

Greek Drama & Sophocles' Oedipus Rex

And They All Fall Down: The Rise and Fall of the Contemporary Tragic Hero Project

Introduction:

A hero has traditionally been defined as a person who is admired for brave acts or for embodying fine qualities. Though tragic heroes have admirable qualities, they are destined to fail. The Greek philosopher Aristotle defined a tragic hero as one “who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty.” A tragic hero frequently has a lapse in judgment, makes mistakes, or has a weakness – one that is so great, that it ultimately leads to his downfall.

There are many people in our society today considered to be heroic, gifted, extraordinary, admirable, or special. Just like tragic heroes depicted in literature and film, these modern day, real-life heroes make significant mistakes or suffer from their own weaknesses. Imperfect beings with flaws, they fail despite their many admirable traits. Some may rise again after their downfall – stronger, more determined, and more knowledgeable than ever. Others may never regain their status quo or gain self-awareness of their mistakes.

Your Task: Research a contemporary figure of your choice and create a presentation that examines this figure as a tragic hero.

Information Requirements:

1. Provide background about your tragic hero: *birth, upbringing, family, early environment, significant events, life-changing moments, influence or inspiration received from others, etc.*
2. Describe your tragic hero's claim to fame/success: *What traits or qualities set your person apart from others? Note any awards, specific accomplishments, successful ventures. What measures did he/she take to succeed? How do others regard him or her? Did he/she make a difference in our world? Others' lives?*
3. Detail the events leading to your tragic hero's downfall: *Was this descent gradual? Or did it happen suddenly based on an isolated incident? Were there character flaws that led to this person's fall from grace? Or did he/she make a very poor decision based on his/her weaknesses?*
4. Examine the impact the tragic hero's fall had on her/his life and/or the lives of others: *Describe the reaction of others once the mistakes or character flaws were revealed. Describe specifically how this downfall impacted your research subject both professionally and personally. Did he/she change after this happened? Accept responsibility? Acknowledge her/his flaws? Where is this person today? Has he/she been able to achieve success again and regain admiration and respect from others?*

Suggested Slides:

- An introduction defining the traits of a modern tragic hero
- Background information about the person
- Description of any significant or life-changing events
- The subject's extraordinary traits or qualities
- How he/she became famous and/or successful
- Any impact he/she made on others or society
- Description of the subject's mistake or downfall
- Result of person's actions
- How it affected subject

Information continues on the back!

Other Requirements:

1. **Choosing a Tragic Hero:** You will be provided with a list of contemporary figures. Browse through the list, selecting a figure of interest to you.
 - a. No two students in the same class can choose the same hero.
 - b. If there is a person you would like to research and she/he is not included on the list, see me! However, you should be prepared to defend your choice.

2. **Sources:** You must use at least 3 separate sources.
 - a. Your first source should be the link I provided you.
 - i. Be sure to vet your sources: credible sources are websites for news outlets, websites for popular magazines, and websites ending in .gov, .org, and .edu. Stick to "big named" sources, and you should be OK. If you're unsure about whether a source is credible, see me.
 - b. **ALL SLIDES SHOULD INDICATE FROM WHICH SOURCE(S) YOUR INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED.**
 - i. Use MLA format of (Author's Last Name).
 - ii. **A NOTE ABOUT PLAGIARISM: Although you are providing information from your research into your presentation and acknowledging your sources, this information should be IN YOUR OWN WORDS (paraphrased or summarized) or IN QUOTATION MARKS (when taken directly from a source). THIS IS YOUR WARNING!!!**
 - c. Your final slide should be a source slide. You will format your citations in MLA format.
 - i. Author's Last Name, First Name. "Page Title." Website title. Sponsoring Institution/Publisher, Publication Date. Medium. Date Accessed.
 1. EXAMPLE: Smith, John. "High School Student Leads Protest." CNN.com. Cable News Network, 21 Jan. 2011. Internet. 12 Feb 2014.
 - ii. You can also use a site like easybib.com, citationmachine.net, or bibme.org to prepare your source citations.

3. **Presentation style:** Although I've provided a list of suggested slides for your presentation, your presentation should also include:
 - a. An image of the person
 - b. A quote from the person *about her/his mistake*
 - c. Other visual/auditory elements such as colorful slides, animations, etc.

4. **Presentation:** You will present this information to the class. See below for how your oral presentation will be scored (along with the rest of your project).

Grading: This assignment is worth a project grade of 100 points. **All presentations will take place on _____.**

Information: ___/63 points (7 points each)

- ___ An introduction defining the traits of a modern tragic hero
- ___ Background information about the person
- ___ Description of any significant or life-changing events
- ___ The subject's extraordinary traits or qualities
- ___ How he/she became famous and/or successful
- ___ Any impact he/she made on others or society
- ___ Description of the subject's mistake or downfall
- ___ Result of person's actions
- ___ How it affected subject

Sources: ___/12 points

- ___ 3 sources (6 points)
- ___ each slide indicates source(s) (3 points)
- ___ sources are properly formatted within slides and on the source slide (3 points)

Presentation Style: ___/15 points (5 points each)

- ___ Image of person
- ___ Quote from person
- ___ Other visual/auditory elements

Presentation: ___/10 points (2 points each)

- ___ clear, loud voice
- ___ paced effectively
- ___ avoids calling attention to nerves (if any)
- ___ minimal mistakes in pronunciation
- ___ slides easy to read; very few mistakes in spelling, grammar, and mechanics