1. What is significant about the fact that the first line of the play is a question?
   - Sets a tone that the play is of questions and answers.

2. How does Oedipus choose the spokesman of the group of supplicants?
   - Chooses the closest one.

3. What is your first impression of Oedipus?
   - He seems to be a very proud and arrogant king.

4. What problem is afflicting the city of Thebes?
   - Thebes is unable to produce any crops, causing a famine. A plague.

5. What is the house of Cadmus?
   - The city of Thebes.

6. How does the priest say the suppliants view Oedipus? How does this begin to establish Oedipus as an Aristotlelian tragic hero?
   - They view Oedipus as a main force of men, making him a tragic hero due to events happening later in the plot.

7. What exposition does the priest provide in this scene?
   - The Priest reminds the audience that Oedipus is the hero who solved the riddle of the sphinx (the "fell songstress") and freed the city of Thebes from its bondage.
8. Why do the supplicants believe that Oedipus will be able to find a solution to the famine?
   ✍ He had no human help when he had solved the Riddle of the Sphinx

9. Why does Oedipus claim he suffers even more than the supplicants?
   ✍ Oedipus claims that each supplicant suffers only for himself individually while he, Oedipus, suffers for the individual subject, his subjects generally, and for himself.

10. What impression do we get from Oedipus based on his language?
    ✍ He seems to be a good king, but seems incredibly proud and arrogant.

11. What action has Oedipus taken to find an answer to the city’s problem?
    ✍ Sent Creon to the Oracle of Delphi.

12. What is Oedipus and Creon’s relationship?
    ✍ Brother-in-Law

13. What is foreshadowed by Oedipus’ promise to the priest?
    ✍ He said that he will do whatever the oracle demands.

14. Why does the Priest suspect Creon brings good news?
    ✍ He sees that Creon is wearing a crown made from a laurel, the tree of Apollo, and believes he would not do so if he had brought bad news.

15. When Creon arrives from Delphi, what does Oedipus insist that he do? What does this insist about his character?
    ✍ Creon decides to talk about the Oracle in private. Oedipus wants to talk about the issue in public. It illustrates the extent to which he loves his subjects.
16. Why do you suppose Creon wants to talk to Oedipus in private first?
   - He wants to protect the privacy of his family.

17. What does Creon report from the Oracle?
   - The killer of Laius has to be exiled or killed to end the plague.

18. What is Oedipus' reaction to Creon's information?
   - He immediately asks questions about the circumstances of Laius' murder, presumably in order to help find the murderers and purge the city.

19. Explain the dramatic irony in Oedipus' interrogation of Creon.
   - The audience knows Oedipus killed Laius.

20. What is ironic about the one survivor's testimony?
   - He lied.

21. What theory does Oedipus immediately develop about Laius' death?
   - He suspects that the killer is among them.

22. Why did the citizens of Thebes not investigate Laius' murder at the time it occurred?
   - They were preoccupied with the Sphinx

23. What does Oedipus promise to do? Why, according to Oedipus, must his resolution be strong?
   - Oedipus promises to avenge the murder of Laius. He feels it is his duty as king to save his people and also believes that the person who killed Laius may do the same to him: “Whoever killed King Laius might … who knows? / Lay violent hand even on me...” (141-142)
24. Why does the Chorus appear at this point in the play?
   - The conflict has been introduced and the plot is in motion.

25. Whose voices does the Chorus represent?
   - Theban commoners

26. Give details of how the Chorus describes the city to the gods.
   - The Chorus tells the gods that their crops are not growing, their children are stillborn, and many people are dying. The dead are lying on the ground, and there are few others left to mourn them.

27. What does Ares represent to the Chorus? What various things do they wish for him?
   - Ares represents the Plague, and they ask Zeus to strike him with lightning bolts.

28. What is ironic about the curse Oedipus places on the murderer of Laius?
   - He is placing the curse upon himself

29. What is Oedipus' tone in the long speech beginning?
   - Confidence; he feels very confident to rid the land of the plague.

30. Why does Oedipus insist that he will seek out and avenge Laius' murderer?
   - As Laius and Jocasta had no children, Oedipus will take on the cause of revenge "as if" Laius were his own father.

31. In this speech, Oedipus refers to Laius' descendants as "ill-fated," but to his own good fortune in obtaining Laius' throne as driven by "chance." Explain the difference between these two concepts, and why Oedipus might choose to characterize these events in different ways.
   - In contrast to the term chance, he thinks that his life is governed by chance.
32. Structurally, why is it appropriate for the Chorus to appear now?

The Chorus first appeared at the introduction of the conflict. Now the action has begun rising toward the climax: Oedipus has ordered the culprit to come forward, and he has cursed the murderer. To mark the beginning of the rising action and to build suspense, Sophocles again has the Chorus interject.

33. Once again, in whose voice does the Chorus speak?

The commoners

34. Why is it significant that it was Creon whom Oedipus sent to the Oracle and now it is Creon whom Oedipus has sent to get Tiresias?

Oedipus is just using Creon as a tool.

