

# Vocabulary

## *Oedipus Rex*: Vocabulary List

**besiege**— (verb) overwhelm

**solicitous**— (adj) showing care or concern

**enigma**— (noun) riddle or puzzle

**reproached**— (verb) accused, shamed

**cognizance**— (noun) perception, apprehension, the judicial hearing of a matter

**sagacity**— (noun) wisdom

**changeling**— (noun) an infant secretly exchanged at birth

**parricide**— (noun) one who murders his father, mother, or close relation

**pristine**— (adj) pure

**vexed**— (verb) worried; troubled

Aristotle's "Are you Greek Hero material?"  
 We don't know that you would want to be.

1. You are of noble stature and are meant for greatness.  
 No Yes

2. You are a virtuous (good), but not perfect.  
 No Yes

3. Your fate has been decided, but you try to change it.  
 No Yes

4. Your misfortunes are not wholly deserved. Often times  
 your punishments exceeds the crime.  
 No Yes

5. Your downfall or problems are partially your own fault,  
 the result of  
 free choice, not an accident or villainy.  
 No Yes

1-2 Yes's	3 Yes's	4 – 5 Yes's
You are a regular guy. This may sound like a let down, but hey, you get to be saved and your, well, normal. So just relax, say your prayers to the Greek gods, and let the heroes do all the work.	You're a sidekick. You mean well, but you will probably never get the glory of the hero and your costume isn't as cool. However, you are under less pressure to save the day.	You are a tragic hero. You are a good person, but you are burdened because of your flaws. You are doomed because of the choices you made. We may or may not pity you.

## Ancient Greek Theatre:

This is where it all began: the Theatre of \_\_\_\_\_ in Athens.



2500 years ago, 2000 years before Shakespeare, Western theater was born in \_\_\_\_\_

Greece. Between 600 and 200 BC, the ancient Athenians created a theater culture whose form, technique and terminology have lasted 2 millennia. They created plays that are still considered among the greatest works of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Scope of Influence:

The \_\_\_\_\_ that developed in Athens and flourished in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE have influenced nearly all subsequent Western drama, starting with that of the Romans.

When the Romans conquered \_\_\_\_\_ they brought Greek literature back to Italy and set about making it their own.

The earliest origins of drama are to be found in Athens where ancient hymns, call \_\_\_\_\_, were sung in honor of the god \_\_\_\_\_.

These hymns were later adapted for \_\_\_\_\_ in which participants would \_\_\_\_\_.

One of these, the \_\_\_\_\_, a festival of entertainment held in honor of the god \_\_\_\_\_, featured competitions in \_\_\_\_\_.

According to tradition, in 534 or 535 BC, \_\_\_\_\_ astounded audiences by leaping on to the back of a wooden cart and reciting poetry, as if he was the character

whose lines he was reading. In doing so he became the world's first \_\_\_\_\_, and it is from him that we get the word \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Development of plays:**

- First plays had one actor \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ added a second speaking role, called the antagonist, and reduced the chorus from 50 to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ went on to add a third actor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ added both a \_\_\_\_\_, introducing the subject of the play and the \_\_\_\_\_, a divine figure who wrapped up any loose end at the close.
- Drama was classified according to three different types of genre: \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Comedy:**

- The first comedies were mainly \_\_\_\_\_ and mocked men in power for their vanity and foolishness.
- The first master of comedy was playwright \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Tragedy:**

- Tragedy dealt with the big themes of \_\_\_\_\_, the abuse of power and the fraught relationships between men and gods.
- Typically the main \_\_\_\_\_ of a tragedy commits some terrible crime without realizing how foolish and arrogant he has been. Then, as he slowly realizes his \_\_\_\_\_, the world crumbles around him.
- The three great playwrights of tragedy were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

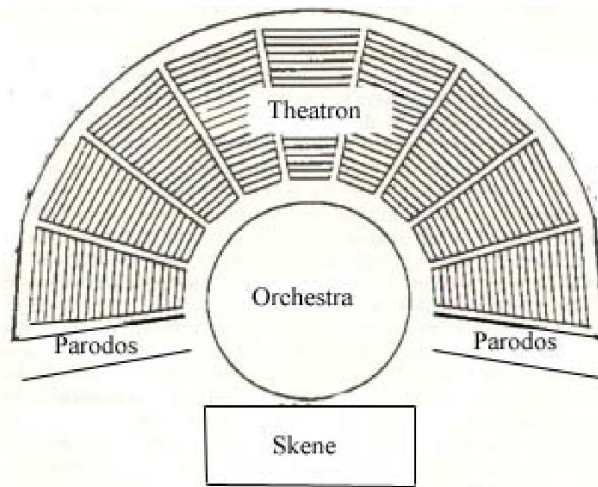
### **Satyr Plays:**

- These short plays were performed between the acts of \_\_\_\_\_ and made fun of the plight of the tragedy's characters.
- The satyrs were \_\_\_\_\_, half-goat figures and actors in these plays wore large phalluses for comic effect.

### **Staging of an Ancient Greek Play:**

- Greek plays were performed in an \_\_\_\_\_ theatre, used \_\_\_\_\_, and were almost always performed by a chorus and \_\_\_\_\_.
- No matter how many speaking characters there were in the play, only \_\_\_\_\_ actors were used; the actors would go back stage after playing one character, switch masks and costumes, and reappear as another character.
- Greek plays were performed as part of \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of the god \_\_\_\_\_, and unless later revived, were performed only once.

- o Plays were always presented in competition with other plays and were voted either the first, second or third (last) place.



