English 10H

According to Aristotle, tragedy is a drama that depicts the downfall of a basically good person through some fatal error or misjudgment, producing suffering and insight on the part of the protagonist and arousing pity and fear on the part of the audience.

Key points:

* The play evokes pity and fear on the part of the audience. *The purpose of a tragedy is to achieve an emotional catharsis* (release, purification, cleansing).
* The hero must be – in some essential way – admirable and good.
* While fate and outside events may play an important role, the hero’s demise – at least in part – must come from a fatal flaw or mistake. *There is no such thing as an innocent victim in a classic tragedy.*

Essential elements and stylistic devices:

* Chorus: “peanut gallery,” comments on the events of the play, gives necessary information to the audience, and occasionally, as in *Oedipus* – communicates directly with the actors by giving advice and answering questions.
* Tragic Hero
* Tragic Flaw
* Soliloquys
* Monologues
* Dramatic Irony
* An exploration of the relationship between fate and free will

Assignment: Write a play that takes the essential ideas and events from *Things Fall Apart* and presents them in the style of a Greek tragedy. You may change the setting and contextual details, but you must honor the broad plot arc, essential conflicts, and themes from *Things Fall Apart.* You may work by yourself or in small group. Use the worksheet below to organize your thoughts and plan your play. Type the script of the play on a computer. You have approximately one class period to write your play. You will have the option to perform a section of your play for the class, but you will not be required to do so. Turn in the script of the play with the worksheet (one set per group – include all of your names on the worksheet).

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| Tragic Hero and Flaw |  |
| Forces that lead to the hero’s demise |  |
| Relationship between fate and free will |  |
| Essential Conflict |  |
| Setting |  |
| **exposition –** introductory material about setting, characters, and other background information |  |
| **rising action –** complications in resolving the conflict, building to the climax |  |
| **climax –** pivotal moment, turning point, high point |  |
| **falling action –** action leading to conclusion |  |
| **resolution / denouement –** conclusion |  |
| Characters |  |
| Dramatic Irony |  |
| Role of the Chorus |  |
| Relationship between your play and *TFA.* What did you change? What did you keep the same?  |  |