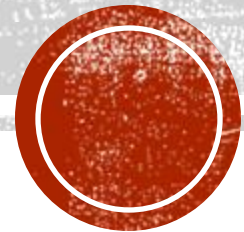




# UNDERSTANDING THE ELEMENTS OF TRAGEDY

Unit 4 Lesson 6



# UNDERSTANDING THE ELEMENTS OF TRAGEDY

- **Definition of Tragedy:**

- Tragedy is a literary genre where the main character, often a hero of high status, suffers a downfall due to a tragic flaw. This flaw can be a character weakness, an error in judgment, or external forces beyond the character's control.

- **Key Elements of Tragedy:**

- **Protagonist:** The tragic hero who experiences the downfall.
- **Tragic Flaw:** The fatal flaw or error in judgment that leads to the hero's downfall.
- **Catharsis:** Emotional cleansing or purging experienced by the audience through the protagonist's suffering.
- **Reversal (Peripeteia) and Recognition (Anagnorisis):** Moments of reversal of fortune and realization of truth by the tragic hero.

- **Example:**

- In William Shakespeare's "Macbeth," the protagonist's ambition and unchecked desire for power lead to his tragic downfall, resulting in his own demise and the destruction of others.



# TYPES OF TRAGEDIES

## ▪ 1. Classical Tragedy:

- Originating from ancient Greece, classical tragedy follows the downfall of a noble protagonist due to a tragic flaw (hamartia). It often involves fate or gods playing a significant role in the hero's demise.
- Example: Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex" portrays Oedipus' tragic discovery of his identity and fate, influenced by prophecy and destiny.

## ▪ 2. Shakespearean Tragedy:

- Shakespearean tragedies are characterized by complex protagonists of high status who experience a downfall due to their fatal flaws, such as ambition, jealousy, or indecision. These tragedies often feature themes of power, betrayal, and moral dilemmas.
- Example: "Hamlet" showcases Prince Hamlet's internal conflict and tragic end, driven by his indecision and desire for revenge.

## ▪ 3. Modern Tragedy:

- Modern tragedies explore contemporary themes and social issues, often depicting ordinary individuals facing circumstances beyond their control. The protagonists' flaws or external forces lead to their downfall, emphasizing psychological depth and societal critique.
- Example: Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" portrays Willy Loman's disillusionment and tragic demise due to his distorted beliefs in the American Dream.



# UNDERSTANDING AND ANALYZING TRAGIC FLAW

- **Definition of Tragic Flaw:**

- A tragic flaw is a character trait or error in judgment that leads to the downfall of the tragic hero in a literary work.

- **Types of Tragic Flaws:**

- **Hubris:** Excessive pride or arrogance that leads to overconfidence and downfall.
- **Hamartia:** Tragic error in judgment or a fatal mistake.
- **Catharsis:** Emotional cleansing or purging experienced by the audience through the protagonist's suffering.
- **Reversal (Peripeteia) and Recognition (Anagnorisis):** Moments of reversal of fortune and realization of truth by the tragic hero.
- **Example:**
  - In Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex," Oedipus' hubris and determination to uncover the truth about his identity ultimately lead to his tragic downfall and realization of his fate.



# INTEGRATING TRAGEDY INTO WRITING

- **1. Develop a Tragic Hero:**

- Create a protagonist of high status with a fatal flaw.
- Ensure relatability and clear motivations.

- **2. Establish Conflict:**

- Introduce escalating conflicts that challenge the protagonist's flaw.
- Include external forces or antagonists.

- **3. Build Tension:**

- Use foreshadowing and dramatic irony.
- Increase stakes leading to a climactic moment.

- **4. Craft Climax and Resolution:**

- Reach a turning point highlighting the protagonist's flaw.
- Provide moments of catharsis and reflection.

- **5. Use Symbolism and Imagery:**

- Integrate symbols and vivid imagery.
- Reinforce emotional and thematic depth.