Parts of a Greek Theater

### Parts of a Greek Theatre

Parts of a Greek Theater Early Greek theaters were probably little more than open areas in city centers or next to hillsides where the \_\_\_\_\_, standing or sitting, could watch and listen to the \_\_\_\_\_ singing about the exploits of a god or \_\_\_\_\_. From the late \_\_\_\_\_ BC to the \_\_\_\_\_ BC there was a gradual evolution towards more elaborate theater structures, but the basic layout of the \_\_\_\_\_ remained the same. The major components of Greek theater are labeled on the diagram above.

**Orchestra:** The orchestra (literally, \_\_\_\_\_) was normally circular. It was a level space where the chorus would dance, sing and interact with the actors who were on the stage near the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Theatron:** The theatron (literally, \_\_\_\_\_) is where the spectators sat. The theatron was usually part of a hillside overlooking the orchestra, and often wrapped around a large portion of the orchestra,

**Skene:** The skene (literally \_\_\_\_\_) was the building directly behind the stage. It was above the level of the orchestra and was perhaps \_\_\_\_\_ feet wide and 10 feet deep.

It had at least one set of \_\_\_\_\_, and actors could make entrances and exits through them. There was also access to the roof of the skene from behind, so that actors playing \_\_\_\_\_ and other characters could appear on the roof, if needed.

**Parodos:** The paradoi (literally \_\_\_\_\_) are the paths by which the chorus and some actors made their entrances and exits.

### Declaratory Acting Style:

Actors could not move easily, so lines were delivered in a \_\_\_\_\_ style.

Broad sweeping gestures.

General movements to express emotions: \_\_\_\_\_ – grief; beating chest – mourning; stretching arms – prayer

Minor props – scepter – king, spear – warrior, elderly –  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Greek Masks and their Paradox:

- The most distinctive feature of the mask was its ability to limit and broaden at the same time.
- It identified a specific character, but it also had generalized features which gave an \_\_\_\_\_ quality. This allowed the audience to “get” the personal message intended for each member of the audience.

### Format of the play:

Prologue

Parados

Scene

Ode

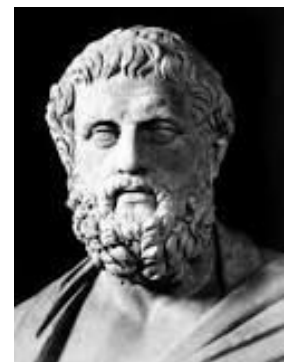
Exodos



- The prologue and \_\_\_\_\_ provide the audience with a summary of past events that have led up to the moment of the play. They also build pace and anticipation for the entrance of the central character. The \_\_\_\_\_ normally makes their entrance during the \_\_\_\_\_.
- There then follows \_\_\_\_\_ (scenes) that develop the plot and character, and these are interrupted by six \_\_\_\_\_.
- Then the exodus in the \_\_\_\_\_ scene.

### Sophocles Notes:

- Born in \_\_\_\_\_, about a mile northwest of Athens, Sophocles was to become one of the great playwrights of the golden age.
- By the age of 16 he was already known for his beauty and grace and was chosen to lead a \_\_\_\_\_ of boys at a celebration of the victory of \_\_\_\_\_.
- In his first competition, Sophocles took first prize – defeating none other than \_\_\_\_\_ himself.
- An accomplished \_\_\_\_\_, Sophocles performed in many of his own plays.
- However, the young Athenian’s voice was comparatively weak. And eventually he would give up his acting career.
- One of the great innovators of the theatre, he was the first to



- add a \_\_\_\_\_ actor.
- o He wrote more than 120 plays, but only \_\_\_\_\_ have survived in their entirety. Of these, \_\_\_\_\_ is generally considered his greatest work.
  - o *Oedipus Rex* is the first in a trilogy. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is \_\_\_\_\_ and the 3<sup>rd</sup> is \_\_\_\_\_. However, they were not written in trilogy order. Sophocles wrote \_\_\_\_\_ first, and then went back to write the first story \_\_\_\_\_. He wrote \_\_\_\_\_ last.

### **Background Info on *Oedipus Rex* or *Oedipus the King***

- o This tragedy of fate explores the depths of modern psycho-analysis as Oedipus unwittingly kills his \_\_\_\_\_ and marries his \_\_\_\_\_ in an attempt to avoid the very prophecy he ultimately fulfills.
- o Greek \_\_\_\_\_ were based on widely known myths or famous historical events, so the audience would know the characters and outline of the story they were about to see.
- o Heroes were mortals, such as \_\_\_\_\_, who were worshipped as demigods after their deaths.
- o Murder and incest violate natural law as well as human law, so these crimes were seen to offend the \_\_\_\_\_.
- o The Greeks believed that, when a murder was committed, the murdered, the place of the crime and any place the harbored the killer were \_\_\_\_\_, that is, outside the favor of the \_\_\_\_\_. A proper ritual cleansing \_\_\_\_\_ was necessary to restore both person and place to an acceptable state.
- o Apollo's oracle at \_\_\_\_\_, was the most important place of prophecy in the Greek world.
- o Seeing a play about Oedipus, for instance, Sophocles' Athenian audience would already know that this story came from the cycle of myths about the city of \_\_\_\_\_, one of Athen's rivals in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century.
- o The Oedipus story is set a few generations before the \_\_\_\_\_, which the ancient Greeks placed at 1184 BCE.
- o King \_\_\_\_\_ of Thebes received a prophecy that his son would kill him. So King Laius tries to avoid this prophecy.