

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: K-12 Close Reading Task

Text grade band placement: 9-10	
Text	Text Complexity Analysis
<p>Title: <i>Antigone</i></p> <p>Author: Sophocles</p> <p>Note: <i>Antigone</i> is available in most 10th grade literature textbooks and can be found in the public domain. Complexity of the text is highly dependent on translation which varies greatly.</p> <p>Section used for task: Only the opening scene, the Prologue, is used for this task</p> <p>A link to some translations: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/31</p>	<p>Quantitative: Depending on the translation, Lexile can vary between 1020L and 1570L.</p> <hr/> <p>Qualitative:</p> <p><i>Purpose</i> - implied but easy to define as the reader continues to explore the events and characters</p> <p><i>Text Structure</i> - even with a higher Lexile translation, the predictable nature of a Greek tragedy helps ground the complicated language. Some quick explanation over unfamiliar sections of drama (e.g. Exodos, Antistrophe, etc.) may help, but isn't required in order to engage in a close reading.</p> <p><i>Language Features</i> - The language in the play, depending on the translation, can be unconventional and possibly archaic. The language is often rife with metaphor and can sometimes allude to obscure Greek mythology. Depending heavily on the translation, language can greatly differ in vocabulary required for understanding and complex sentence structure.</p> <p><i>Knowledge Demands</i> - Students need time understanding the myth of Oedipus to even begin understanding this play, the third in Sophocles' Theban cycle. Other allusions to Greek mythology in the play may help students understand difficult passages (depending on translation) but not a lot of background study other than the Oedipus story is required for students to engage in the difficult topics explored in this text (such as gender bias, the role of fate, and qualities of a leader).</p> <hr/> <p>Reader and Task:</p> <p><i>Potential Challenges</i> - The student must work through the language of the play to understand the complex meanings and metaphors. Students must fully understand the Oedipal myth to understand this play. Explanation of the original Oedipus story provides easy student motivation.</p>
ELA Common Core Standards addressed by task	
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.</p>	

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

What key insights should students take from this text?

- The story of *Oedipus Rex* provides the background information for this play.
- The Prologue sets the emotional groundwork for the rest of the play, and events all stem from what we read here.
- The characters are multi-faceted and each of the sisters begins the play evoking emotion and summarizing her objective.
- There is a crisis for Antigone that requires her to choose between the law of the gods and the law of the land.

Text-Dependent Questions

Prior Knowledge

Based on our exploration of the Oedipal myth, what do you know about the characters in this play: Antigone, Ismene, and Creon?

Comprehension

What is this Prologue about? What have we learned about the current state of Thebes? How do you know?

Explain Antigone's emotional state in this opening scene and why she feels that way. Use specific evidence to support your explanation.

Significance

Choose a moment that you think is significant to Antigone's argument for the action she would like to take and explain why that moment is significant.

Choose a moment that you think is significant to Ismene's argument and explain why that moment is significant.

Writing Mode

Informative/Explanatory

Writing Prompt

What can you learn about a character from his or her desires? In a short, informative essay, compare and contrast what Antigone and Ismene hope to accomplish as demonstrated in their dialogue in the Prologue. Be sure to explain each character's claims and supports for the action she would like to take. Then explain what this suggests about the qualities of each of the characters. Draw your explanation exclusively from evidence in the text and be sure to adhere to the conventions of Standard English.

Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers:

For struggling readers, the teacher must accomplish two tasks: (1) fully prepare the student with social and historical background knowledge of Greek theater and the Oedipus myth, and (2) slow the pace of instruction to fit the needs of the students. If students are not prepared for the context of the play, they will struggle to understand its complex themes. The first 424 lines of the play should hook students, so it's important to invest time in the analysis of those scenes. *Antigone* is not a long play, so close reading activities are reasonable without exhausting the students' interest.