**Aspects of Tragedy According to AQA**

At the core of all the set texts is a tragic hero or heroine who is flawed in some way, who suffers and causes suffering to others and in all texts there is an interplay between what might be seen as villains and victims.

Some tragic features will be more in evidence in some texts than in others and students will need to understand how particular aspects of the tragic genre are used and how they work in the three chosen texts. The absence of an ‘aspect’ can be as significant as its presence.

There can be no exhaustive list of the ‘aspects’ of tragedy but areas that can usefully be explored include:

1. the type of the tragic text itself, whether it is classical and about public figures, like Lear, or domestic and about representations of ordinary people, like Tess
2. the settings for the tragedy, both places and times
3. the journey towards death of the protagonists, their flaws, pride and folly, their blindness and insight, their discovery and learning, their being a mix of good and evil
4. the role of the tragic villain or opponent, who directly affects the fortune of the hero, who engages in a contest of power and is partly responsible for the hero’s demise
5. the presence of fate, how the hero’s end is inevitable
6. how the behaviour of the hero affects the world around him, creating chaos and affecting the lives of others
7. the significance of violence and revenge, humour and moments of happiness
8. the structural pattern of the text as it moves through complication to catastrophe, from order to disorder, through climax to resolution, from the prosperity and happiness of the hero to the tragic end
9. the use of plots and sub-plots
10. the way that language is used to heighten the tragedy
11. ultimately how the tragedy affects the audience, acting as a commentary on the real world, moving the audience through pity and fear to an understanding of the human condition.