

## Oedipus Rex Essay Topics

1. Examine the playwright's use of foreshadowing throughout the play, and discuss how its use:
  - Makes Oedipus a less (or more) sympathetic character **OR**
  - Highlights Oedipus' tragic flaw
2. Examine the playwright's use of the three types of irony (situational, dramatic, and verbal) throughout the play, and discuss how its use
  - Makes Oedipus a less (or more) sympathetic character **OR**
  - Highlights Oedipus' tragic flaw

### \*NOTE:

-If you choose essay choice #1, you should first think about how you want to organize your paper. What different things are foreshadowed throughout the play? Or, what do different characters foreshadow to Oedipus? Formulate your three-part specific thesis next. Then, think about the second part of the question. Does this foreshadowing make Oedipus a more sympathetic character? Does it make him less sympathetic? Why? Or, you may want to think about Oedipus' tragic flaw. Is he too proud? Is he too easily angered? Is he too quick to jump to conclusions? Whatever you think his flaw is, how is it showcased by the enormous amount of foreshadowing in the play? Remember, in each of your body paragraphs, you must have purpose statements that go back to your thesis and answer this second part of the prompt.

### Example thesis statements:

Although Teiresias, Jocasta, and the old shepherd make comments to Oedipus that foreshadow the outcome of his search, Oedipus never heeds their warnings, and therefore, his tragic flaw, rashness, is all the more evident.

Although the truth about Laius' murder, Oedipus' birth, and the incestuous relationship between Oedipus and Jocasta are all foreshadowed to Oedipus throughout the play, Oedipus' desire to rid Thebes of the plague and save his people cause him to disregard these warnings, which makes him an extremely sympathetic character when he finally reaches his demise.

-If you choose essay choice #2, you also should first think about how you want to organize your essay. However, this is easier because the obvious choice would be to discuss each of the different types of irony in each of your three paragraphs. The challenge, however, is in deciding if the irony makes Oedipus more or less sympathetic and how (ex: it is ironic that Oedipus leaves Corinth to avoid his fate, and the oracle comes true anyway; however, how does that make him more sympathetic?) Or, you may want to think about Oedipus' tragic flaw. Is he too proud? Is he too easily angered? Is he too quick to jump to conclusions? Whatever you think his flaw is, how is it showcased by the enormous amount of irony in the play? Remember, in each of your body paragraphs, you must have purpose statements that go back to your thesis and answer this second part of the prompt.

### Example thesis statements:

Through Sophocles' use of verbal, situational, and dramatic irony, Oedipus becomes a seemingly more sympathetic character in his demise.

The generous use of verbal, situational, and dramatic irony highlights Oedipus' tragic flaw, his over-confidence.

### **\*\*\*NOTE**

**When citing quotes from *Oedipus Rex*, you will simply put the line numbers in parentheses. Ex: Jocasta says, "For God's love, let us have no more questioning! / Is your life nothing to you?" (1003-4).**

**A backslash shows where one line ends and another begins.**

Thesis:

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Point Sentence #1:

Proof #1:

Purpose:

Proof #2:

Purpose:

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Point Sentence #2:

Proof #1:

Purpose:

Proof #2:

Purpose:

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Point Sentence #3:

Proof #1:

Purpose:

Proof #2:

Purpose:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Oedipus Rex Essay: Irony/Foreshadowing**

**I. Mechanics (5 pts. each)**

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ Spelling/Word choice    | _____ No Fragments        |
| _____ Punctuation/Comma Rules | _____ No Run-On Sentences |

**II. Structure (5 pts. each)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer has a good attention-getter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer has a clear thesis statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer uses transition words between paragraphs (ex: another, next, finally, in conclusion)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each body paragraph begins with a clear point sentence
- \_\_\_\_\_ Organization- entire paper follows MLA format and progression of thoughts is logical
- \_\_\_\_\_ The information in the body supports the thesis statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paper is appropriate length- 6 paragraphs of at least 7-9 sentences each
- \_\_\_\_\_ The writer has a good conclusion that does not just summarize
- \_\_\_\_\_ All citations are cited correctly in MLA format
- \_\_\_\_\_ The writer includes a works cited page that is in correct MLA format

**III. Content (10 pts. each)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ The writer answers the prompt completely and discusses either irony or foreshadowing **and** discusses how it make Oedipus a more or less sympathetic character or how it highlights his tragic flaw
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the writer back up their point sentences with an adequate amount of proof (2 relevant quotes in each body paragraph)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the writer explain their examples adequately (purpose) and relate that information back to the thesis statement?

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ / 100 pts.

