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The Motif of Sight: Knowledge versus ignorance in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex

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UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: The Motif of Sight: Knowledge versus ignorance in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*

Grade Level: 11th and 12th

Subject/Topic Area(s): English Literature

Designed By: Lauren Lee

Time Frame: 11 59 minute class periods

School District: Littleton Public Schools

School: Arapahoe High School

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Brief Summary of Unit:

In this college preparatory English class, I expose students to formative texts of the Western world. One such text is *Oedipus Rex*, the only text from classical Greek literature students read in their English coursework unless they choose to take the elective course on its mythology. We will, therefore, explore this play with the goal of introducing students to this formative literary world, both by reading the play itself and also by studying several prominent myths of Greek antiquity. Additionally, students will obtain knowledge of some of the tenets of and contributors to Greek theater, including a study of its staging and setting as well as Sophocles' contribution to its development. Using their understanding of literary terminology, including, most prominently, motif, they will analyze the play using several reading and discussion formats as well as activities. Ultimately, in addition to these factual understandings, students will explore the nature of knowledge—knowledge of self, of others, of the world—and how people respond to and interact with the realities with which they're confronted.

Please note that the brilliance of my colleagues and inspiring work in the field, including the work of Jeff Wilhelm's *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension*, inspired many of the activities and strategies found in this unit .

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goals (e.g., standards)	Transfer
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed and are appropriate informal tasks. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives. Implement an effective group effort that achieves a goal Participate in the preparations of the group activity or product, defining and assuming individual roles Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. Describe and contrast characteristics of specific literary movements and perspectives. Evaluate the influence of historical context on the form, style, and point of view of a written work. Analyze and relate a literary work to source documents of its literary period or to critical perspectives. Evaluate how literary components impact meaning. Demonstrate knowledge of classical foundational works of world literature Read and comprehend dramas at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually,) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. Use reading and note-taking strategies to organize information and make connections within and across texts Use a range of elaboration techniques to establish and express point of view and theme	*Students will independently use their learning to…* Understand qualities one should possess to be self aware and how his relationship with others allows him to see himself clearly. Appreciate the necessity of introspection and how knowledge of self, though sometimes painful to self and others, is necessary for one's growth as well as for the greater good. Recognize that, despite hindrances and how we choose to interact with reality, it will reveal unavoidably reveal itself.

Meaning		
Understandings *Students will understand that….*	Essential Questions	
• Knowledge of self and reality, while often initially painful to one's self, behoove the greater good. Unfortunately, our vanity, pride, fears and arrogance sometimes prohibit us and others from seeing our reality. No matter our willingness to see this reality, however, it will ultimately reveal itself, whether we can handle that truth or not.	• What keeps us from seeing? • How accurately do we see ourselves? • In what instances is it better to be blind? To keep others in darkness? Can we ever truly be successful in doing so? • How do we respond to things we don't want to see?	

Acquisition		
Knowledge *Students will know…*	Skills *Students will be able to…*	
• The basics of Greek theater including setting, costuming, and structure as well as how Sophocles contributed to its evolution • The climate of Greek culture, some of its formative myths, and what those myths help us to understand about this setting and time period • The plot, setting, and main characters of the play • Stylistic devices used by	• Recognize how Greek culture manifests itself in *Oedipus*, including knowing the play parts and how the Greeks relationship with their gods affect what happens in the play • Identify instances of irony and motif in *Oedipus* and how they affect the	

Articulate a position through a sophisticated claim or thesis statement and advance it using evidence, examples, and counterarguments Support judgments with substantial evidence and purposeful Elaboration Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information	Sophocles to enhance play's meaning including irony, hubris, and motif	play's meaning • Use interpretive/ inferential reading strategies to analyze characters' relationships to motif of knowing

Stage 2 – Evidence

CODE (M/T)	Evaluative Criteria (for rubric)	
T	• Thoughtful • Thorough • Developed • Clear • Organized • Supported with specific detail	**Performance Task(s)** *Students will demonstrate meaning-making and transfer by…* Students will predict the outcome of taking the Myers Briggs test, complete the assessment, then reflect on/ evaluate its results using the specific prompts and directions described in the performance assessment below.
M A M M A M	• Same as above • Accurate • Same as above • Same as above • Accurate • Same as above	<u>Other Evidence (e.g., formative)</u> • Pre-assessment activity described in stage 3 below, including interview question handout and blog post • Background information quiz • Postcard from the past • Two reading log checks as well as collection of final reading log • Objective quiz over plot of *Oedipus*, myth of Narcissus, as well as myth of Icarus and Daedalus • Socratic seminar

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

	Pre-Assessment	
M	*How will you check students' prior knowledge, skill levels, and potential misconceptions?* Give students a handout with a series of questions on it that probe their self-knowledge and how well others know them, for example, "in one word, how would this student describe himself?" The student will complete/ obtain three responses: one from himself, one that indicates how another person responded (i.e. a parent, teacher, friend, etc.) and another that indicates how the student expected these individuals would respond. The student is on the honor system to not permit himself or others see the responses that are not his/ her own. Next, students will reflect on the class blog about their experiences, answering such questions as "how well do you know yourself", explaining their responses based on specific data gathered in this exercise.	

