

# Poetics

by Aristotle

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A printable to-do list of the most effective habits from this book. Check one off each day you do it.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

<sup>01</sup> **Watch a Greek Tragedy With Aristotle as Your Guide**

Choose Oedipus Rex, Antigone, or Medea - or a film adaptation. As you watch, track: What is the hamartia? Where is the peripeteia? When does the anagnorisis arrive? What catharsis do you feel at the end?

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<sup>02</sup> **Map Peripeteia in a Story You Love**

Find the exact moment in a favorite story where an action produces its opposite effect - where the hero's attempt to secure safety triggers their destruction. In Breaking Bad, it's the pilot. In Hamlet, it's the play-within-the-play. Find it.

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<sup>03</sup> **Write Down Your Own Hamartia**

Name the quality in yourself that is both a virtue and a potential liability. The perfectionism that becomes paralysis. The directness that becomes brutality. The ambition that blinds judgment. Aristotle says the tragic flaw is not a weakness but a strength in the wrong register.

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<sup>04</sup> **Rewrite a Scene Using Only Action**

Take a scene from a book or film you know well. Remove all description of feelings, all exposition, all statements of intent. Leave only what characters physically do and say. Aristotle's test: does character still emerge? It should.

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<sup>05</sup> **The 'Therefore / But' Exercise**

Tell a true story from your life replacing every 'and then' with 'therefore' or 'but'. Each event must make the next necessary. If a beat doesn't pass the test - if you could remove it without altering what follows - it doesn't belong. This is Aristotle's unity of plot.

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<sup>06</sup> **Seek Catharsis Deliberately This Week**

Choose one work - a film, novel, or piece of music - that you know will move you, and engage with it fully. Aristotle argues this is cognitive work, not passive entertainment. The catharsis is real processing. Give it the time and attention it deserves.