

9.2.2 Lesson 8

Introduction

In this lesson, students will explore the passage “At least first listen to what I have to say” through “it is not yours alone” (lines 658–766). Students will explore the development of the central idea of the role of fate in Laius’s murder through an analysis of key details in the argument between Oedipus and Creon. Students will continue to develop their understanding of Oedipus’s opinion of prophecy.

Students will build upon writing and discussion skills as they participate in a Silent Discussion to the following prompt: How does Oedipus's reaction to the prophecy refine or alter your understanding of a central idea in the text?

For homework students will continue to read their AIR text and will respond briefly in writing to a reflective prompt that asks them to use recently acquired vocabulary to synthesize their understanding of the argument between Oedipus and Creon.

Standards

Assessed Standard	
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	
SL.9-10.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

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 Oedipus's reaction to the prophecy reveal how his beliefs about Teiresias and prophecy have changed?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response may include the following:

- Oedipus's reaction to the prophecy reveal that he no longer seems to believe in prophecy, especially if it comes from Teiresias. Oedipus doesn't believe Teiresias's prophecy that he is guilty, because he thinks Teiresias has been convinced by Creon to lie to him. "If Teiresias were not working with you, he would not name me as the one who murdered Laius" (lines 689–691). According to Oedipus, Teiresias is not a true prophet because he did not reveal the truth years before when Laius was killed. "Why did this man, this wise man, not speak up?" (line 684) Some students may suggest that Oedipus ignores Creon's suggestion to confirm the things he is saying by "go[ing] to Delphi and ask[ing] the prophet" because he doesn't believe in Teiresias's prophecy or trust prophets (line 728).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- persuade (v.) – to convince someone to do or believe something
- deceitful (adj.) – dishonest
- Delphi (n.) – an ancient city in central Greece, in Phocis: site of an oracle of Apollo
- conspired (v.) – agreed together, especially secretly, to do something wrong
- conspirator (n.) – a person who takes part in a secret plan of wrongdoing
- treacherous (adj.) – untrustworthy, unreliable
- govern (v.) – to rule over in authority

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

- betrayed (v.) – to have hurt someone who trusts you

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.1 Text: <i>Oedipus the King</i>, lines 658–766 	
Learning Sequence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Lines 658–766 Reading and Discussion Silent Discussion Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 10% 40% 30% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (from 9.2.1 Lesson 1)
- Student copies of the Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (from 9.2.2 Lesson 5)

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.9-10.2. In this lesson, students will analyze the key details of Creon's interrogation into the murder of Laius in order to explore the development of the central ideas of *Oedipus the King*.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they further supported their Quick Write from Lesson 7 with evidence from the text. Ask several pairs to share out their evidence with the class.

- ▶ Student pairs discuss and share how they used evidence to further support their Quick Write assessments from Lesson 7.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (How does Oedipus's reaction to the prophecy refine or alter your understanding of a central idea in the text?). 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 from “At least first listen to what I have to say” through “it is not yours alone” (lines 658–766). Instruct students to consider the following question as they listen to the masterful reading.

① Consider having students hear this exchange in two voices to enrich their understanding of this conversation as an argument and exchange between Oedipus and Creon. Consider playing an audio version that uses two actors, or asking two students to prepare ahead of time to read this excerpt aloud in class.

- ▶ Students follow along in their text, reading silently and considering the following question.

What advice did Creon give to Oedipus (lines 670–672)?

- 💬 Student responses may include: Creon “persuade[d] [Oedipus] to send for Teiresias” (lines 670–671). Creon told Oedipus that he should listen to what the prophet had to say.

Activity 4: Lines 658–766 Reading and Discussion

40%

Instruct students to discuss the following questions in pairs. Then ask them to share out their responses.

Why does Oedipus consider Creon’s “advice” a betrayal?

- Student responses may include: Oedipus thinks Creon’s advice to listen to the prophet is a betrayal because the prophet ended up accusing Oedipus of the crime: “You yourself are the very man you’re looking for” (lines 433–434). Oedipus is accusing Creon of setting him up to take the fall for Laius’s murder.

What is the relationship between Creon and Oedipus? How might this relationship make Oedipus feel about Creon’s actions?

- Students should connect the family relationship—they are brothers-in-law—between Oedipus and Creon provided in the *Dramatis Personae* and “are you not married to my sister?” (line 697) to infer that this betrayal may be even more hurtful to Oedipus because it comes from a family member.
- ① As this question prompts students to return to their understanding of the conversation between Oedipus and Teiresias, it may help to direct students back to the interchange in lines 433–455 in order to find this evidence to support their answer.

Organize students into pre-established heterogeneous small groups. Ask groups to read aloud from “How long is it since Laius” through “as the one who murdered Laius” (lines 673–691) and work together to respond to the questions that follow.

- ▶ Students read aloud in groups and discuss the following questions.

What questions does Oedipus ask Creon? Underline them in your text.

- Student annotations should identify the following questions (lines 673–684):
 - “How long is it since Laius... was killed so brutally?”
 - “Was Teiresias as skilled in prophecy?”
 - “Did he ever mention me?”
 - “Did you not investigate the killing?”
 - “Why did this man, this wise man, not speak up?”

What does the repetition of “this wise man” suggest about the tone and meaning of Oedipus’s question, “Why did this man, this wise man, not speak up” (line 684)? What does he think about Teiresias’s wisdom and ability?

- Students should identify that the tone of the statement “this wise man” is sarcastic, because Oedipus’s line of questioning casts doubts on Teiresias’s skills as a prophet. Oedipus does not truly believe that Teiresias is wise. The question is accusatory, implying that Teiresias is not truly a “wise man” because he didn’t “speak up” in the past (line 684).

