

Name: _____ Date: _____ Block: _____

Aristotle's Tragic Hero

William Shakespeare's *Othello* wasn't written until the early 1600s, but the basic structure of the play, in which Othello can be considered a tragic hero, can be linked back to the Greeks. In Aristotle's famous work *Poetics* (written around 350 BC), he outlines common elements found in a tragic hero's journey.

TERM	DEFINITION
Hamartia	A fatal, inherent flaw found in a tragic hero. Although the hero is generally fortunate, this shortcoming causes their downfall.
Hubris	Excessive pride, which is a common tragic flaw.
Anagnorisis	A moment of discovery, when a tragic hero gains awareness of reality. Usually, the discovery is not positive, and caused by the hero's tragic flaw (hamartia).
Peripeteia	A turning point, when certain circumstances completely change, usually to opposites. Commonly, fortune changes to misfortune. This is usually caused by anagnorisis.
Catastrophe	The ending of the plot, and typically the complete downfall of the tragic hero. Similar to the resolution or dénouement.
Catharsis	A moment that causes a profound and emotional realization, releasing tension and anxiety caused by the plot. The tragic hero's downfall should cause catharsis in the audience.