**Essay prompts for the plays of Sophocles 2015**

**Oedipus essay Questions:**

1. How is the riddle of the Sphinx a metaphor for the life of Oedipus? Why then is it ironic that Oedipus solved the riddle? How does Oedipus’ revelation of the riddle of the Sphinx further support the perspective of Oedipus as the archetypal tragic man? What, therefore, is the play saying about being human?

2. Trace the use of these archetypal symbols in the play: light, sight, dark, blindness. How are these archetypes used to convey *theme* and dramatic irony? Again, in discussing theme, consider what Sophocles is saying about the human condition.

**Antigone essay questions:**

1. Who is the tragic hero/figure in this play? You may use Aristotle’s or Miller’s (or both) definition to defend your choice. How does your choice of tragic figure connect to Sophocles’ idea of the human condition, as derived entirely from a close reading of the text.

2. What is the significance of saying "no" in this play? Who says "no" and to what? Consider how saying "no" figures as an agent of tragedy. How does the act of saying no contribute to the theme of the play—that is what does it say about the human condition.

**Either**

1. Sophocles plays instruct the audience how to act in a moral or correct way. What is the moral lesson of one of the plays. For example, consider what Antigone says about acting on emotions rather than deliberate reason. Make sure you connect the lesson to theme, something that can be said about humanity.