

9th Honors English Summer Reading

Chattahoochee High School 2024-25

Welcome to 9th Honors, where your journey as a scholar begins! Just like the heroes of myth and legend, you now step into the new realm of high school English. Your teachers will be your guides and mentor as you explore a variety of literature, acquire critical thinking skills, and hone your writing. Along the way, you will face challenges, learn valuable lessons, and ultimately acquire the knowledge and skills to conquer any challenge that lies ahead.

So, welcome, brave scholars, to 9th Honors, where the Hero's Journey awaits.

Our journey begins with this summer reading assignment which will give you a foundation for our first unit.



10 *The Open Sea*

Illustration by Ruth Robbins for Chapter 10 from the original publication of *A Wizard of Earthsea*.

Read

- The overview of the Hero's Journey on the following pages
- *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin.

Apply

Take a look at the Hero Journey Chart on the final pages of this handout. Since you are an excellent and careful reader, you will no doubt notice that there are some stages listed that were not part of the overview you read in Part 1 of this assignment. However, the questions provided should be ample to help guide your efforts in the following two tasks:

Task 1

1. Who is your favorite hero, and what is their story? This could be from a book, comic, graphic novel, film, television series, video game, or other media. (Pro tip: Harry Potter, Star Wars, Disney, and Marvel movies are great for this.) **Write a brief overview (one to two well-developed paragraphs) that describes the hero, the major characters, and the overall plotline of the story you have selected.**
2. Fill in as much of the Hero Journey chart as you can for your story. Then, write a one-two paragraph response to each of the following questions:
 - In what ways does this story adhere to or break away from the archetypes and stages of the classic monomyth/hero's journey?
 - What makes this version of the familiar hero tale your favorite?

Task 2

3. Fill in as much of the Hero Journey chart as you can for *The Wizard of Earthsea*. For our purposes, we will consider that Ged crosses the threshold when he enters The School of Wizardry on Roke Island. Then, write a one-two paragraph response to the following question:
 - In what ways does this story adhere to or break away from the archetypes and stages of the classic monomyth/hero's journey?

You will be expected to turn in your writing and charts when school begins. You're expected also to do your own work, to think for yourself. Do not consult with friends, parents, the internet, or ChatGPT to complete this. We just want to see what you can come up with on your own. Work should be either typed or very neatly written.

Summer Reading Assessment

During the first week of school, you will be expected to complete a multiple-choice and essay component exam covering several areas of the novel - setting, plot, characters, important concepts, and themes – and how it aligns and diverges from the archetypal monomyth or hero's journey. These assessments will help us evaluate your reading comprehension skills, analysis skills, and writing skills, which will be critical to your success in this challenging course. We will discuss how to write an in-class essay during the first week of school, and we will spend some initial class time on activities related to the hero's journey, but we will not discuss the novel in depth prior to the test.

For now, keep the assessment in mind as you take notes so that your notes will be useful for review.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Joseph Campbell, an American mythological researcher, wrote a famous book entitled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In his lifelong research Campbell discovered many common patterns running through hero myths and stories from around the world. Years of research lead Campbell to discover several basic stages that almost every hero-quest goes through (no matter what culture the myth is a part of). He calls this common structure "the monomyth."

George Lucas, the creator of *Star Wars*, claims that Campbell's monomyth was the inspiration for his groundbreaking films. Lucas also believes that *Star Wars* is such a popular saga because it taps into a timeless story-structure which has existed for thousands of years.

Many followers of Campbell have defined the stages of his monomyth in various ways, sometimes supplying different names for certain stages. For this reason there are many different versions of the Hero's Journey that retain the same basic elements.

THE ORDINARY WORLD

Heroes exist in a world is considered ordinary or uneventful by those who live there. Often the heroes are considered odd by those in the ordinary world and possess some ability or characteristic that makes them feel out-of-place.

- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: Dorothy in Kansas
- *The Hobbit*: Bilbo Baggins in Hobbiton
- *Star Wars*: Luke Skywalker on Tatooine
- *The Lion King*: Simba at Pride Rock

THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

For heroes to begin their journeys, they must be called away from the ordinary world. Fantastic quests don't happen in everyday life. Heroes must be removed from their typical environment. Most heroes show a reluctance to leave their home, their friends, and their life to journey on a quest. But in the end they accept their destiny.

Usually there is a discovery, some event, or some danger that starts them on the heroic path. Heroes find a mystic object or discover their world is in danger. In some cases, heroes happen upon their quest by accident. Campbell puts it like this, "A blunder—the merest chance—reveals an unsuspected world."

The new world the hero is forced into is much different than the old one. Campbell describes this new world as a "fateful region of both treasure and danger...a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state...a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight". This description may seem pretty vague, but think of all the various fantasy realms characters have entered throughout the years: Middle-Earth, Oz, Namia, Wonderland. It could even be outer space, a

haunted house, or the Matrix. Regardless of the details, the new world is sure to be filled with adventure.

- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: The tornado
- *The Hobbit*: Gandalf the wizard arrives
- *Star Wars*: R2D2's cryptic message

REFUSAL OF THE QUEST

During the *Call to Adventure* heroes are given a task or quest which only they can complete. They are faced with a choice: accept the quest or deny it. Their choice might seem like a no-brainer. If they don't accept the quest, there won't be much of a story—or will there? Actually there are stories where heroes *don't* accept their destinies. When this happens, the stage is set for disaster. There's a reason why the powers-that-be have chosen a particular hero. A refusal of the quest only brings trouble.

King Minos, the monarch of Crete who antagonizes the Greek hero Theseus, does not do what the gods ask of him. Poseidon, Lord of the Seas, sends him a beautiful white bull. The god's only order is that Minos must sacrifice the creature back to him. After seeing the magnificent beast, Minos decides he just can't bring himself to do what the god asks and keeps the bull as a personal trophy.

Enraged, Poseidon vows revenge and causes Minos' wife to burn with lust for her husband's prized beast. The rest of this story is strictly NC-17. It results in the birth of the Minotaur, a creature half-bull, half-human, a curse to his father King Minos.

Campbell notes that heroes who refuse their quest often become characters in need of rescuing or in Minos' case, the villain of another hero's journey.

- *Star Wars*: Luke refuses the quest until he learns his aunt and uncle are dead
- *The Lion King*: Simba refuses to return to Pride Rock and accept his destiny
- *Groundhog Day*: Example of the negative cycle caused by refusing the call

ACCEPTING THE CALL: Once the adventure is accepted, the heroes advance into the next stage of their journey.

ENTERING THE UNKNOWN

As they embark on their journey, the heroes enter a world they have never experienced before. Very often it is filled with supernatural creatures, breathtaking sights, and the constant threat of death. Unlike the heroes' home, this outside world has its own rules, and they quickly learn to respect these rules as their endurance, strength, and mettle are tested time and time again. After all, it is not the end of the journey which teaches, but the journey itself.

- *The Wizard of Oz*: Dorothy must learn the rules of Oz
- *The Matrix*: Neo must come to grips with the realities and unrealities of the Matrix

SUPERNATURAL AID

Supernatural doesn't have to mean *magical*. There are plenty of hero stories that don't have wizards or witches per say. *Supernatural* simply means "above the laws of nature." Heroes are almost always started on their journey by a character who has mastered the laws of the outside world and come back to bestow this wisdom upon them. This supernatural character often gives them the means to complete the quest. Some of the time the gift is simply wisdom. Other times it is an object with magical powers. In every instance it is something the hero needs to succeed. As Campbell says, "One has only to know and trust, and the ageless guardians will appear." The job of the supernatural assistant is to give the heroes what they need to finish the quest—not finish it for them.

- *The Hobbit*: Gandalf
- *Star Wars*: Obi-Wan Kenobi
- *Cinderella*: Fairy Godmother

TALISMAN: A Special (and often magical) items that assist the heroes on their quest.

- *The Wizard of Oz*: Ruby Slippers
- *The Hobbit*: The Ring
- *Star Wars*: Lightsaber

ALLIES/HELPERS

Every hero needs a helper, much like every superhero needs a sidekick. Without the assistance of their companions and helpers along the way, most heroes would fail miserably. For example, in the Greek hero story of Theseus, Minos' daughter Ariadne, after falling hopelessly in love, helps Theseus navigate the Labyrinth. She does this by holding one end of a golden thread while Theseus works his way inward to slay the Minotaur. Without her help, Theseus would never have fulfilled his quest or found his way out of the maze once he did so.

- *Lord of the Rings*: Samwise Gamgee
- *The Wizard of Oz*: The Tin Woodsman, Scarecrow, and Cowardly Lion

TESTS & THE SUPREME ORDEAL

The heroes progress through a series of tests, a set of obstacles that make them stronger, preparing them for their final showdown. At long last they reach the Supreme Ordeal, the obstacle they have journeyed so far to overcome.

All the heroes' training and toil comes into play now. The journey has hardened them, and it's time for them to show their prowess. Once this obstacle is overcome, the tension will be relieved. The worst is passed, and the quest, while not officially over, has succeeded.

- *Star Wars*: Blowing up the Death Star
- *Lord of the Rings*: Mount Doom
- *The Wizard of Oz*: Defeating the Wicked Witch

REWARD AND THE JOURNEY HOME

Typically, there is a reward given to heroes for passing the Supreme Ordeal. It could be a kingdom. It could be the hand of a beautiful princess. It could be the Holy Grail. Whatever it is, it is a reward for the heroes' endurance and strength.

After the heroes complete the Supreme Ordeal and have the reward firmly in hand, all that is left is for them to return home. Just because the majority of the adventure has passed doesn't mean that the return journey will be smooth sailing. There are still lesser homebound obstacles to overcome.

