**De Aston**

**English Department**

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**Year 9: Shakespearean Tragedy - *Romeo and Juliet***

**Challenge Tasks**

**Name:**

**Week Five:**

A.C. Bradley believed that the tragic hero was flawed but predominately good – apply this theory to the character of Romeo. \*flawed = having weaknesses in their character. What was Romeo’s main weakness? What made him good? Again, justify your ideas with quotes from the play if you can.

**Week Four:**

This week you will study the fight scene! Beware: spoilers!! Tybalt wants to fight Romeo, but Romeo refuses, so he fights Mercutio instead. Mercutio ends up dead and then Romeo kills Tybalt in revenge. Who do you blame for Romeo’s banishment? Explain your answer in detail, weighing up the evidence against all three men.

**Week Three:**

Now you know all about Juliet. Choose a challenge!

**Hard** – create a Facebook profile for Juliet;

**Harder** – write Juliet’s school report – what would she be like in class?

**Hardest** – write a poem about Juliet (try a sonnet!).

**Week One:**

This week, you will have learnt about different Elizabethan contexts. Choose one of the tasks below to demonstrate your understanding of this time period.

* A leaflet for Y7 pupils to summarise what you have learnt about Elizabethan times;
* A letter to Shakespeare explaining why you think life is better (or worse) now;
* A descriptive diary entry for a day in the life of a wealthy Elizabethan.

Be creative but be prepared to explain how your response shows your understanding of the Elizabethan era.

**Week Two:**

You have now learnt about some of the play’s main characters. This week, choose a challenge task:

**Hard** – create your own tragic hero and write two paragraphs describing their appearance;

**Harder** – create your own tragic hero and write two paragraphs about their backstory;

**Hardest** – create your own tragic hero and write two paragraphs about their backstory and explain the moral lesson that your character could teach us.

**Week Six:**

‘Men are entirely to blame for the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.’ Create arguments for and against this view. First consider, which men could be blamed? Why? (Examples: Romeo, Mercutio, Tybalt, Lord Capulet). Which women could be blamed? Why? (Examples: Juliet, the nurse, Lady Capulet). Refer to specific events and, if you can, use quotes from the play itself to support your ideas. The full text of the play can be found at:

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/romeo_juliet/full.html>

**Bonus week:**

Below is an extract from the opening page of Shalom Auslander's novel Hope: a Tragedy.

Read the extract below and complete the ‘all’ question and one more of the questions below:

**All:** list four ways to die as described in this extract.

**Hard:** what genre is the text and how do you know?

**Harder:** how does the writer use language to interest the reader?

**Hardest:** to what extent does the text meet the expectations of the tragedy genre?

**It’s funny:** it isn’t the fire that kills you, it’s the smoke.

There you are, pounding on the windows, climbing higher and higher through your burning home, trying to get away, to get out, hoping that if you can just avoid the flames, perhaps you’ll survive the fire, but all the time you’re suffocating slowly, your lungs filling with smoke. There you are, waiting for the horrors to come from some *there*, from some *other*, from without, and all the while you’re dying, bit by airless bit, from within.

You buy a handgun—for protection, you say—and drop dead that night from a heart attack.
You put locks on your doors. You put bars on your windows. You put gates around your house. The doctor phones: It’s cancer, he says.

Swimming frantically up to the surface to escape from a menacing shark, you get the bends and drown.

You resolve, one sunny New Year’s Day, to get back into shape. This is the year, you insist. A new beginning. A new start. A stronger you, a tougher you. At the health club the following morning, just as you’re beginning your third set of bench presses, your muscles cramp and the barbell collapses onto your neck, crushing your windpipe. You can’t cry out. Your face turns blue. Your arms go limp. There, on a poster on the wall beside you, are the last words you see before your eyes close and darkness envelopes you for eternity:

Feel the Burn.

It’s funny.

**Additional challenge tasks:**

Make sure you understand what each of these words means and show your understanding by trying to use them in your classwork. Then learn how to spell them – be ready for a spelling test in the last week of term.

**Hard:**

1. Tragic hero 2. Hubris 3. Civil 4. Mutiny 5. Strife

**Harder:**

1. Anagnorisis 2. Catharsis 3. Hamartia 4. Peripeteia 5. Patriarchal

**Hardest:**

1. Enmity 2. Antithesis 3. Coherent 4. Impudent 5. Chide

**Final challenge:**

Finally, challenge yourself to watch a performance of another one of Shakespeare’s tragedies, such as Hamlet or Othello. If you can, go and see one live at the theatre, or several versions are available to view for free online.

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For more resources, including literacy support, visit www.deastonenglish.com