

# Oedipus the King

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## Introduction

'Oedipus the King' is a play written by Sophocles in Ancient Greek at around 430 B.C. set in a fabulous past of the ancient Greek. Throughout the play, the king is determined to understand several issues about the community and himself.

As a result, he seeks help from the Theban chorus; Tiresias, the blind prophet; Creon, his brother in-law; Jocasta, the Oedipus wife and the shepherd. Throughout the play, conflict stands out as the main theme as explicated by exploring the three elements of conflict from the play viz. man versus man, man versus himself and man versus nature.

## Man versus man conflict

A conflict exists between the king and the prophet Tiresias. The play begins by investigation into the cause of death of Laius, the former Theban king. When the Oedipus King seeks advice from the prophet Tiresias, to his surprise, the prophet tells him that Oedipus was responsible for the murderer of Laius.

In disbelief, the King becomes annoyed with Tiresias and they end up into a heated argument. The king blames the prophet for accusing him for the murder (Sophocles 306). While the King maintains his innocence, Tiresias holds that the murderer of Laius is a Theban citizen whom they have a blood relationship. The manner in which Tiresias leaves the palace evidences unhidden conflict between him and the Oedipus King.

In addition, the king is in conflict with his brother in-law, Creon. When the prophet accuses Oedipus for the murder, the king blames Creon for masterminding the accusations. The king believes that Creon is determined to undermine him. As a result, the king calls for Creon's execution.

Another conflict exists between Jocasta and the prophets. Jocasta believes that prophets are liars and the king should take none of their advice. "Listen and I'll convince thee that no truth in these prophets" (Sophocles 316). This quote reveals that Jocasta

# Oedipus The King Essay Introduction

**Zhe Xu**



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