- *The Hobbit*: The Battle of Five Armies
- *The Lord of the Rings*: Return to Hobbiton

MASTER OF TWO WORLDS/ RESTORING THE WORLD

Success on the heroes' quest is life-changing, for them and often for many others. By achieving victory, they have changed or preserved their original world. Often they return with "the exilir," an object or personal ability that allows them to save their world.

The heroes have also grown in spirit and strength. They have proved themselves worthy for marriage, kingship, or queenship. Their mastery of the outside world qualifies them to be giants in their own.

- *Lord of the Rings*: Frodo saves the Shire
- *The Wizard of Oz*: Dorothy rids Oz of the Wicked Witch

THE MONOMYTH: NOT JUST FOR MYTHOLOGY

While Joseph Campbell's monomyth works best with the traditional form of the quest—folk and fairy tales, myths, legends, and other fantasies—it can be applied to many different genres or types of stories. A quest does not have to include swords and monsters. It can just as easily occur in the *real world*. The monomyth, ageless and universal, exists anywhere and everywhere.

ARCHETYPES APPEARING IN THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Joseph Campbell was heavily influenced by the Swiss Psychiatrist Carl Jung whose theory of the collective unconscious involved archetypes—recurring images, patterns, and ideas from dreams and myths across various cultures. Below are several archetypes often found in myths.

- **HEROES**: Central figures in stories. Everyone is the hero of his or her own myth.
- **SHADOWS**: Villains, enemies, or perhaps the enemy within. This could be the repressed possibilities of the hero, his or her potential for evil.
- **MENTORS**: The hero's guide or guiding principles.
- **HERALD**: The one who brings the Call to Adventure. This could be a person or an event.
- **THRESHOLD GUARDIANS**: The forces that stand in the way at important turning points, including jealous enemies, professional gatekeepers, or even the hero's own fears and doubts.

- **SHAPESHIFTERS:** In stories, creatures like vampires or werewolves who change shape. In life, the shapeshifter represents change.
- **TRICKSTERS:** Clowns and mischief-makers.
- **ALLIES:** Characters who help the hero throughout the quest.
- **WOMAN AS TEMPTRESS:** Sometimes a female character offers danger to the hero (a femme fatale)

Chart to Complete for your chosen story

I. DEPARTURE	
Call to Adventure: How does the character receive the call to adventure?	
Refusal of the Call: Does the character accept the call immediately?	
Answering the Call: What motivates the character to accept the call?	
Supernatural Aid: Who or what helps the hero on his journey? Why?	
Guide/Mentor: Is there a specific character that helps the hero understand the life situation or provides the hero with special training?	
Talisman: Is there a particular item that has special significance to the hero?	
Companions: Who is with the hero on his journey? How do these companions help the hero face the challenges?	
Crossing the Threshold: At what point in the story does the hero leave the familiar world and move into a new, unfamiliar world?	
Threshold Guardians: Are there characters that try to prevent the hero from crossing over into the unfamiliar territory or circumstance?	
II: INITIATION	
Road of Trials: What specific challenges does the hero face?	
Brother Battle: Does the hero battle physically or mentally with someone who is a relative or a close friend?	
Meeting the Goddess: Does the hero meet with a character with special beauty and power?	
Abduction: Is the character kidnapped, or is someone close to the hero kidnapped?	

Night or Sea Journey: Where do the hero's travels take him?	
Dragon Battle: Does the hero battle some kind of monster? Does the hero face an inner-demon?	
Ritual Death or Dismemberment: Is the hero injured and thought to be dead? Does the hero mistakenly believe someone close to him is dead? Does the hero suffer an injury in which he loses a limb or use of some other body part?	
Sacred Marriage: Does the hero have a special emotional bond? (It could literally be a marriage with another character.)	
Atonement ("at one with") with or Recognition by the Father: Is the hero reunited with his father in some way?	
Entering the Belly of the Whale: Is there some point in the story where the hero must face his deepest fear or the darkest evil in the story?	
Apotheosis (Deification): Is there a point in the story where the hero is held up as an ideal or where the hero is worshipped as a god?	
Ultimate Boon/Magic Elixir: Does the hero find some special solution to the problem he is attempting to resolve? This might be a magic potion or a key to something.	
III. THE RETURN	
Refusal of the Return: Does the hero initially refuse to return to the homeland or the place that he began the journey?	
Magic Flight/Pursuit: Is there some point (generally toward the end) where the hero is being chased or is otherwise trying to escape something?	
Rescue from Without: Is there some point in the story when all seems hopeless, when it looks like the hero is going to die then suddenly he is rescued unexpectedly?	

<p>Crossing the Return Threshold: Is there some point where the hero clearly returns “home”?</p>	
<p>Master of Two Worlds: Does it appear that the hero has conquered life in both the familiar and unfamiliar worlds?</p>	
<p>Freedom to Live: Since the hero typically begins the journey to resolve a problem, does it appear the problem is at last resolved so that all can live freely?</p>	

Chart to Complete for *The Wizard of Earthsea*

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