



 Prestwick House

# Free Lesson Plan

## INFORMATIONAL TEXT:

### *Star Wars* and The Hero's Journey

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, 5, 9 | TEKS 110.33.b.(2),(5),(8))

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#### Objectives:

Introduce students to the archetypal character *the Hero* and plot structure *the Hero's Journey*

Use popular media to explore the Hero's Journey

#### Time:

1 class period

#### Materials:

One copy of *Star Wars: The Hero's Journey* Handout for each student



#### Procedure:

##### 1 - Introduce the concept of the Hero's Journey.

Tell your students that you are going to read them the summary of a story they are most likely familiar with. They should listen and then guess the name of the main character and the title of the story.

*The hero lives a simple, if boring, life dreaming of adventure. One day, he learns of a great task that he must accomplish. (And ONLY he can accomplish it.) Not only will accomplishing this great task be difficult and dangerous, it will require him to travel far from home, and he might never return. At first, he refuses. He even tries to run away from this great task that has been dumped on him. Eventually, circumstances force him to take up the challenge.*

*Now that he is in harmony with his destiny, even the forces of nature and the supernatural come to his aid. He finds an older, wiser, possibly magical teacher who helps him prepare for his journey and the task he must face.*

*On his adventure, our hero encounters a series of trials that test his abilities. He feels defeated and friendless. Always, however, those forces of nature and the supernatural intervene, and he is encouraged to continue. Eventually, he draws near to the task itself. He encounters a power far greater than himself. At the same time, whatever help he'd been receiving from the forces of nature*



*and the supernatural leave him. The teacher tells him that he must accomplish this task alone. Again, he thinks about running away, but the consequences of not accomplishing this task reach far beyond his life and friends.*

*Bereft of the teacher's help, he confronts a powerful force that is opposed to his accomplishing this task. They engage in a battle or contest that shakes our hero to the core. He almost dies. He's transformed, reenergized, and newly committed to achieving his task.*

*Of course, he succeeds.*

*Finally, having overcome many trials and reached his goal, he wants only to return home. He finds, however, that home has changed during his long absence, and it is not the same comfortable place it was before he left. He also finds that he has changed and is no longer fully suited to his former life. He tries to integrate the wisdom that he's gained from his adventure into his former life, but the change he has undergone is irreversible, and he knows he will never be quite the same again.*

*What story is this? Who is our hero?*

Your students may reply with a variety of stories such as *Star Wars*, *The Odyssey*, *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, or many others. Let them know that all are correct, because you're describing what is known as the "Universal Myth" or the "Hero's Journey."

Other stories that your students might be familiar with include:

*Star Wars*

*Lord of the Rings*

*Harry Potter*

*The Hunger Games*

*The Wizard of Oz*

*Divergent*

*Jaws*

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

*Fallout 4 Video Game*

## **2 - Explore what these stories have in common.**

Distribute the Handout to each student.

While there are differences in the way that the Hero's Journey is described, they generally follow the following pattern:

### **The Call:**

Typically, the Hero is challenged to embark on the Quest or is called to it by a god or god-figure. Usually, there is a sense of destiny associated with the call to the Quest—this is the Hero's purpose; it will be his or her defining moment.

### **The Decision:**

The Hero makes an intentional decision to accept the challenge or call and pursue his (or her) destiny. There is usually a sense that this decision is irrevocable—the ship sails, the bridge burns, the home planet is destroyed, etc. At this point, the Hero must go forward; there is no turning back.

### **The Preparation:**

This is a period during which the Hero learns what he or she needs to know in order to complete the Quest. The Hero develops the skills, builds the strength, gathers the tools and other materials, and collects the allies he or she will need to succeed.



Often, the Hero will meet a Mentor, an older, wiser individual who has the knowledge and skills the Hero needs. This Mentor may or may not be supernatural.

**The Obstacles:**

This is the Quest itself, the journey to the place where the treasure is hidden or the captive is imprisoned. It is a long trip. It is a dangerous trip. Many of the Hero's allies (met during the Preparation) will desert him, be rendered incapable of continuing, or die. The Hero will lose many, if not all, of the tools and weapons collected during the Preparation and will have to continue the Quest alone.

**The Climax:**

This is, of course, the moment when the Hero is at the point of either succeeding or failing. The failure might be physical, emotional, or psychological. The Climax also involves the moment when it becomes obvious that the Hero will succeed.

**The Return:**

After the successful Quest, the Hero always returns home, but he or she always returns a changed person.

**3 - Discuss how stories and novels fit the Hero's Journey.**

Ask your students to consider and discuss how the stories and characters they listed earlier follow the general structure of the Hero's Journey.

**4 - As a class, examine the original Star Wars trilogy as The Hero's Journey.**

One of the most famous examples of the Hero's Journey is the original *Star Wars* trilogy. As a class, discuss how the series, follows the structure of the Hero's Journey, and fill out the Handout with specific plot events that conform to the structure.

**The Call:** Luke Skywalker receives the message from the Droid R2D2 that princess Leia is in trouble. He sets off to find Obi Wan Kenobi.

**The Decision:** Luke finds Obi Wan and learns of his Destiny. Luke's decision is rendered irrevocable when his uncle and aunt are killed and his home is burned.

**The Preparation:** Luke sets off to aid the rebellion. Along the way, he gathers a crew of companions and learns the ways of the Force from his mentor Master Yoda. The concept of a Mentor is a reoccurring motif in the Hero's Journey.

