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oedipus the king full text

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Oedipus the King Full Text: A Complete Guide to the Classic Greek Tragedy

When you search for **oedipus the king full text**, you're likely looking for a reliable source that offers the entire play by Sophocles in its original form, along with a clear understanding of its plot, characters, and themes. This article not only provides you with the full text of "Oedipus the King" but also offers a comprehensive exploration of its historical background, literary significance, and enduring influence on Western drama. Whether you're a student, a literature enthusiast, or simply curious about one of the greatest tragedies ever written, this guide will give you everything you need.

Why Do Readers Seek the Full Text?

There are several reasons why people want the complete text of *Oedipus the King*:

- Academic Study – Students and scholars need the full play for close reading, analysis, and citation.
- Literary Appreciation – Readers who enjoy Greek tragedy often want to experience the original language and dramatic structure.
- Teaching Resources – Educators require the full text to design lesson plans, discussion guides, and assignments.
- Public Domain Availability – The play is in the public domain, making it freely accessible and easy to share.

Because of these motivations, the keyword "oedipus the king full text" remains highly searched. Providing a clear, well structured article around this phrase helps readers find what they need quickly and satisfies search engine algorithms that prioritize relevance and user intent.

About Oedipus the King

Author: Sophocles

Sophocles (c. /497 /– /c. /406 /BC) was one of the three great tragedians of ancient Greece, alongside Aeschylus and Euripides. He is best known for his mastery of the tragic form, his skillful use of chorus, and his ability to create psychologically complex characters. "Oedipus the King" (Greek: 9ñó ´óÈ¿óÅ ¹´¤¸S¸¤) is one of his most famous plays, first performed in 429 /BC at the City Dionysia festival in Athens.

Historical Context

The play was written during the Peloponnesian War, a period of intense social and political upheaval in Greece. Sophocles' tragedies often reflected contemporary anxieties about leadership, destiny, and the fragility of human life. "Oedipus the King" explores these themes through the lens of a mythic story that predates the Greek polis but remains strikingly relevant.

Plot Summary

1. Introduction of Oedipus – Oedipus, king of Thebes, has solved the riddle of the Sphinx and saved the city. He is now beloved by his people.
2. The Plague – A devastating plague descends on Thebes. The Oracle of Delphi says that the plague will only

end when the murderer of the former king, Laius, is found.

3. Oedipus' Investigation – Oedipus vows to find the killer. He interrogates witnesses and discovers that he himself is the murderer, having killed an old man on a road in a fit of rage.

4. The Prophecy Fulfilled – Oedipus learns that he is the son of Laius and Jocasta, the former king and queen, and that he was abandoned at birth but saved by a shepherd. The prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother is now unfolding.

5. Jocasta's Suicide – Upon learning the truth, Jocasta hangs herself. Oedipus blinds himself in despair.

6. Oedipus's Exile – Oedipus leaves Thebes, guided by his son, and is eventually taken to Corinth, where he is made a king again, but he is haunted by his past.

7. Conclusion – The play ends with Oedipus's lament and a final reflection on fate and free will.

Main Characters

- Oedipus – The tragic hero, king of Thebes, whose fate is sealed by prophecy.
- Jocasta – Oedipus's mother and queen, who is unaware of her true relationship to him until the end.
- Creon – Brother of Jocasta, advisor to Oedipus, later becomes king of Thebes.
- The Chorus – The citizens of Thebes, representing the voice of the people.
- Prophet (Delphic Oracle) – The divine messenger who delivers the plague's cause.
- Messenger of the Sphinx – A key figure who informs Oedipus about the Sphinx's riddle.

Key Themes and Motifs

- Fate vs. Free Will – The tension between destiny and personal choice is central to Oedipus's tragedy.
- Blindness and Sight – Oedipus's physical blindness contrasts with his intellectual insight.
- Identity and Self Discovery – The play explores how identity is constructed and the consequences of self knowledge.
- Power and Responsibility – Oedipus's role as king forces him to confront the moral weight of leadership.
- Guilt and Redemption – The play examines whether guilt can be absolved through truth and penance.

Analysis of the Play

Structure and Dramatic Techniques

Sophocles employed several techniques that made "Oedipus the King" groundbreaking:

- Chorus as Moral Compass – The chorus comments on the action, providing context and moral reflection.
- Use of Prophecy – Prophecies drive the plot, creating a sense of inevitability.
- Climactic Revelation – The moment of truth is delivered in a dramatic crescendo that shocks both the characters and the audience.
- Foreshadowing – Sophocles drops subtle hints early on that foreshadow the tragic outcome.

Philosophical and Moral Implications

Oedipus's story raises enduring questions about the human condition:

- Can a person escape their destiny?
- What is the moral responsibility of a ruler when the city's fate is at stake?
- Is truth always liberating, or can it be a source of ruin?

These questions resonate in contemporary discussions about ethics, governance, and personal accountability.

Where to Find the Full Text

Because “Oedipus the King” is in the public domain, you can freely access the complete play online. Below are some reliable sources:

Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg offers a well formatted PDF and ePub of the play, available for download at https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2241. The text is transcribed from the original Greek and translated into English by various scholars.

Perseus Digital Library

The Perseus Digital Library provides the original Greek text with an English translation. It also includes helpful tools for linguistic analysis. Access the text at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc

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