	Learning Activities	Progress Monitoring (e.g., formative data)
A	<u>Day one:</u> • Jigsaw background information by giving students varying excerpts from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that capture some formative stories in Greek myth, covering those gods frequently referenced in *Oedipus* including Dionysus, Athena, Apollo, Zeus, and Tiresias. (The appendix at the end lists stories in which each appears. Choose those that are more famous and characterize these gods more thoroughly.) As students read, have them investigate how these myths characterize ancient Greek culture. Understanding these were its idols, what can one infer about their culture? What do these gods have in common? What relationship do they possess to the mortals?	

	• Debrief first in groups that read the same myth, then with people who read differing ones. • Homework: Build on understanding with reading packet that contains background information on Sophocles, Athens, and the Dionysian festival. Also instruct them to read the introductory informtion in their books, keeping same focus questions in mind. Introduce pre-assessment due day three. Day two: • Show pictures from Greek theater that capture the dress, the structure of the theater, and staging/ props. For each of these 3 pictures, give students a graphic organizer that has 4 boxes. Show the picture as a whole and have them make observations about each picture, then divide into quadrants. In each of the 4 boxes, they will make more specific observations about what they see in that quadrant of the paper. After looking at all 3, based on these pictures, ask them what they understand about Greek theater. What makes it different than other theater types they've studied? After they've had time to reflect, have them discuss their responses in pairs and debrief as a whole class. • Supplement their thinking with notes on Greek theater. In addition to physical parts of the theater and the staging elements, inform them about play parts that correlate with their reading and how Sophocles contributed to what Greek theater was and came to be during this period of renaissance in his culture. • Homework: study for quiz on background information, finish pre-assessment	
A		
A M	Day three: • Begin with quiz on background information, including objective parts that ask them about Greek theater as well as Greek gods. Additionally, quiz will include a couple short answer questions about Sophocles' contribution to the theater as well as a couple about the culture as defined by its gods. • Next, debrief their pre-assessment activity by bringing up a few of their blog posts and inquiring further. Ask them, what did you learn about yourself that you didn't know before? What do others think they know about you that's untrue? Why do you think that is? Etc. • Collect interview handout. • Finish by distributing handout that captures Oedipus' family tree and informs students about what the Greek audience would know about Oedipus prior to the story's beginning. The opposite side of the handout will contain a graphic organizer they will use during reading. This graphic organizer will contain names of each major character or group of characters—Oedipus, choral leader and chorus, Creon, Jocasta, Tiresias. Students prompt will be, in each section of reading, to explore that character's relationship to the motif of seeing/ not seeing. What does each character understand? At what points? What does he remain ignorant to? In addition, for each day of reading, they'll be a reflection column that asks them to explore what strikes them as interesting, strange or important. Provide a model so they understand the expectation for each section of reading. • Homework: read to the first parode (choral ode), adding to your graphic organizer.	Quiz on background information. Blog post about pre-assessment. Pre-assessment interview handout
M / A	Day four: • When students arrive, have role cards that correspond with one of the characters in the play's opening. They will create a postcard about an earlier time that is important to the current situation, illustrating that scene from the past on one side of the card and the character's feelings about it on the other, using 1 interesting quote from the play in their postcard text. **Check graphic organizer for completion of first reading response, running a highlighter over that content so I know when students have added to it.** • Tea party: students will then play their roles, walking around and visiting other characters to figure out where their concerns are similar and where they're different.	Postcard from the past Reading log check #1.

