OBJECTIVES
Students will analyze specific character traits of tragic heroes within the storylines of books/movies. They will provide evidence (specific scenes) for their analysis of their chosen tragic hero within the parameters of a storyboard, and then present their storyboard to the class in an effective and professional manner. Once they have presented, they will complete an analytical essay discussing the specific flaw their chosen tragic hero had and how rationality may have changed the hero’s outcome.

CONTENT STANDARDS
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2 Write informational/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6 Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6 Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.
**Overview**
Rationality is an essential factor for success. It enables an individual to make decisions through the process of thought and the logic of reason. Without it, one tends to respond impulsively, relying on emotion as the main driver for decision-making. In this exercise, students will analyze the tragic hero archetype in order to understand how the lack of rationality impacts a hero’s ability to succeed. Students will identify Aristotle’s six character traits of a tragic hero within the context of a chosen book/movie. This identification is then transformed into a storyboard, which is the illustration of specific scenes that exhibit the different traits. The storyboards allow students to visually express how and why the chosen hero ultimately failed.

**Materials Needed**
Whiteboard and markers
Coloring/drawing utensils
Paper
Computer access
Free subscription to www.storyboardthat.com or other online source

**Virtues Highlighted**
Each lesson exposes students to practical and theoretical demands that encourage the development of virtuous character. The core virtue highlighted in this activity is **rationality**. The activity also fosters **imagination** in thinking through a fictional scenario, **skill** in considering how a person’s skills impact their success and can often be turned against them, and **integrity** in considering whether integrity in harmful character traits is valuable.

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### Virtues Highlighted in This Activity

- **Rationality**: ★ ★ ★
- **Objectivity**: ★
- **Imagination**: ★ ★
- **Skill**: ★ ★
- **Courage**: ★
- **Self-Esteem**: ★
- **Ambition**: ★
- **Perseverance**: ★
- **Integrity**: ★ ★
- **Justice**: ★
- **Leadership**: ★
- **Trust**: ★

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ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

As a class, in groups, or individually, have students consider the question: Are heroes always victorious? Have students provide examples of when a hero hasn’t been victorious. What was the context? Why did this happen? Was the hero responsible for the losing outcome? If so, could the outcome have been changed? How could it have been changed?

Next, have students analyze the literary archetype of a tragic hero. By analyzing this character type, they can examine how the character’s choices and traits connect to a work as a whole and determine the character’s course. Define a tragic hero as being a literary character, specifically the protagonist, who makes a judgment error that leads to his/her own downfall or destruction.

Further that definition by outlining Aristotle’s 6 traits of a tragic hero:
(For more information, see: https://literarydevices.net/tragic-hero/)

- Hamartia - The flaw that causes the hero’s downfall
- Hubris - Excessive pride, or disrespect for the natural order
- Peripeteia - A reversal of fortune, often brought about by the hero’s error in judgment
- Anagnorisis - The moment when the hero makes a critical discovery, usually the recognition that the reversal was brought about by the hero’s own actions
- Nemesis - A fate that cannot be avoided, generally a retribution for hubris
- Catharsis - The feeling of pity or fear the audience feels after the hero’s fall

Once you’ve defined a tragic hero, discuss different books/movies that include a tragic hero (Hamlet, Macbeth, Medea, “Star Wars,” “The Dark Knight,” etc.). Identify the flaws each of these heroes have that lead to their destruction. If they had acted differently, would their outcome have changed? Why or why not? Highlight if and how rationality could have served to overcome the tragic hero’s flaw. If not, why not? This will help students recognize the scope and value of rationality, while not filling them with the vain (hubristic!) belief that rationality can solve every problem.

Then have students create storyboards that depict the events in a movie or book that exemplify each of Aristotle’s tragic hero traits. These events often happen in the order listed. Students can complete storyboards either through online software, such as http://www.storyboardthat.com/, or through the use of physical materials (if online, then this portion can be assigned as homework).

When they complete their storyboards, have students present them to the class. After presentations, have students complete an analytical essay that identifies the main cause of their hero’s downfall and discusses how rationality may have changed the hero’s outcome.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER LEARNING
Have the students write essays about their own tragic qualities. What flaws do they have that impede them?

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS
You will discuss examples of tragic heroes and then your teacher will briefly explain the characteristics of tragic heroes in literature.

Now that you’re familiar with the tragic hero archetype and the different traits these heroes have, choose a specific tragic hero either from literature or film to analyze. Your task is to go through each of Aristotle’s six traits and identify them within your hero. These traits are depicted through particular scenes within the book/movie.

Next, create a storyboard that depicts the events in the movie or book that exemplify each of Aristotle’s tragic hero traits. These events often happen in the order listed. You can complete storyboards either through online software, such as http://www.storyboardthat.com/, or through the use of physical materials. When you complete your storyboard, you will present it to the class.

After presentations, write an essay that identifies the main cause of your hero’s downfall and discusses how rationality may have changed the hero’s outcome.
EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Are Heroes truly Heroes if they have so-called “flaws?” What is it that makes one a Hero?

2. How would you define tragedy, both in a story and in a character?

3. How do you determine what a “flaw” is in a Hero? (What does it mean to be a “flaw?” Is it that which causes a Hero’s death, or perhaps that which causes the death of those close to him?)

4. What exactly is hubris, and how does it contribute to the downfall and tragedy?

5. Are judgment errors on the part of the protagonist (Hero) always the cause of their own downfall? Are there some situations where no good options exist?

6. For your example, what was the flaw that caused the character’s downfall? If there wasn’t a character flaw, then what about the situation/world caused the downfall, and was there anything the Hero could have done to change their circumstance? (In each case, is the flaw inherent to the character, or did it arise out of the character’s actions? Or did things happen in the world that caused the flaw to arise in the character?)

7. How does rationality facilitate the making of choices? Is it possible to have two equally rational, equally undesirable options? How does rationality facilitate the making of choices in the case of two evils?

8. How do ignorance and knowledge feature in the Tragic Hero? How does realization affect the plot (and fate) of the Hero, either self-knowledge or outside knowledge?

9. Do a Hero’s actions always directly influence their fate? Why or why not? Give examples.

10. Rationality itself presupposes additional criterion for determining whether an action is logical or not. For instance, if the desired criterion is to save the most human beings possible, what would rationality say about murdering one person so that many might live? A rational decision, or not? But what if your criterion is preservation of human life and a deterrent for creating policies that negatively affect human life, then what is the most rational course of action? Thus, how exactly is rationality affected by objectives or criterion? And furthermore, is rationality actually the basis for making decisions, or merely the means by which decisions/conclusions are reached? Is rationality an end or a means to an end?