35. Explain what Tiresias means by his first statement to Oedipus.

This knowledge will hurt Oedipus.

36. Why does Tiresias at first seem to refuse to help Oedipus?

He knows that Oedipus is the culprit

37. What terrible thing does Oedipus accuse Tiresias of doing?

A plot to murder the king.

38. Goaded into anger by Oedipus, what does Tiresias finally tell him?

The truth.

39. The truth revealed to Oedipus, what does Tiresias predict for him?

Oedipus accuses Tiresias of being blind
40. What is Oedipus' reaction to Tiresias' revelations? Of what does he accuse Tiresias?
   He is enraged. He accuses Tiresias of envy and trying to take the throne.

41. How does Oedipus try to discredit Tiresias?
   Oedipus asks why, if Tiresias is such a gifted seer, was he unable to solve the riddle of the Sphinx.

42. How does the Chorus serve as the "conscience" of the play?
   Reminds him that this is no time to argue but to consult with Tiresias in order to fulfill the Oracle.

43. In what ways is Oedipus blind according to Tiresias?
   Although he can physically see, he is blind to the situation.

44. What prophecy for Oedipus does he reiterate?
   Tiresias predicts that Oedipus will be physically blind as well, referring to how he will gouge his eyes out before he is exiled from Thebes.

45. How is Tiresias' response to being ordered to leave comic and ironic? What traits of Oedipus' does this emphasize?
   Oedipus tells him to leave and never come back; stubbornness; lack of thought.

46. What does Tiresias mean when he predicts, "This very day will sire you and destroy you?"
   Oedipus is going to learn who his father is.

47. Why does Tiresias say that Oedipus, of all people, should understand his riddles?
   Oedipus is known as a great riddle solver because he figured out the riddle of the Sphinx.
48. Whom does the Chorus believe, Oedipus or Tiresias? Why?

Oedipus, because he saved them from the Riddle of the Sphinx and they are not sure if they can trust prophecies.

49. What arguments does Creon use to defend himself?

He would not gain anything from plotting against Oedipus.

50. Explain the irony of Oedipus calling himself wise.

Oedipus knows the least about the situation of everyone, including the audience.

51. Why would the Chorus assert that no one is better able to end the feud between Oedipus and Creon than Jocasta?

Jocasta is both Creon's sister and Oedipus' husband.

52. In what ways does Creon's behavior contrast from Oedipus'?

Creon is calm and reasonable. Oedipus is rash and stubborn.

53. Why does Jocasta believe Oedipus and Creon should be ashamed of themselves?

It is wrong for the two leaders to be pursuing a private quarrel in public when the country at large is suffering so much.

54. What does Creon say that persuades Jocasta to urge Oedipus to believe him?

He takes an oath.

55. At this point, what appears to be Oedipus' hamartia?

His stubbornness.
56. For whose sake does Oedipus finally free Creon?
   - For the sake of the people of Thebes.

57. What is unusual about Jocasta's initial reaction when Oedipus reveals the accusation against him?
   - She is not surprised.

58. What is Jocasta's opinion of soothsayers?
   - On what does she base this opinion? She has no faith in them.

59. What is significant about Jocasta's account of Laius prophesy and death?
   - The place of Laius' murder—the junction of three roads—sparks Oedipus' interest. Probably he is connecting Laius' murder spot with where he killed the stranger.

60. After questioning Jocasta about the details of Laius' death, what does Oedipus begin to believe?
   - Up to this point he has denied killing Laius, now he begins to believe that he may have killed Laius after all.

61. Why does Sophocles use interrogation as a means of exposition rather than show the scenes of Laius' death and Oedipus' encounter with him?
   - Has to do with time. Uses it as a flashback

62. What happened to the servant who survived the attack on Laius?
   - When he saw that Oedipus became king, he asked Jocasta to send him from the city to tend flocks.
63. What does Oedipus relate about his past to explain his fears?

A drunken man told him that his parents in Corinth were not really his parents. Although his parents denied this, Oedipus was suspicious and went to the shrine at Delphi. There the god told him that he would murder his father, marry his mother, and have children with her. After hearing the dreadful prophecy, Oedipus fled Corinth to avoid this evil. Before he arrived at Thebes, he did kill men where the three highways came together. At this point, Oedipus fears that one of the men was Laius.

64. Why did Oedipus kill the men at the crossroads?

He was angry at them because they pushed him off the road.

65. What character trait does Oedipus' killing of Laius enforce? What will probably prove to be this trait's dramatic significance?

His impetuousness, his anger. May prove to be his tragic flaw.

66. What is ironically similar about the reasons Laius attempted to kill his child, and Oedipus fled to Corinth?

What does each action suggest about fate and free will? They each thought they could use their free will to escape fate.

67. How will Oedipus determine whether he was the man who killed Laius?

Oedipus will send for the one survivor who was with Laius the day the king and his men were killed. If this survivor says that several men were responsible, then Oedipus will know he is innocent, because he was alone when he murdered the men at the crossroads.

