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EN40SC

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Ms. Smith ✓

Hamlet – A Tragic Hero ✓

A tragic hero is not a conventional hero. Instead of possessing superpowers or an enviable quality, a tragic hero, as defined by A.C. Bradley, must be a respected person of high status plagued by a tragic flaw that ultimately leads to his or her own death. It has been long debated whether William Shakespeare's Hamlet is a tragic hero or simply a tragedy himself. Being a beloved leader and suffering from the inability to act upon his emotions, Hamlet ultimately destroys himself. He is furthermore guilty of causing the deaths of his uncle, lover, friends, and parents. *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare clearly presents to the reader a true tragic hero. ✓

In the kingdom of Denmark, Hamlet is a well-known and highly respected prince. Following Hamlet's horrific death, Horatio pays tribute to his friend's life by saying, "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince, And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!" (5.2.352-354). Horatio's kind words prove that Hamlet was of great importance to the people Denmark. His wish that Hamlet be granted peace in death indicates that no one wished to condemn Hamlet for his illogical actions at the play's end. Then, again after Hamlet succumbs to his injuries, Fortinbras speaks about how Hamlet's remains should be treated honourably. He says,

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;

For he was likely, had he been put on,

To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,

The soldiers' music and the rites of war

Speak loudly for him. (5.2.389-393). ✓

Fortinbras recognizes that if Hamlet had gotten the chance to be king, he would have been a great one, and for that, they must honour him like a fallen valiant soldier and remember him with respect. The words of these characters emphasize that Hamlet was endeared by his country. Although Hamlet is a person of high regard, he suffers from a destructive flaw.

Hamlet is plagued with consequences directly resulting from his tendency to overthink and procrastinate. After watching a play where an actor becomes overtly emotional, Hamlet soliloquies,

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
 Is it not monstrous that this player here,
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
 Could force his soul to his whole conceit
 That from her working all his visage wann'd;
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
 With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing! (2.2.545-552).

Hamlet is frustrated with himself because the actor is able to respond with feeling while simply acting a part in a play, and Hamlet himself fails to use his own emotions to respond effectively to his father's murder. A.C. Bradley states that Hamlet "broods over the moral idealism which leads to his delay in action" (Bachelor and Master). He continues to overanalyze the gravity of his situation, rather than moving forward by saying,

Why, what an ass am I! this is most brave,
 That I, the son of the dear murder'd,
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a cursing, like a very drab, (2.2.580-584).

Hamlet berates himself for fretting about his sensitivity instead of dealing with his desire for revenge. Instead of doing anything, Hamlet continues to evaluate his options and emotions and this procrastination ultimately leads him to his own grave. ✓

Avoid starting sentences with "because" - it's like a conjunction

Hamlet's inability to act unfortunately puts him permanently to sleep. Because Hamlet waits so long to react to his father's death, the king is able to formulate a plan to kill Hamlet. When Hamlet finally stops delaying and decides he is going to kill the king, he says in anger,

He that hath kill'd my king, and whored my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil? (5.2.64-70). ✓

Hamlet's fury allows him to see Claudius for the murderer and adulterer that he is and he finally commits to a plan to kill Claudius. Unfortunately, before he can proceed, Laertes challenges Hamlet to a duel in honour of his father who Hamlet had inadvertently killed earlier in the play. Hamlet is forced to face the consequences of his actions and says,

If it be now, 'tis
Not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it
be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: since
no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave
betimes? Let be. (5.2.211-215). ✓

Hamlet knows that he can no longer avoid his situation by pondering and stalling. He must face reality. In conjunction with Claudius, during the duel, Laertes uses a spear rapier drenched in poison and by no fault but his own, Hamlet dies. If Hamlet had hesitated less and acted more swiftly to avenge his father's

murder, his fate, as well as those of Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, Gertrude, Claudius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern would have been vastly different (Reddy). Hamlet's weakness clearly results in his untimely end.

Though he is respected and revered for his leadership in Denmark, Hamlet, by every measure, is a typical tragic hero who allows his indecision to ruin his life. As tragic as the events in William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* are, his character Hamlet is even more so. If he had only reacted with action instead of hesitation, Hamlet may have lived to be King. It is both ironic and remarkable that the message from a play written over four hundred years ago is still pertinent. One only needs to look at modern political figures to recognize how possessing a deep flaw inevitably leads to destruction.

Works Cited

Roy, Ken. editor. *Hamlet*. Harcourt Canada, 2003. ✓

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Reddy, Indira. *Tragic Flaw in Shakespear's Hamlet*. Rayalaseema University, December 2014.

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Sample: Identifying Your Writing Variables



Day 2

Identifying Your Writing Variables

Think of the writing variables like pieces of a puzzle. Plan your writing variables for your written text about *Topic* in the graphic organizer below. If you decide to change your writing variables during the writing process, please indicate the changes on your Final Copy.

	Form Persuasive Essay	
Purpose To prove that Hamlet is a tragic Hero	Central Idea Hamlet is a tragic hero	Audience other students studying Hamlet in school
	Context Tragic hero website with examples of tragic heroes	

Sample: Reflecting on Your Writing Task



Day 3 or 4

Reflecting on Your Writing Task

Using specific reference(s) to your writing variables and/or your draft, explain one or more of the following prompts:

5 marks

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- The information I included in my text is effective for my purpose because ...
- The advantages of my choice of form are ...
- My style of writing is effective in capturing and maintaining my audience's attention by ...
- The context in which my audience will experience the text is important because ...
- The central idea of my text is important for my chosen audience because ...

The central idea of my text is important for my chosen audience because the audience will be looking for other people's opinions about whether Hamlet is a tragic hero or not. From the evidence I provided in my essay, the audience will clearly be able to understand why Hamlet fits the definition of a tragic hero.

The context in which my audience will experience the text is important because the internet is a quick and easy place to find answers about Hamlet's behaviour.

too general