**The Obstacles:** Most of the second and third movies show intermediary steps that Luke must accomplish in order to become strong enough to defeat the Emperor. Along the way, he encounters a "Shadow," an evil figure that mirrors those things the hero most fears or dislikes about himself. In Luke's case, that "Shadow" is Darth Vader. During "The Obstacles" portion of the story, Luke is separated from his friends and forced to face the ultimate evil alone.

**The Climax:** Luke faces the "Shadow" and is able to overcome the Emperor without falling to the "Dark Side."

**The Return:** Having overcome the enemies and returned peace to the galaxy, the major characters are reunited. Luke returns to his friends a changed man ready to move forward. In the final scene, Luke sees the ghosts of his fallen mentors Obi Wan, Yoda, and (in the remastered version) Anakin Skywalker, his father. In the final shot, Luke turns his back on the ghosts and returns to his *friends*.

**5 - Break the class into small groups to analyze another movie or book.**

Have your class break into small groups to discuss how other books, movies, or other media follow the same pattern. Encourage your students to be creative in selecting media to explore, including video games or graphic novels. If they need help,



they can use the list that you generated in Step 1 above. If the story contains a “Mentor” or “Shadow,” ask them to identify who that character is while they complete the Handout.

Have your students fill in column three of the form with specific examples of how their story follows the Hero's Journey.

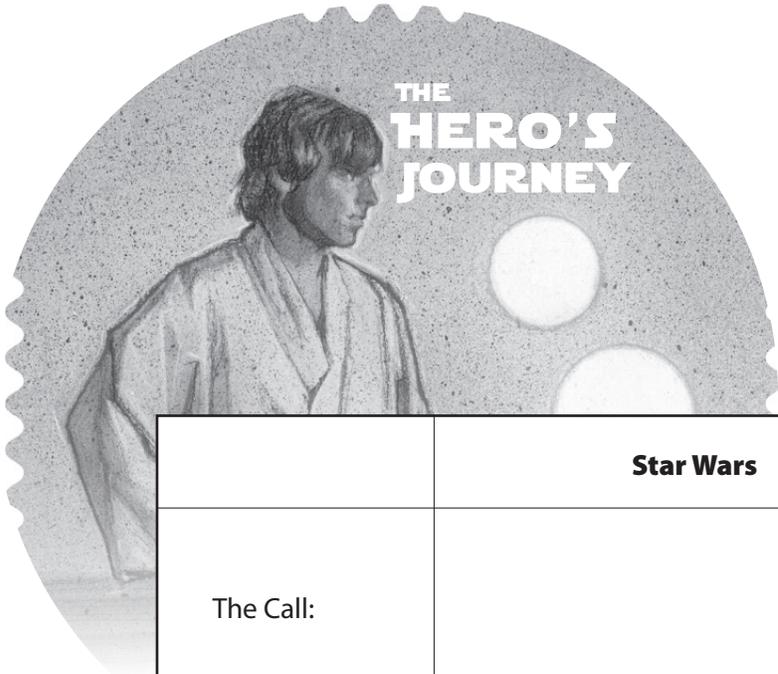
**6 – Have the groups review their stories.**

Ask each group to discuss how their story followed the Hero's Journey.

**7 - Wrap up with a discussion of why these stories are so powerful, and look at examples in classic literature.**

*The Hero's Journey is one lens through which you can view almost any story. When you look at these stories, you're calling upon generations of such stories, including ancient myths and bedtime stories that you've been familiar with since you were a child. Stories following this structure are universal and powerful. When you read many classics, you'll see elements of this story, and by identifying these common structural elements, you'll have a deeper appreciation of literature.*

Finish your discussion by looking at the books you've read so far this year, and see if your students can identify elements of the Hero's Journey in those stories.



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**Handout**

|                  | <b>Star Wars</b> | <b>Your Story</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| The Call:        |                  |                   |
| The Decision:    |                  |                   |
| The Preparation: |                  |                   |
| The Obstacles:   |                  |                   |
| The Climax:      |                  |                   |
| The Return:      |                  |                   |

## Standards

Common Core Standards – Reading: Literature

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5

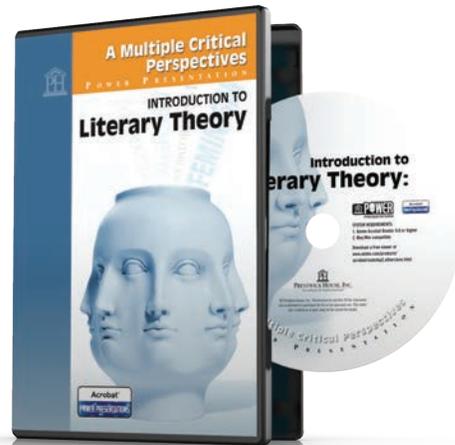
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Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

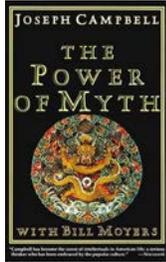
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TEKS 110.33.b.(5)

TEKS 110.33.b.(8)



## References:



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Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, NJ. Publisher: Princeton University Press.

Campbell, Joseph and Moyers, Bill. *The Power of Myth – DVD*. Publisher: Athena.

Dickenson, Craig. *Star Wars in the Classroom: Rogue 3*.

[http://www.starwarsintheclassroom.com/rogues/members/rogue\\_03.asp](http://www.starwarsintheclassroom.com/rogues/members/rogue_03.asp)



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