

9.2.2

Lesson 10

Introduction

In this lesson students will read from “Lady, as I listen to these words of yours” through “then he will be here” (lines 874–922). Students will examine Oedipus’s reaction to Jocasta’s description of Laius’s murder and consider his opinion of who might be responsible for this crime. Collaborative discussions scaffold students towards analyzing Oedipus’s shifting understanding of the central idea of the role of fate in the crime of Laius’s murder.

For homework, students will reflectively respond in writing to a prompt that asks them to consider how this passage might serve as a turning point in the play.

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.9-10.5	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.

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">Who does Oedipus blame for this “dreadful curse”? What is the role of fate in the placing of blame (line 894)?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response may include the following:

- Oedipus blames himself for the “dreadful curse that trouble[s]” him, because it appears that events he was involved in led directly to Laius’s death: “I may have just set myself under a dreadful curse without my knowledge!” (line 893–894). If this is true then fate had nothing to do with the murder of Laius. Some students may broaden this inference to assert that Oedipus’s statement “without my knowledge” (line 894) suggests that although he recognizes the curse is a result of his past actions, he is still not taking full responsibility for these decisions because he did not know.
- Some students may suggest that Oedipus blames the gods for the “dreadful curse that trouble[s]” him. When Oedipus discovers that he may have been involved in Laius’s death he cries out, “Oh Zeus, what have you done? What have you planned for me?” (lines 886–887), placing the responsibility of doing and planning the actions that led to the curse onto the god Zeus. Oedipus also says that he is full of “terrible fears the prophet sees” (line 897), which implies that the curse he suffers under is something from the gods, something that prophets can see. If this is true then fate had a role in the crime of Laius’s murder.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- Zeus (n.) – the supreme deity of the ancient Greeks, the god of the heavens
- escort (n.) – a group of persons or a single person who accompanies another for protection, guidance, or courtesy
- herald (n.) – a royal or official messenger

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

- None.

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.5 Text: <i>Oedipus the King</i>, lines 874–922 	
<p>Learning Sequence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Lines 874–922 Reading and Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 10% 55% 15% 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.9-10.2. In this lesson students will continue to explore prophetic voice and its role in the development of a central idea in the text through the perspective of Oedipus.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to discuss in pairs and share out the connecting ideas and points of comparisons they identified in the Riddle Handout.

- ▶ Student pairs share the connecting ideas they identified in the Riddle Handout.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (Who does Oedipus blame for this “dreadful curse”? What is the role of fate in the placing of blame?). 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 “Lady, as I listen to these words of yours” through “then he will be here” (lines 874–922).

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Pose the following annotation prompt: How is Oedipus feeling in this passage? Underline the words and phrases that tell you so.

- 🗨 Student annotations should include some or all of the following details:
 - “my soul is shaken, my mind confused”
 - Jocasta: “What’s worrying you?”
 - Jocasta: “Why is your spirit so troubled?”

- “I am afraid, full of terrible fears”
- “Alas! Alas!”

Lead a brief discussion of student annotations.

- ① This passage is a transitional moment in the text, in which Oedipus switches from anger, bravado, and skepticism to the beginnings of fear and anxiety over his role in Laius’s murder. With this focused annotation, students will isolate key details and begin their exploration of the effects of Oedipus’s shifting feelings on the outcome of the drama.

Activity 4: Lines 874–922 Reading and Discussion

55%

Place students in pairs. Instruct pairs to read aloud from “Lady, as I listen to these words” through “What have you planned for me?” (lines 874–887). Direct student pairs to discuss the following questions before sharing out with the class.

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

How does the *intention* of Jocasta’s story differ from the actual *effect* that it has on Oedipus?

- 🗨️ Students should point to the words “shaken” and “confused” to demonstrate that Jocasta’s words have upset Oedipus. Jocasta intended to “ease [Oedipus’s] mind” (line 851) and help him not be worried, but she has done the opposite.

Where is Oedipus looking for answers in this passage?

- 🗨️ Oedipus is talking to Jocasta: “How long is it since these events took place?” (line 883), and he is also speaking to the god Zeus: “Oh Zeus...what have you planned for me?” (lines 886–887). Oedipus is looking for answers from his wife, and he is also looking for them from the gods.

