

# Shakespearean Tragedy

The elements below can be found in Shakespearean tragedies. How well do they match the play or plays you know? Try putting them in rank order.

- They end with the **death** of the tragic heroes.
- The deaths of the heroes have a big **impact** on the people around them, and the larger community.
- Other people die as part of the tragic chain of events (e.g. Duncan and Banquo in *Macbeth*; Tybalt, Paris and Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*).
- The heroes reach a '**peak**' in the play - of happiness, or achievement (e.g. Macbeth becomes king, Romeo and Juliet get married). This usually happens about half-way through.
- After this peak, there is a **peripeteia**, where events take a terrible turn for the worse.
- The **heroes** are in some part **responsible** for this change of fortunes.
- There is also an element of **fate** - something that, combined with the heroes' actions - seems to make the tragedy inevitable.
- However, the final **denouement** of the tragedies can still seem like a terrible accident.