What evidence does Oedipus provide to build his argument against Teiresias?

- Student responses may include: Through a series of questions, Oedipus builds the argument that if Teiresias was telling the truth now about Oedipus’s guilt in the crime of Laius’s murder, then he would have accused Oedipus “many years” ago (line 677). Creon’s answers to Oedipus’s questions reveal that although he was considered a prophet when Laius died, Teiresias “never” said anything when Laius was murdered (line 681).

Why does Oedipus question Teiresias’s skills as a prophet? Cite evidence from the play to support your answer.

- Oedipus questions Teiresias’s skills as a prophet because Teiresias has accused Oedipus of committing the crime, but he didn’t accuse him when the crime happened: “back then did he ever mention me?” “No never” (lines 680–681). Oedipus is implying that Teiresias is not a real prophet but is lying to make Oedipus look guilty: “if Teiresias were not working with you, he would not name me” (lines 689–690). Oedipus believes that Teiresias is working with Creon.

Instruct students to reread independently, in pairs, or in their current groups from “If he says this” through “Those who are unreliable give rash advice” (lines 691–747), underlining the questions that Creon asks Oedipus.

- Students reread and annotate to the following prompt:

What questions does Creon ask Oedipus?

- Student annotations should include the following questions (lines 697–723):
 - “Are you not married to my sister?” (line 697)
 - “And you two rule this land as equals?” (line 699)
 - “And am I not third, equal to you both?” (line 701)

- “In your view, would anyone prefer to rule and have to cope with fear rather than live in peace, carefree and safe, if his powers were the same?” (lines 704–707)
- “So how can being a king be sweeter to me than royal power without anxiety?” (lines 715–716)
- “So why would I give up such benefits for something else?” (lines 722–723)

Ask students to share their annotations with their groups and then discuss the following questions. Explain to students that they will continue the work of collaborative discussion outlined in SL.9-10.1. Remind students that these discussion skills scaffold toward further discussions in this unit and to the discussion-based End-of-Unit assessment in Unit 3.

What is Creon suggesting about the responsibilities of being a king through the statement “So how can being a king be sweeter to me than royal power without anxiety?” How do his questions develop his argument for his innocence?

- Students should point to Creon’s argument: “So how can being a king be sweeter to me than royal power without anxiety?” (lines 715–716) to suggest that Creon believes that being a king causes a lot of stress and it often means you have to do things you don’t want to do. Creon argues that since he has all the power of a king because of his familial relationship to Oedipus: “And am I not third, equal to you both” (line 701), but none of the difficulty and stress, he would have no reason to try to overthrow Oedipus.
- Some students may extend this observation to include Creon’s statements: “if I were king myself, I’d be doing many things against my will” (lines 713–714) and “now I get everything I want from you, but without the fear” (lines 712–713) to support Creon’s argument that being a king brings lots of trouble and stress.

Who does Creon suggest Oedipus go to for proof of his innocence? How does this further develop Creon’s argument?

- Creon tells Oedipus to “go to Delphi” and “ask the prophet” (lines 728–729). Creon is arguing that since he brought back “exactly what was said” from his trip to speak to Apollo he could not possibly be guilty (line 730).
- ① It may be helpful to remind students to recall that the temple of Apollo is in Delphi, which is where Oedipus sent Creon “to learn from [Apollo] what [Oedipus] might do or say to save our city.”

Instruct students to reread independently from Oedipus's "If some conspirator moves against me" through Creon's "it is not yours alone" (lines 748–766). Then direct students to discuss the following questions in groups.

- ▶ Students reread independently and discuss the following questions in groups.

What does Oedipus's use of "my" in his exclamation "Oh Thebes—my city!" suggest about how he understands his responsibilities as king (line 764)?

- 💬 Oedipus's use of "my" reasserts his feelings of sole ownership and responsibility for the people of his city. Students may also suggest that Oedipus's use of the possessive reasserts his position as king of Thebes and therefore the most powerful man in the city.

Activity 5: Silent Discussion

30%

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

How does Oedipus's reaction to the prophecy reveal how his beliefs about Teresias and prophecy have changed?

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.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.

After students have had an opportunity to respond in writing to the prompt, instruct them to complete a Silent Discussion in their groups, using their written response. Students pass their written response around in their groups. At each pass, students respond briefly to the original response or another comment a group member has made. Remind students to use evidence to support, build upon, or respectfully contradict what other group members are writing. Once students have completed a full rotation and their original response is returned to them, have students submit their response for lesson assessment and accountability.

Display the Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist and remind students to consult it as they engage in the Silent Discussion.

- ▶ Students participate in a Silent Discussion to the focusing prompt.

- ① This Silent Discussion allows an opportunity for students to complete a brief written response for lesson assessment but also provides the opportunity for students to practice collaboration skills as they are exposed to and respond to different viewpoints.

Using the Speaking and Listening Rubric, circulate to observe students' mastery of SL.9-10.1.

- 🗣 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread the section of the text from this lesson and respond in writing to the following prompt: Use several of the following vocabulary words to summarize the argument between Oedipus and Creon: *allegations*, *betrayed*, *reproach*, *spurred*, and *rash*. Remind students to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

Also, instruct students to continue their Accountable Independent Reading through the lens of their focus standard and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Reread the section of the text from this lesson, from “At least first listen to what I have to say” through “it is not yours alone” (lines 658–766). Use several of the following vocabulary words to summarize the argument between Oedipus and Creon: *allegations*, *betrayed*, *reproach*, *spurred*, and *rash*.

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.