	• In debrief, have each student share one most important line in their writing. What do we understand about the state of this city? What do each of these people/ groups of people seem to understand and seem to be missing? Why? • Homework: read to the end of the second choral ode. As you read, add to your graphic organizer. Bring in a picture of yourself (digital or print).		
M	Day five: • Have students fold a piece of paper in half and hand the picture of themselves and their paper to the person sitting next to them. (Bring in some extra pictures for students who forget.) That person's job is to describe what they see in objective, non-judgmental language that states fact. (Model this on the board with a picture.) Next, have them hand the picture back to its owner and, without unfolding the paper to see what that person wrote, perform the same exercise. When they finish, have them open the paper back up and take a few minutes to read and observe, recording, if they wish, observations they make. Use this to engage in a dialogue: do we see more clearly about ourselves or others? Was it easier to write about yourself or someone else objectively? Why? What distorts our perceptions/ allows us to see clearly? • Categories: give students quotes that come from the chorus, from Oedipus, from Creon, and from Tiresias. Without telling them how to categorize these and on what basis they're categorizing them, have them group the quotes into 2 to 4 piles without basing them on length or number of words. • Discuss categories. What quotes went together? Though those quotes may be from different characters, what do they have in common? What do the characters that see Oedipus clearly have in common? Those who don't? Why? • Homework: read the second episode through page 41 when Jocasta says, "clear to us himself".		
M / A	Day six: • Begin by reading myth of Icarus and Daedalus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses (*VIII:183-235). As students read, have them focus on the question of what keeps Icarus from seeing his demise. Use discussion of this question to introduce/ review the idea of hubris and to talk about its place within Greek tragedy. **While they read, check their reading logs for the last 2 entries.** • Next, look at Bruegel's "Landscape of the Fall of Icarus" and analyze the pieces of this visual, addresses color, foreground and background. • Lastly, have them write analogies using this painting, assigning prominent characters in the play including Tiresias, Oedipus, Creon, and the chorus to an object or person in the painting to the effect of, "the chorus is the plowman, foraging along with his work and refusing to see the truth because…". Ideally, do this by printing the painting and cutting it up, putting the picture pieces in an envelope. • Homework: read to the end of the third choral ode, reflecting on graphic organizer.	Reading log check #2	
M	Day seven: • Give students a series of fate cards or fortunes, each of which describes a certain future that affects oneself or another person in one's life and that is told that fate by a particular party. For example, "your friend tells you that, after having saved the economy and lifting America to a great time of prosperity, the president will be ousted from his office having been revealed to have committed a violent crime as well as several shocking immoral acts". Have them reflect—how likely are you to believe this to be true? Consider who tells you, what he tells you, and your regard for that person. **Reading log check #3 • Next, have them find a person/ people with a correlating card and discuss with that person/ those people. Why would you be inclined or disinclined?	Reading log check #3	

	• On the back of their fate cards, students will have character names, so that when they get into their groups, they can then explore multiple characters in relation to the following idea. In this section of the text, Oedipus finally begins to waver on his willingness to discredit his fortune. He listens to Jocasta, for example, and not Oedipus and Tiresias. Have them open their books and find textual evidence to defend their thinking as they determine who he listens to and why. Next, have students move to sides of the room according to the evidence they found, one side reflecting those characters he's inclined to believe and another those he's disinclined. Allow them to move around given what they discuss with people on their side of the room. • Debrief, using quotes as fodder for discussion and coming back to the warm up. Why do we believe some versus others? Why does Oedipus? To what extent is our willingness to believe contingent upon the information given and the person who the information involves? Why is this? • Homework: read to the end of the fourth choral ode, adding reflections to your graphic organizer.	
A / M	**Day eight:** • Begin by having students read the myth of Narcissus from Ovid's *Metamorphosis.* • Students will then be assigned one of two roles, agreer or disagreer. Show them the quote Tiresias says, "wisdom is a dreadful thing when it brings no profit to its possessor". Students will have 10-15 minutes to gather three pieces of evidence to defend their position: one from the play, one from the myth, and one personal anecdote. They will then get with a partner representing the opposing point of view to share their evidence, ultimately reaching a consensus about whether they mostly agree with this statement or mostly disagree. • We will then do poll everywhere as a debrief and use this to spark a discussion about where they ended up as a class. • Homework: finish Oedipus, adding to reading log.	
A / M	**Day nine:** • Objective quiz over *Oedipus*'s plot as well as that of Narcissus myth and story of Daedalus and Icarus. • Read Sarah Ockler's "What Censorship Teaches Kids". Before reading, assign students the role of parent, author, or kid. Have them respond to the reading from this person's perspective. Why is this issue important to you? Why do you feel the way you do about this issue? • Next, have them get into groups of 3 representing the perspective of each of these 3 people. Pose to students three questions and have them respond to these questions using the Microlab protocol: what would you say to the parent/ yourself? What would you say to the author/ yourself? What would you say to the kid/ yourself? • Debrief by discussing those questions and also addressing which role Oedipus is most closely related to (parent, kid or author) and doing the same for the chorus and Jocasta. • HW: prepare for day ten's Socratic. Be sure to bring your reading logs to submit.	Objective quiz over play's plot and summative elements of studied myths
M	**Day ten:** • Begin with a one minute essay that will be their ticket into discussion: what can Ockler's article and the play's conclusion teach us about the spread of information? Can we ever truly prohibit it? What other burning question/ idea about this play do you want to discuss? • Determine/ review Socratic seminar expectations • Socratic seminar, using one-minute essay as fodder. Particularly, discuss the fact that the chorus doesn't know what Oedipus did at the end of the play. Does that mean they will never know? What about Jocasta's choice to hang herself—how does this characterize her relationship to knowledge? How does Oedipus' choice of fate characterize him? Is he	Socratic seminar Collection of

	heroic? Can we, in fact, stop the spread of information, or does it behoove us to acknowledge its reality so we can better deal with it? • Collect students reading logs	final, completed reading log
T	**Day eleven:** • Have students record their predictions about the Myers Briggs by showing them the personality types and, based on the definition of each descriptor, having them predict what type they are. • Take Myers Briggs. • Homework: complete the reflection component of the performance task as captured on the handout below **Day twelve:** flex day	Performance assessment

