

Read *Oedipus the King*, from “My children, latest generation born from Cadmus,” through “if no men share your life together there” (lines 1–66).

1. What function does the *Dramatis Personae* serve in this text? How can this structural element inform your understanding of what type of text this is?
2. A definition of *pity* is “to have compassion for the suffering of others.” How can this definition of the word *pity* (line 15) and the understanding established in your focused annotation help you to determine the meaning of *suppliants* (line 15) in this passage?
3. *Suppliants* refers to people who go to a powerful person for help in times of trouble. How can this understanding of *suppliants* help you to make meaning of *supplication*? What is the cumulative effect on meaning and tone created by this repetition?
4. What imagery in this section can help you to make meaning of the word *pestilence*?
5. Why have the *suppliant* citizens and the Priest come to Oedipus’s palace?
6. What reason do the citizens have for believing Oedipus can help them? Why do the citizens of Thebes “judge” Oedipus to be the “first of men” (lines 37–38)?
7. Where does the Priest suggest that Oedipus “find some help”?

8. What choice is Sophocles establishing for Oedipus through the Priest's *either...or* statement?

9. Reread from "Oedipus, ruler of my native land" through "with groans and howls" (lines 16–35). How does the Priest's description of the "deadly pestilence" as "that fiery god" refine your understanding of the tension between gods and men?