- ① It may be helpful to remind students that Zeus is the supreme deity of the ancient Greeks; he is the god of the heavens.

What does the word *planned* suggest about the role Oedipus believes Zeus plays in his life?

- 🗨️ The word *planned* suggests that Oedipus believes Zeus controls the events of his life.

Instruct pairs to continue to read aloud from Jocasta’s “What is it, Oedipus?” through “under a dreadful curse without my knowledge” (lines 887–894). Direct students to answer the following questions in pairs

before sharing out with the class. What effect is created by the word *yet* in his request when Oedipus states “Not yet, no questions yet” (lines 888–889)?

- Oedipus asks Jocasta not to ask him any “questions yet” (line 889). The word *yet* implies that he will answer her questions later; this creates the effect of foreshadowing. The many questions that have arisen around the role of Oedipus in the crime of Laius’s murder will be answered eventually, but not *yet*.

How does Jocasta’s description of Laius further develop Oedipus’s fear?

- Jocasta says that Laius “was not all that unlike” Oedipus—according to Jocasta, Oedipus and Laius look alike (line 892).
- ① Sophocles plants small details like Jocasta’s description of Laius throughout the drama to foreshadow the traumatic revelation of Oedipus’s familial relationship to Laius. Although students may not be ready to infer how these subtle references build the dramatic irony of the play, noting these details throughout the reading process builds the foundation necessary for a rich retroactive exploration of how Sophocles structures the revelation of Oedipus’s crime later in the unit.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** To scaffold understanding, consider posing the following question:

How would the meaning of Jocasta’s description change if the word *not* was omitted? How does the addition of the word *not* change the meaning of *unlike* (line 892)?

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Student responses should indicate an understanding that if *not* was removed, then Jocasta would be saying that Laius did not look like Oedipus at all. The use of the word *not* in combination with *unlike* makes Jocasta’s statement mean that they do look like each other. Even though Jocasta is using negative descriptions, she is really saying that Oedipus looks like Laius.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with the complex syntax of Jocasta’s description of Laius, it may be helpful to scaffold their comprehension of this double negative construction—Jocasta’s two negatives (*not* and *unlike*) cancel each other out to form a positive description.

What has Oedipus just realized about himself? How does the word *may* develop your understanding of his realization?

- Oedipus has just realized he “may have just set [him]self under a dreadful curse” (lines 893–894). The use of the word *may* in this statement creates a sense of uncertainty and develops the idea that Oedipus did something “without [his] knowledge.” The actions that led to the dreadful curse happened without Oedipus realizing it (line 894).

Instruct pairs to continue reading aloud from “What do you mean?” through “It’s all too clear” (lines 895–905). Direct students to discuss the following questions together before sharing out with the class.

How does Jocasta respond? What effect does Jocasta’s response have on this passage?

- 🗨️ Jocasta begins to “tremble” and “shake” (lines 896, 899). She is worried by what Oedipus says. She is beginning to feel scared. This further develops senses of mystery, danger, and foreboding.

According to Oedipus, what does the “prophet see” (line 897)? How does this compare to Oedipus’s initial reaction to Teiresias’s prophecy?

- 🗨️ The prophet sees “terrible fears” (line 897). Where Oedipus was at first angry, he is now afraid that Teiresias was right.
- ① If students struggle to make this connection between Oedipus’s shifting attitudes towards prophecy, direct them to reread his initial enraged reaction to Teiresias’s prophecy earlier in the play, from “I will. In my anger I will not conceal” through “this work all by yourself” (lines 411, 417).

Instruct pairs to read aloud from “Lady who told you this?” through “Then he will be here” (lines 905–922). Direct students to discuss the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Where is Oedipus looking for answers now? What is he trying to find out?

- 🗨️ Oedipus is looking for answers from the man who “told [Jocasta] this” information about Laius’s murder, “the only one who got away” when Laius was killed (lines 905–906). Oedipus is trying to find out the details of Laius’s murder from this servant.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

Who does Oedipus blame for “this dreadful curse”? What is the role of fate in the placing of blame (line 894)?

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.

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread the selection of text from this lesson and respond in writing to the following prompt: How might this passage mark a turning point of the play? 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 “Lady, as I listen to these words of yours” through “then he will be here” (lines 874–922) and respond to the following prompt: How might this passage mark a turning point of the play? 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.