Mirror, mirror on the wall: reflecting on your Myers-Briggs indicator

- Objective: taking and examining this famous indicator will continue to serve our course's college preparatory purpose and will, additionally, take our *Oedipus* unit's focus questions and ask you to apply them to your own life: **What keeps us from seeing?** How accurately do we see ourselves? In what instances is it better to be blind? To keep others in darkness? Can we ever truly be successful in doing so? How do we respond to things we don't want to see?

- Directions: Using your pre-assessment, unit coursework, and *Oedipus* mental notes, craft a typed reflection of 1 ½ to 2 pages minimally that captures your thinking about the following questions.

   This should not be a list of bulleted responses, but should rather be a thoughtfully organized, cohesive response with introductory remarks, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. *Please also use M.L.A. format for your response, noting headings, headers, font types, font sizes, and margin sizes.*

   For each question, be sure to use specifics from our coursework, your pre-assessment, and from your indicator to support your thinking.

    - How does your indicator inform and/ or correlate with your current study and career plans?
    - How does it influence your thinking about how you interact with others?
    - How others view you?
    - How you view yourself?
    - How accurate were your predictions?
    - To what extent do you find this assessment of you reliable? Explain.
    - What surprised you about yourself?

- Rubric:

Analysis and application   / 100

In the absence of your indicator, this assignment will remain incomplete, even if you submit the reflection component.

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Student responded to all seven questions thoughtfully and thoroughly.	Student responded to all questions OR may have neglected 1 question or part of a question, but addressed the others thoroughly and thoughtfully.	Student responded to all questions but responses may all feel hurried or un-thoughtful. A couple questions may also be neglected.	Student neglected to respond to 3 or more of the questions and response to others may also feel hurried or disingenuous.
Student took a genuine approach to the indicator, thoughtfully completing all parts.	Student responded to all questions OR may have neglected 1 or 2, but addressed the others thoroughly and thoughtfully.	Student responded to all indicator questions but responses were hurried. A few questions may also be neglected.	Student neglected to respond to several of the questions and response to others may seem disingenuous.

Skills: writing   / 100

Essays of less than one page *under correct formatting constraints* will be marked incomplete.
Essays of less than 1 ½ pages under said restraint will automatically lose ten points.

Please see the highlighted portions of the rubric below as well as comments on your reflection that indicate how your essay faired.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Organization and content	• Begins with an introduction and conclusion which are effective to essay's purpose • Effective topic sentences and transitions make organization sophisticated and easy to follow throughout • Ideas feel cohesive and focused throughout	•Begins with a clear introduction and conclusion that connect with content • Topic sentences and transitions make organization clear throughout • Feels tangential 1 or 2 places due to unnecessary information	•May lack an introduction or a conclusion • Although organization exists, it's challenging to follow, possibly due to absence of transitions and/ or topic sentences • Feels tangential in places	•Missing an introduction and a conclusion both. • Reflection is one big paragraph or a series of bulleted responses. • Feels tangential in several places
Style, tone and formatting	• Word choice is clear and sophisticated. • Clear, varied, graceful sentence structure (syntax) • Style/Tone suit purpose. • Student effectively uses MLA formatting	• Word choice is clear • Sentence structures make thinking clear throughout • Style and tone are inappropriate or ineffective to purpose in places. • Student uses MLA formatting with only a couple minor errors	• Word choice does not match what writer is trying to communicate at times. •Little variance in sentence structure and some may be unclear • Style and tone inappropriate or ineffective to purpose in several places. • Student neglects a component of formatting and/ or may have a few errors	• Word choice makes writing challenging to interpret. • No variance in sentence structure and many are convoluted.. • Style/ tone inappropriate and/ or ineffective. • Student neglects MLA formatting
Grammar, mechanics, and proofreading	No flagrant errors in grammar or mechanics. Proofreading is flawless.	Few errors in grammar or mechanics in relation to reflection's length and complexity. May also contain 1 or 2 minor proofreading errors.	A handful of errors or distracting patterns of mistakes in grammar or mechanics in relation to reflection's length and complexity. May also contain some proofreading errors.	Inattention to grammar and mechanics interfere with reflection's readability. It may also seem this essay was not proofread.