68. What acts of hubris do Oedipus and Jocasta commit?

Disbelief in the prophecy.
69. What concerns does the Chorus have about the current state of religious belief?

The chorus believes people are losing faith in the gods.

70. Why is Jocasta pleased at the news of Polybus' death?

If Oedipus' father is dead, and Oedipus did not kill him, then the prophecy was false, and seers are discredited.

71. How does Oedipus respond to the news of his father's death?

He is likewise pleased, for the same reason.

72. What information does the messenger give Oedipus to put an end to his dread of the Oracle? How does this man know the truth?

The messenger explains that Oedipus was not the natural son of Polybus and Merope. A shepherd found Oedipus, who had been left to die with a skewer that pinned his feet together. This shepherd, one of Laius' men, gave the baby to the messenger, who in turn gave it to the childless Polybus.

73. What is the meaning of Oedipus' name? Why is this significant?

Swollen feet, that was his ailment when the messenger took him.

74. Why is Oedipus excited by the messenger's information? Whom does he insist on questioning?

Oedipus is excited by the possibility of finding out his true parentage, because he has long wondered about the truth. He insists on questioning the shepherd who handed him over to the messenger as a baby. This shepherd is also the same man who survived the attack on Laius.

75. How does the messenger's information change the central question in the play?

Up until this point the question is "who killed Laius?" now it's "who are Oedipus' parents?"
76. What does Jocasta fear Oedipus will learn if he continues to seek the truth of his parentage?
   Jocasta clearly fears that Oedipus will learn that he is the son of Jocasta and Laius; that he did indeed murder his father and marry his mother.

77. What does Oedipus mean when he declares himself the "child of chance"? Why is this an example of dramatic irony?
   His life was not ruled by cruel fortune but cruel fate.

78. To heighten the suspense and create a distraction before the final climax, the Greek playwrights often included brief songs. What false hope is the Chorus creating?
   He could have been a son of the gods.

79. Why is the shepherd so reluctant to identify Oedipus as the child he gave to the messenger?
   To acknowledge that Oedipus was that child would be to admit that he did not follow Laius' instructions.

80. What is the climax of this play?
   He is indeed the son of Laius and Jocasta.

81. What behaviors has Sophocles presented as evil and dreadful?
   Incest, murder of parent, lack of divine will.

82. During the dialogue between Oedipus and the shepherd, what happens to their lines as they get closer to the revelation of the truth?
   They become shorter and faster.
83. What is the contrast between Antistrophe 1 and Strophe 2?

The glory and strength of Oedipus is contrasted to his terrible fate.

In Antistrophe 1, the Chorus describes Oedipus as the man who

Though death sang, stood like a tower
To make Pale Thebes take heart.
Fortress against our sorrow!
True king, giver of laws,
**Majestic Oedipus!** (1142-1147; 1251)

In Strophe 2, the Chorus states,

And now, of all men ever known
Most pitiful is this man's story:
His fortunes are most changed; his state
Fallen to a low slave's
Ground under bitter fate." (1150-1154; 1251).

84. Explain the Chorus' statement, "All-seeing time discovered you unwilling." Why is this concept central to the play?

Even though Oedipus tried to escape his fate, it found him anyway.

85. How do you feel about Oedipus? Do you see him as a victim of cruel fate or as a man who at least partly to blame for his own sorrow.

It's all his fault.

86. Why does Sophocles have a messenger describe the scene of Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus' disfigurement instead of portraying them?

It was a convention of Greek drama that are performed on stage.
87. What does the servant report is Oedipus' explanation for his self-mutilation?

He shouts that his eyes should not see any more of the evil that he had created.

88. Oedipus believes that the gods hate him more than any other man. Does anything justify their hatred? Why do you think Oedipus has been chosen to live out such a terrible fate?

There is little that apparently justifies the gods' hatred of Oedipus. He was simply cursed from birth because of his father's misdeed.

89. How does this speak to the central issue of the play?

This issue of why Oedipus was cursed speaks to the question: how much control do we have over our own lives? Regardless of Oedipus' good deeds and noble qualities, he was chosen to live out a terrible fate, not because of any wrongdoing on his part. The Greeks felt the gods became angry with people who were guilty of pride, and Oedipus certainly was, so perhaps that justifies his fate in some way. He also attempted to escape the will of the gods through free will. He could not, however, be blamed for his actions with Jocasta, as he had no knowledge that what he did was wrong.

90. Why must Oedipus seek Creon's permission to go into exile? Why does Creon not grant it immediately?

Creon had just as much power, since Creon, Jocasta and Oedipus now rule together.

91. Besides exile, what else does Oedipus ask of Creon?

To give Jocasta a proper burial and to take care of his daughters.

92. Why is Oedipus concerned about his daughters' futures and not his sons?

His sons are grown, and can fend for themselves. At the time that the play was written, girls and women relied on marriage for successful lives. Oedipus' daughters will probably never get married, given their family history.
93. According to the Chorus when is the only appropriate time to call a man "blessed"?

- The time of a man’s death

94. How does Creon treat Oedipus in this final section?

- With respect