

## ***Oedipus Rex Paper***

### **Problem/Issue**

Why does Oedipus accept responsibility for his actions in the play (killing his father/marrying his mother), when they seem to be part of a fate he can't escape? He tries his best to escape this fate, so why should he be blamed?

### **Thesis (The writer's answer to the Problem/Issue)**

Even though Oedipus was fated to do these actions, he still does them on purpose. We can see the oracle's pronouncements as forecasts rather than prophecies. Oedipus's temperament leads him into sin.

### **Point 1**

Oedipus appears in the opening scenes as a proud and intemperate man (and something of a loose cannon)

#### **Evidence**

- Treats his subjects as inferiors
- Wants to play the hero
- Places an extremely harsh punishment on the murderer of Laius
- Irrationally accuses Teiresias of the murder
- Also accuses Creon of the murder

### **Point 2**

Oedipus similarly overreacts when he kills his father.

#### **Evidence**

- Coddled or spoiled as a child?
- Angry that his status is challenged when he's forced off the road
- His rage is out of control when he kills Laius
- He kills everyone in the party except one household servant
- Killed without a just cause

### **Point 3**

Oedipus doesn't take the gods seriously.

#### **Evidence**

- Takes matters into his own hands instead of awaiting his fate humbly
- He and locasta gloat about having outsmarted the gods' predictions

### **Point 4**

Oedipus's marriage to locasta also shows he doesn't take the gods seriously

#### **Evidence**

- The fact that locasta was old enough to be his mother should have been a warning
- Still violated the spirit of the Oracle's pronouncement; locasta was *like* his mother
- Oedipus and locasta definitely had a sexual relationship

### **Conclusion**

Circles back to the thesis, then talks about what happens in the end—Oedipus justly accepts blame.