

The Hero's Journey

Types of characters

Hero: Heroes almost always have courage, have one or more special talents, are idealistic, have been “wounded” (physically, disgraced or lost a loved one), are clever and resourceful, takes take action. Heroes are usually, loyal, forgiving, physical superior in some way, have a special birth and have a special destiny. Heros sometimes have a scar.

Name a hero: _____

Mentor: Mentors are wise and noble. They are often former heroes who are now passing on their knowledge and wisdom. A Mentors main function is to teach or train (e.g. Obi Wan teaches Luke about being a Jedi). A Mentor often gives the hero a gift (e.g. Dumbledore gave Harry his father's invisibility cloak). The Mentor's function is also to motivate the hero and help him overcome fear. Grace is Jake's mentor in Avatar.

Name a mentor: _____

Threshold Guardian: All heroes encounter obstacles on their adventure and threshold guardians are often at the gateway to a new world. Their function is to test the hero. (e.g. the Sorting Hat in Harry Potter). So they might not be characters, they could be a puzzle, like the game of chess in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Fluffy, the three headed dog, is a Threshold Guardian. They often turn into allies if the hero passes his tests. Think of your parents being Threshold Guardians. They question some of your decisions in order to test your commitment to a path. For example, before they buy a guitar and sign you up for lessons, they question your commitment to practice.

Name a threshold guardian: _____

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Herald: A herald character often delivers the Call to Adventure. He is the messenger and can provide the motivation and offer the hero a challenge. The herald may be a positive or negative figure or even a situation (a war) or a thing (a treasure map). The Herald signifies the need for change. (In Star Wars, Darth Vader captures Princess Leia).

Name a herald: _____

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Shapeshifter: Shapeshifters can change appearance or mood. They might mislead the Hero or keep him guessing and their loyalty or sincerity is often in question. A Shapeshifter brings doubt and suspense into a story. (e.g. Snape and Quirrell in *Harry Potter*) Any character can wear the mask of a Shapeshifter. (e.g. The wicked Queen in *Snow White* wears disguises herself as an old woman to trick Snow White into eating the poisoned apple.)

Name a shapeshifter: _____

Shadow: The Shadow is often the villain or the character who opposes the hero on his journey. Shadows create conflict and they force the hero to rise to the challenge. Often the more interesting and stronger the Shadow, the better the story. Voldemort and Darth Vader are great Shadows. Draco Malfoy in *Harry Potter* is a junior shadow.

Name a shadow: _____

Trickster: A mischief maker or a character who provides comic relief. Headless Nick, the ghost in Harry Potter is a Trickster. The Joker in Batman stories is both a villain (Shadow) and a Trickster.

Name a trickster: _____

Allies: Characters who help the hero. Hermione and Ron in *Harry Potter*, Han Solo, C3PO and R2D2 in *Star Wars*, the other toys in *Toy Story* and Grace, Moat and Trudy in *Avatar*.

Name an ally: _____

The Hero's Journey Outline

Choose a story from a book or movie and complete as many stages of the hero's journey as you can. Many stories won't have every stage. For example, many stories don't contain Refusal of the Call. And the stages will appear in different orders in different stories, however this is the usual outline.

Title of the story: _____

The stages are:

The Ordinary World: _____

The Call to Adventure: _____

Refusal of the Call: _____

Meeting with the Mentor: _____

Crossing the Threshold (The hero enters the Special world): _____

Tests, Allies and Enemies (The hero is tested and sorts out who are his allies and enemies): _____

Approach (The hero and allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world): _____

The Ordeal (Near the middle of the story, the hero confronts death or his greatest fear): _____

The Reward (The hero gets the treasure after facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.) _____

The Road Back (The hero leaves or is driven out of the Special world and needs to make sure the treasure is brought home. There might be a chase scene here.) _____

The Resurrection (The hero is tested once more on the threshold of home. He might make one last sacrifice and have to face another moment of death and rebirth.) _____

Return with the Elixir (The hero returns home or continues the journey with the treasure or wisdom that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.) _____
