

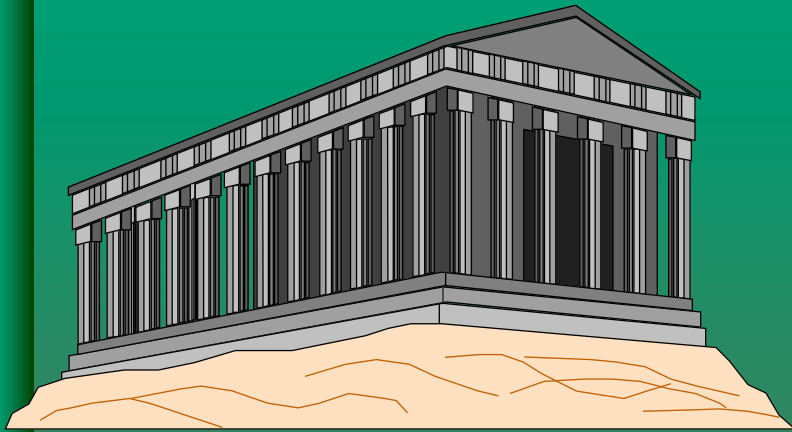


# Aristotle's Rules for Tragedy



from *The Poetics*

# Definition



**Tragedy =  
A drama in  
which the  
protagonist  
dies or is  
utterly  
defeated.**

# The “Musts”

- 1 .The protagonist (main character) must be a person of importance
  - Hamlet (a prince)
  - Oedipus ( a king)
  - Brutus (from *Julius Caesar*) (a senator)

# The “Musts”

2 . The protagonist is guilty of a *hamartia* (literally a “missing the mark”; a flaw)

- jealousy
- pride
- greed





# The “Musts”

**3 . The audience must empathize with the protagonist**

- This process is necessary for the audience to experience *catharsis*
- (the purging or cleansing of emotions)



# The “Musts”

**4 . The tragedy must have a single plot.**



# The “Optionals”

1 . *Peripeteia* = an ironic twist

# The “Optionals”

2 . *Anagnorisis* = a discovery or revelation

Oh, I get it now!





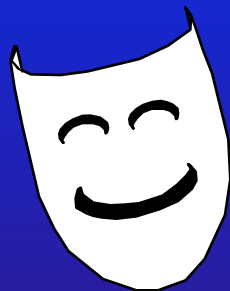
# The “Optionals”

## 3 . Fate or inevitability



# The “Optionals”

## 4 . Tragic joy



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# Summary:

## The Elements of Tragedies

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- Musts
    - person of importance
    - *hamartia*
    - audience empathy
    - one plot
  - Optionals
    - *peripeteia*
    - *anagnorisis*
    - fate
    - tragic joy
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