

## Dramatic Irony Worksheet

English 4 - McNamara

The contemporary Athenian audience would have already known, before the play began, that Oedipus himself was the murderer of Laius. As a result, there are quite a few lines in the play that we can label as “dramatic irony.” **Dramatic irony** is present when an audience member knows more than a character on stage.

An example of dramatic irony from *Oedipus*:

“I would be blind to misery/not to pity my people kneeling at my feet.” (lines 14-15)

The line is an example of dramatic irony because Oedipus mentions that he would be “blind” to misery, while the audience knows he will blind himself at the end of the play and forget all about the misery of Thebes to focus on his own. When the audience hears this line, they experience internal tension.

In order to examine how dramatic irony is important to the play, we must first “re-see” the play through our new knowledge, looking for specific lines that contain dramatic irony. Please focus on the lines you’re assigned: if your last name begins with A-D, lines 1-244; E-M, lines 245-572; M-Z, lines 573-end.

Record the line numbers of at least 5 statements that contain dramatic irony and explain why each is ironic.

My example from above would look like this:

Line #'s	Quote	Reason It's Dramatic Irony
14-15	I would be blind to misery/not to pity my people kneeling at my feet.	The line is an example of dramatic irony because Oedipus mentions that he would be “blind” to misery, while the audience knows he will blind himself at the end of the play and forget all about the misery of Thebes to focus on his own.

When we have these records, we’ll be able to understand how this contributes to the “pity” and “fear” that Sophocles is trying to evoke in the audience.

Prompts - please answer prompt 1 **or** 2 to connect dramatic irony to your own life. Then answer 3 **or** 4 to address how dramatic irony works in the play.:

1. In what ways do parents experience dramatic irony (i.e. with their children. Maybe even consider your own parents.)
2. Where & when do you experience dramatic irony in your actual life?
3. How does dramatic irony heighten Sophocles’ ability to evoke pity and fear in the audience?
4. How do the Greek gods experience dramatic irony?