

Oedipus Rex Key Facts

Writer: Sophocles | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

- **Full Title:** *Oedipus Rex* (English Name: *Oedipus the King*)
- **Playwright:** Sophocles (496 BCE- 406 BCE)
- **Written Time:** 429 BCE
- **Written Place:** Athens, Greece
- **Published Date:** 429 BCE
- **Literary Period:** Classical
- **Genre:** Tragedy
- **Place Setting:** In Thebes in front of the royal palace
- **Structure:** Prologue, Parodos, Episodes, Stasimon, Exodos
- **Climax:** When Oedipus uproots his eyes
- **Protagonist:** Oedipus
- **Antagonist:** Fate

Classical Tragedy and Tragic Hero

Oedipus Rex is a classical tragedy because it exhibits several key features: tragic hero, hamartia (tragic flaw), hubris (excessive pride), nemesis (retribution), peripeteia (reversal of fate), anagnorisis (recognition), and catharsis (pity and fear). Oedipus is a tragic hero because he is noble by birth. He has a tragic flaw (pride and anger), and his hubris leads him to defy the prophecy. His nemesis comes as a result of his actions, causing his inevitable downfall. He suffers a reversal of fortune (peripeteia). He realizes his mistake (anagnorisis). He faces his downfall due to fate and his flaws. He brings pity and fear (catharsis) to the audience. His story perfectly matches Aristotle's definition of tragedy.

The Role of Chorus

The **Chorus** in *Oedipus Rex* mainly does these things in Stasimon:

- **Comments** on the action (after important scenes, through Stasimons).
- **Reflects** the feelings of the citizens of Thebes.
- **Warns** about the dangers of pride (hubris) and ignoring the gods.
- **Prays** to the gods for help and justice.
- **Teaches** moral lessons by connecting the events to bigger ideas like fate, justice, and human weakness.

Stasimon:

The Chorus sang in the Episodes which are called Stasimon. These are:

- **First Stasimon** — After Teiresias and Oedipus argue, the chorus prays to the gods for help and warns against pride.
- **Second Stasimon** — After Creon is accused, the chorus warns that pride (hubris) leads to downfall.
- **Third Stasimon** — After Jocasta tells about Laius's murder, the chorus wonders about Oedipus's true birth and fears fate.
- **Fourth Stasimon** — After the truth is revealed, the chorus mourns Oedipus's tragic fall and the pain of human life.