

Hero's Journey 2.0 - Grade 8 English

For most of my 8th graders, this is their second time tackling the Hero's Journey framework for understanding the power of stories in life and in literature. We start in 7th grade at a more basic level. Before diving into reviewing the stages, students read, discuss and answer questions on an excellent article from Reg Harris' book, *The Hero's Journey : a Guide to Literature and Life*.

One of the best ways I've found to review the stages of the Hero's Journey is by watching *The Lion King*. Through discussion students modify their answers and then keep this set of notes as reference for the next activity.

Next we watch *October Sky* tracking Homer's journey as we watch. I follow the same steps as we did with *The Lion King* to review the stages.

Students use these notes to plot the narrative arc of *October Sky*. This is counted as a summative assignment.

For the final activity of the unit, students write a creative story using all 12 stages of the Hero's Journey. This year, I found an excellent resource that students find highly engaging and entertaining. I modified an excellent resource created by Jadyn Thone (jadynthone@outlook.com) to help students structure their stories.

Story guidelines:

Details: Stories that contain all the required elements of the Hero's Journey will, as a rule, be between 400 - 600 words long. Please limit story length to a maximum of 800 words.

HJ Story Rubric

Criteria	Advanced 4	Meets 3	Approaches 2	Limited 1	No Evidence 0
HJ Stages All 12 stages of the HJ are present and clear in the story. Readers can easily identify most elements.	The 12 stages of the Hero's Journey are easily identifiable. Most readers could easily identify all elements. Further, the story is engaging and goes beyond making sure the elements are included.	All 12 stages of the HJ are present and clear in the story. Readers can easily identify most elements.	Most of the 12 stages are present, but not consistently clear. Readers are unsure when trying to identify the stages.	I can reach Level 2 with guidance and/or more practice.	No evidence submitted. My understanding is incomplete or simply focuses on lists of characters or sequences of events or descriptions of the setting, etc.
Writing Writing is organized and clearly has a beginning, a middle and an end. The story flows and there is congruence in the plot/arc. It falls within the minimum and maximum length requirements.	The elements of the HJ are interwoven in a story that is engaging and flows naturally. The narrative arc is clear as is character development. Readers stay engaged and invested in the resolution. The story can also be easily graphed on the plot triangle in addition to including the 12 stages of the Hero's Journey.	Writing is organized and clearly has a beginning, a middle and an end. The story flows and there is congruence in the plot/arc. It falls within the minimum and maximum length requirements.	Organization is loose and unstructured. The story arc is, at times, difficult to follow. The story may or not meet the length requirements.	I can reach Level 2 with guidance and/or more practice. The story has no clear arc and is far below or above length goals.	No evidence submitted. My understanding is incomplete or simply focuses on lists of characters or sequences of events or descriptions of the setting, etc.
Language I can use proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	I intentionally use a variety of sentence structures as appropriate. I can use proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	I can use proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	I can mostly use proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. Errors do either change the meaning or make it difficult to understand clearly.	I can reach Level 2 with guidance and/or more practice.	No evidence submitted. My understanding is incomplete.