

Is the play a tragedy?

A (very simple) definition of the tragedy genre (in other words, what is a tragic play)

- What happens to the protagonist is beyond their control – no matter what they do, they can not change the outcome;
- The events of the play lead to a catastrophic and fatal end;
- The tone of the play is one of dignity and seriousness.

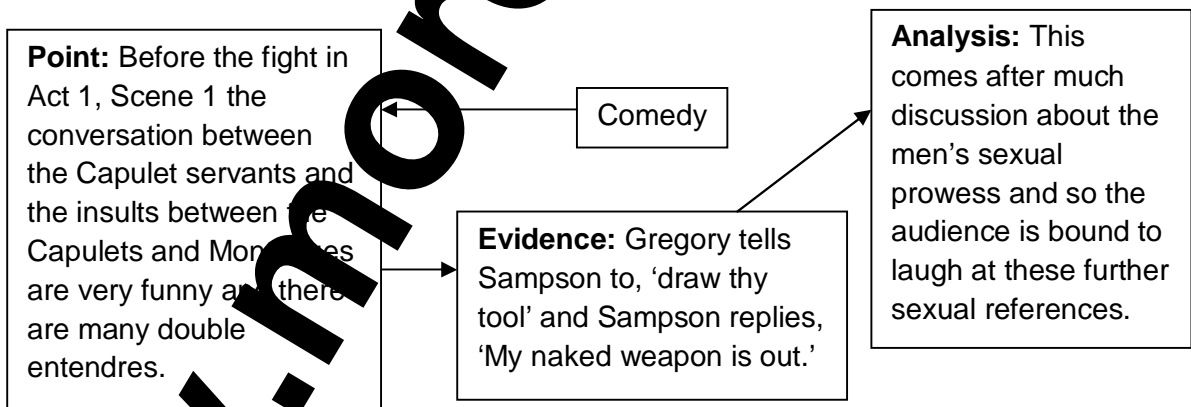
A (very simple) definition of a tragic hero (one of the main characters in a tragedy):

- The protagonist is of high status;
- The protagonist suffers because of a fatal flaw (harmatia);
- The protagonist recognises their error and is humbled by it, before their death at the end of the play;
- The protagonist's fatal flaw is one which can symbolise universal human flaws (such as greed; ambition etc).

1. After studying *Romeo and Juliet* are your initial thoughts that the play is:

- A romance?
- A comedy?
- A tragedy?

2. Discuss your ideas with a partner. Make sure you have evidence for each of your suggestions. You could draw a spider diagram for each genre and then write your ideas around them. An example has been done below to help you get started:



3. Write the introductory paragraph to an essay entitled, '*Romeo and Juliet* is often thought of as a tragedy. Discuss how far you agree with this statement and how Shakespeare presents the tragic elements of the play.'

4. Prepare to discuss with the rest of the class on the tragic elements in *Romeo and Juliet*.