his house—their father, too”
- “the husband and the son of the very woman who gave birth to them”

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider the following amendment to the above activity:

- Note that Sophocles sets up several contradictions in this passage and ask the class to identify the first one “he is a stranger” (line 547). Instruct students, in their groups, to read the remainder of the section quietly together, highlighting the other instances of contradictions that Teiresias constructs in this passage from “I’m going. But first I shall tell you why” through “you can say I lack all skill in prophecy” (lines 539–561).

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

What effect do these contradictions have on Oedipus? Why might Sophocles choose to reveal key details about the identity of the murderer through contradictions?

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider linking contradiction to a riddle, it may be necessary to scaffold with “What may contradictions have to do with riddles?”

- Students should indicate an understanding that the presence of so many contradictions in one passage creates the effect of confusion or mystery concerning the identity of the murderer. Some students may identify the larger structure of these contradictions as a riddle, and some students may connect this observation to recall that Teiresias twice accused Oedipus of being “the accursed polluter of this land” earlier in the drama so the “he” in Teiresias’s speech is likely Oedipus. Students should indicate an understanding that revealing the key details of Laius’s murder through the form of a riddle creates added tension to the mystery of who committed the crime.

Instruct students to return to the passage and annotate with SC for evidence of Sophocles’s structural choices.

- ① If students struggle, remind students that particular passages create effects within the text. The question above asks students to consider the effect of a series of contradictions on Oedipus. This example demonstrates how Sophocles structures the text in order to create an effect of confusion or mystery.

Instruct students to read aloud in their groups from “Apollo and Zeus are truly wise—” through “he will never be guilty of a crime” (lines 598–611).

- ▶ Students read the passage aloud in groups.

What words and phrases in the Chorus’s speech can help you to make meaning of *ascertain* (line 600) in this context?

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** What familiar word in *ascertain* can help you to make meaning in this context?

- Student responses may include: the familiar word *certain* in *ascertain*, as well as the Chorus’s desire for “sure” answers to these questions (line 600). Students may also point to the word “confirmed” (line 604).

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.9-10.4.a through the process of determining word meaning through the use of context clues.

Pose the following questions for students to discuss in groups before sharing out with the class:

How does the Chorus describe Teiresias, the gods, and Oedipus in this speech (cite locations)?

How might these descriptions refine your understanding of the relationship between gods, prophets, and men?

Whose wisdom does the Chorus consider most valuable?

🗨 Student responses should note:

- the repetition of the word *wise* to describe the gods: “Apollo and Zeus are truly wise” and Oedipus: “he was a wise man then” (lines 598, 608). The Chorus does not question the wisdom of the gods: “they understand what humans do,” but they doubt the wisdom of the blind prophet: “there is no sure way to ascertain if human prophets grasp things” (lines 599, 601).
- Ultimately, the Chorus decides that Oedipus’s wisdom is the most valuable because he passed the test of the Sphinx. Some students may extend this observation to include evidence that the Chorus is valuing their own knowledge: “We witnessed it...in my thinking now he never will be guilty of a crime” as further evidence that they are valuing the knowledge of men over that of prophets (lines 608, 610–611).

Lead a brief discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to return to the text and annotate for evidence of Sophocles’s structural choices using SC and the development of a central idea using CI. Remind students that as they annotate for specific elements within the text, they are beginning to identify textual evidence that may be used in the lesson assessment as well as the Mid- and End-of-Unit Assessments. This focused annotation supports students’ engagement with W.9-10.9.a, as they draw evidence from the text to use in their writing.

① Consider noting how Sophocles’s use of repetition of the word *wise* contributes to the development of a central idea (the tension between the knowledge of men and prophets). Students may code these concepts as both CI and SC.

Instruct students to read aloud the parts of Creon and Chorus Leader in groups from “You citizens, I have just discovered” through “here he comes in person” (612–637).

- ▶ Students read aloud in groups.

Consider your annotations of the movement of characters on and off the stage. Where is Creon when Oedipus accuses him? What effect is created by his absence?

- 🗨 Creon was not there to hear Oedipus accuse him of being in on the crime of Laius’s murder with Teiresias. He has “just discovered” that Oedipus has accused him of killing Laius.

What doubt does the Chorus express about Oedipus’s accusation?

- 🗨 The Chorus worries that Oedipus may have accused Creon “by the rash power of his rage” rather than by “his mind’s true judgment.”

Instruct student groups to read aloud from “You! How did you get here?” through “a troublemaker, an enemy of mine” (lines 637–657).

- ▶ Students read aloud in groups.

Instruct student groups to discuss the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What does Oedipus do upon entering the stage? How does Creon respond?

- 💬 Students should respond that Oedipus accuses Creon of Laius’s murder to his face, “you who are obviously the murderer of the man whose house it was, a thief who clearly wants to steal my throne” (lines 639–641). Creon responds by asking Oedipus to listen to what he has to say, “will you listen to me?” (line 652).

How does Oedipus’s response to Creon refine your understanding of the doubts the Chorus expressed in lines 626–628?

- 💬 Students should consider Oedipus’s response to Creon through the lens of the Chorus’s worry that Oedipus may have accused Creon “by the rash power of his rage rather than by his mind’s true judgment” (lines 627–628). Students may suggest that Oedipus’s refusal to listen to Creon “from you I will learn nothing” (lines 655–656) suggests that he is speaking from anger rather than calm and rational judgment.

Lead a brief discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to review the textual details that they marked at the beginning of this lesson to the focused annotation prompt: Annotate for the movement of characters on or off the stage as expressed through dialogue or stage directions.

- ▶ Students revisit their annotations.

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

How does Sophocles use the timing of Creon’s entrance into the dialogue to create tension for the audience?

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

① Display the Quick Write prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

► 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 homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread from: “I’m going. But first I shall tell you” through “a troublemaker, an enemy of mine” (lines 539–657) and review and expand their Quick Write, calling upon evidence from other passages in the text to support their responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

Homework

Reread from: “I’m going. But first I shall tell you” through “a troublemaker, an enemy of mine” (lines 539–657) and review and expand your Quick Write, calling upon evidence from other passages in the text as support.