

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Opening Statement

Introduce the literary element, theme, or technique the author uses.

Example formula:

“Throughout [Text], [Author] uses [literary element] to [effect: create tension, reveal theme, develop character, etc.]”

B. Definition of the Literary Element

Define the term so the reader knows how you are using it.

Example formula:

“[Literary element] occurs when [short, precise definition].”

C. General Context

Briefly explain the situation in the text where this literary element appears.

D. Thesis Statement

State what the author achieves through this element.

Example formula:

“By using [literary element], [Author] reveals [theme about human nature, society, or moral truth].”

II. BODY PARAGRAPH 1 – HOW THE AUTHOR USES THE LITERARY ELEMENT

A. Topic Sentence

Explain the main way the author uses the literary element in the text.

Formula:

“[Author] most powerfully uses [element] by [specific technique].”

B. First Example (Textual Evidence)

Use a direct quote or paraphrased moment from the text.

C. Commentary

Explain how this example demonstrates the literary element.

D. Second Example

Provide another moment from the text showing the same technique.

E. Analysis

Discuss how this deepens the theme, conflict, or message.

F. Clincher Sentence

Summarize the paragraph's main point without repeating yourself.

III. BODY PARAGRAPH 2 – CONNECTION TO ANOTHER LITERARY WORK

A. Topic Sentence

Introduce a comparison text that uses the same literary element or theme.

B. Context of Comparison Text

Identify author, title, and brief situational context.

C. Example of the Literary Element in the Comparison Text

Summarize or quote a moment showing the element at work.

D. Comparative Analysis

Explain how the two texts use the element similarly or differently.

Formula:

“Both authors use *[element]* to show *[shared theme]*.”

E. Clincher Sentence

Connect the comparison to the larger thesis.

IV. BODY PARAGRAPH 3 — HISTORICAL OR REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

A. Topic Sentence

Show how the theme or literary element reflects real human behavior.

B. Historical Example

Introduce a real historical figure or event.

C. Explanation

Explain how this example demonstrates the same pattern seen in the text.

D. Analysis

Show how the historical figure and the literary character share a similar limitation, blind spot, or flaw.

E. Clincher Sentence

Connect back to the universal theme or your thesis.

V. CONCLUSION — UNIVERSAL MEANING & FINAL INSIGHT

A. Restate Thesis in New Words

Avoid copying the thesis — reframe it.

B. Emotional / Intellectual Effect on the Audience

What does the audience experience (surprise, pity, fear, recognition, etc.)?

C. Final Revelation

Show how the theme or literary element reaches its final, most powerful point at the end of the text.

D. Universal Insight

Explain why the theme still matters in literature, history, and modern life.

Formula:

“This story endures because it reveals that *[universal truth about humanity]*.”

INTRODUCTION + DEFINITION + THESIS

Throughout *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles uses dramatic irony to heighten tension, deepen the tragedy, and reveal the painful limits of human knowledge. **[THESIS STATEMENT]**

Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something the character does not, and Sophocles builds his entire plot around this gap in understanding. **[DEFINITION OF LITERARY ELEMENT]**

In *Oedipus Rex*, the audience knows from the opening scenes that Oedipus himself is the murderer he is trying to find. **[GENERAL CONTEXT]**

By allowing the audience to see what Oedipus cannot, Sophocles shows how a noble and intelligent ruler can still be blind to the truth. This theme appears not only in Greek tragedy but also throughout history and literature, demonstrating how human beings often walk toward their downfall without realizing it.

