

On the surface, at least, Sophocles' *Oedipus The King* and Plato's *Apology* appear quite different. The first is a tragedy of mythic origins, the second a philosophical account of an actual trial. So too do their protagonists appear different: Oedipus enters the stage as a revered king, Socrates sits accused in court, a poor philosopher. But there are also deep similarities between them.

Write a paper (7–8 pages) that presents several of these similarities. Focus especially on Socrates' and Oedipus's attitudes to knowledge, tradition, and the divine. Examine each of these attitudes in detail, supporting all of your claims with citations—but not necessarily quotations—of the texts. (For Socrates, you may consult *Euthyphro* as well as *Apology*; for Oedipus, stick to *Oedipus the King*.) In order to round out your portraits of these complex characters, consider their similarities against the background of some differences. How do these differences complicate your comparison? How might they enhance it?

To conclude, extract from your examination of these characters the lessons that Sophocles and Plato might have wished the Athenians to learn from their stories. In other words, which side—if any—might these authors have been taking in the Athenian culture war? You have not yet become acquainted with the philosophical developments that prompted this cultural conflict, but you have studied the fate of its most famous victim: Socrates. As you prepare to study these philosophical developments in the remainder of our course, what provisional conclusions might you draw about Socrates' role in the Athenian culture war?