**Carefully read each quality of a tragic hero and write a 1:1 paraphrase in the space below.**

1. The tragic hero is a character of noble stature and has greatness. This should be readily evident in the play. The character must occupy a “high” status position but must ALSO embody nobility and virtue as part of his innate character.

2. Though the tragic hero is preeminently great, he is not perfect. Otherwise, the rest of us – mere mortals – would be unable to identify with the tragic hero. We should see in him someone who is essentially like us, although perhaps elevated to a higher position in society.

3. The hero’s downfall, therefore, is partially his fault, the result of free choice, not of accident or villainy or some overriding, malignant fate. In fact, the tragedy is usually triggered by some error or judgment or some character flaw that contributes to the hero’s lack of perfection noted above. This error of judgment or character flaw is known as *hamartia* and is usually translated as “tragic flaw.” Often the character’s *harmartia* involves *hubris* (which is defined as a sort of arrogant pride or over-confidence).

4. The hero’s misfortune is not wholly deserved. The punishment exceeds the crime.

5. The fall is not pure loss. There is some increase in awareness, some gain in self-knowledge, some discovery on the part of the tragic hero.

6. Tragedy arouses solemn emotion; tragedy does not leave its audience in a state of depression. One function of tragedy is to arouse the “unhealthy” emotions of pity and fear and through a *catharsis* (which comes from watching the tragic hero’s terrible fate) cleanse us of those emotions. In this way, Greek tragedy was not simply for entertainment; it had a communal function – to contribute to the good health of the community. This is why dramatic performances were a part of festivals and community celebrations.