Dramatic irony becomes the key that unlocks the full tragic power of the play. **[TRANSITION TO BODY PARAGRAPHS]**

BODY PARAGRAPH 1 – HOW SOPHOCLES USES DRAMATIC IRONY (TEXTUAL EVIDENCE + ANALYSIS)

Sophocles uses dramatic irony most forcefully by allowing Oedipus to curse himself without knowing it. **[TOPIC SENTENCE]**

Early in the play, Oedipus declares, “I curse myself as well... if by any chance he proves to be an intimate of our house.” **[TEXTUAL EVIDENCE / DIRECT QUOTE]**

To the audience, this line rings with horror, because we know the truth Oedipus does not: he is the guilty man. **[COMMENTARY /**

EXPLANATION]

This single statement sets the entire tragedy in motion because it shows Oedipus's determination to uphold justice while simultaneously signaling that his search for truth will lead to destruction. **[ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY]**

Sophocles intensifies this irony when Oedipus boasts about solving the riddle of the Sphinx. **[SECOND EXAMPLE]**

His pride in his intellect blinds him to the more important truth about his own identity. **[COMMENTARY]**

The audience watches helplessly as Oedipus's confidence becomes the very flaw that prevents him from seeing the evidence gathering around him. **[ANALYSIS]**

These layers of irony create a tragic structure where every step Oedipus takes toward truth leads him deeper into ruin. **[CLINCHER SENTENCE]**

BODY PARAGRAPH 2 – CONNECTION TO ANOTHER WORK OF LITERATURE

Sophocles' use of dramatic irony reflects a universal pattern found elsewhere in literature. **[TOPIC SENTENCE]**

A powerful parallel exists in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

[INTRODUCTION OF COMPARISON TEXT]

Like Oedipus, Caesar is a respected leader who is warned repeatedly about danger.

The audience knows he will be assassinated, yet Caesar walks into the Senate believing he is safe. **[DRAMATIC IRONY IN COMPARISON TEXT]**

The dramatic irony of the Ides of March mirrors the irony in *Oedipus Rex*: both leaders are blind to their own downfall while the audience watches with dread. **[COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS]**

In both texts, irony reveals the limits of human wisdom, especially in

those who believe they see clearly.

This parallel shows that dramatic irony is not just a literary device; it is a way authors explore human pride, blindness, and the tragic cost of ignoring warnings that appear obvious to everyone else.

[CLINCHER]

BODY PARAGRAPH 3 – HISTORICAL CONNECTION

This theme also reflects the experience of real historical leaders whose confidence prevented them from seeing danger. **[TOPIC SENTENCE]**

One striking example is Julius Caesar himself. **[HISTORICAL EXAMPLE]**

Historically, Caesar received signs, warnings, and even direct messages about the plot against him, yet he chose to ignore them. Like Oedipus, he believed too strongly in his own security and judgment. **[COMPARATIVE COMMENTARY]**

Both men were admired, intelligent, and confident, yet both walked directly toward their destruction.

The audience of history—like the Greek chorus—watches their final decisions with tragic awareness. **[ANALOGY + ANALYSIS]**

These examples show that dramatic irony is not merely a tool for storytelling; it reveals something deep about human nature: we often do not see the truth until it is too late. **[CLINCHER]**

CONCLUSION – MEANING, EFFECT, AND UNIVERSAL TRUTH

Ultimately, Sophocles uses dramatic irony to reveal Oedipus as a tragic hero whose downfall comes not from wickedness but from human limitation. **[RESTATED THESIS IN NEW WORDS]**

Though he seeks truth with sincerity, he cannot escape the consequences of actions he does not remember committing.

The audience feels pity for Oedipus because he suffers for crimes

he tried to avoid, and fear because his situation reflects the vulnerability of all human beings. **[CATHARSIS: PITY AND FEAR]**

When Oedipus blinds himself, the irony of the entire play reaches its conclusion: only when he loses physical sight does he finally see the truth. **[FINAL IRONIC REVELATION]**

Through dramatic irony, Sophocles teaches that even the greatest wisdom cannot prevent suffering, and that truth—once revealed—can destroy as well as free.

This ancient tragedy continues to resonate because the gap between what humans know and what they think they know is still the source of great sorrow in literature, history, and life.

[UNIVERSAL INSIGHT / FINAL REFLECTION]