The Hero's Journey Through The Hobbit

Leah Underwood

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The Hero's Journey Through The Hobbit

Abstract
This project begins with a journey that moves from the familiar to a place of adventure and trials through an instructional unit on the Hero's Journey and The Hobbit. It begins with a rationale for the selection of both the unit topic and the selected text which is followed by the standards covered, prior knowledge needed, and a map of the unit. Following this are the four weeks of lesson plans and the instructional materials the students would use. The project finishes off with a reflection on the process and the struggles and lessons learned along the way.

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First Advisor
Dr. John Staunton

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Dr. Joseph Csicsila

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THE HERO'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE HOBBIT

By

Leah Underwood

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation

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Introduction

This project begins with a journey that moves from the familiar to a place of adventure and trials through an instructional unit on the Hero’s Journey and *The Hobbit*. It begins with a rationale for the selection of both the unit topic and the selected text which is followed by the standards covered, prior knowledge needed, and a map of the unit. Following this are the four weeks of lesson plans and the instructional materials the students would use. The project finishes off with a reflection on the process and the struggles and lessons learned along the way.
Rationale

This unit, designed for an English 10 class, will be studying the age-old Hero's Journey using the novel *The Hobbit*, by J.R.R. Tolkien. This unit will take place over a series of weeks where the class will be reading the novel and participating in activities that will help the students understand both the story and the concept of the Hero's Journey. This journey is a pattern recognized by Joseph Campbell in his 1949 book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In this, Campbell describes the recurring pattern of the Hero's Journey as one existing throughout ages and cultures where characters, heroes, experience a similar path or series of stages. The hero begins the journey in a familiar place and is confronted with a call to adventure. Next, the hero refuses the call but eventually sees reason with the help of a mystical friend. The hero then crosses the threshold from familiar to unfamiliar as they begin their journey. Along the way, the hero will confront many tests as they grow and begin to understand themselves in a new way. The hero eventually approaches the final, most arduous challenge, and comes out the other side as a victor. Finally, the hero returns home to the familiar life they once knew, but they face challenges acclimating back to a typical lifestyle after the surreal trials they encountered along their journey.

The students will study this cycle because it is simultaneously familiar and new to them. They may recognize what could be considered heroism in general, but they don't always recognize the classic components of the Hero's Journey in literature or their everyday lives. Through examining the Hero's Journey in *The Hobbit*, students will be able to recognize and analyze the classic components of a near-universal monomyth spanning differing world literature. Students will also be able to draw connections to their
own lives and relate to the journey as heroes and heroines facing trials in their high
school lives. Seeing how the characters respond to problems and what the consequences
will be for certain actions, students can confront everyday challenges through the
laboratory of fictional literature.

The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) has
created a core curriculum with a suggested plan. These plans have been designed with
input from master teachers and were tested in real classroom settings. In the curriculum
map for 10th grade English, or ATLAS, MAISA recognizes the importance of teaching
the hero’s journey near the beginning of students’ 10th-grade year as their narrative
reading unit. MAISA’s inclusion of this unit of study on their curriculum map influenced
this unit on the Hero’s Journey using *The Hobbit*. Certain aspects of instruction are taken
from these plans, but the unit itself, and the texts, is selected to fit the needs of the
students in this 10th-grade class. Though the unit takes its inspiration from MAISA’s
curriculum, it varies significantly from the instruction that is found in MAISA’s ATLAS.

The Hero’s journey unit from MAISA’s plan is set to take place from the
beginning of December to mid-January and will take four weeks. The study of the Hero’s
Journey using *The Hobbit* will take place earlier in the year than the projected time of the
MAISA unit for a few reasons. First, the district curriculum this was planned for has a
different organization to it which places the narrative reading unit before other units from
MAISA’s curriculum map. Second, the MAISA calendar has students starting classes
during the third week in August, but Michigan schools typically start two weeks later
near the beginning of September. These factors adjusted the timeframe of this unit,
placing it during October after an introductory unit on poetry and short stories.
Students will be studying J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* as the primary Hero’s journey tale in the unit. This classic piece of literature follows an adventurous hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, who breaks from his comfort zone to join a group of 13 dwarves on a journey to reclaim their home. Bilbo signs up with no idea of the hardships to come and rushes bravely forward into the unknown. Along the way, Bilbo discovers much about himself and grows immensely as a character. Without giving too much away, the novel lends itself well to this unit of study because Bilbo experiences each stage represented in the hero’s journey throughout the progression of the story.

Though this novel does lend itself well to the unit, issues of the text’s complexity level need to be addressed. The concept of text complexity is discussed in Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. Appropriate levels of text complexity are important for students to be able to progress as learners and readers who are prepared for college and careers (2). Text complexity consists of three measures: qualitative dimensions, quantitative dimensions, and reader and task considerations. Qualitative dimensions are “…those aspects of text complexity best measured or only measurable by an attentive human reader…” (4). These aspects include levels of meaning or purpose, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and varying knowledge demands (6). Quantitative dimensions are measured by algorithms that analyze word and sentence length and word frequency, or details that would be challenging for an individual to discern without aid (4). The final measure is reader and task considerations. These include a professional analysis of student motivation, knowledge, and experiences, and the tasks the students are required to perform with the text (4). Aspects of reader and task considerations play into and can override the other measures of text complexity.
The Hobbit's quantitative measure, or Lexile score, is around 1000. The suggested complexity range for 10th grade is 1080-1170 which places The Hobbit just below the 10th grade band solely on the quantitative measure. Qualitative aspects and considerations for the reader and tasks combine with this Lexile score to place it within an appropriate range of 10th grade text complexity. The inclusion of intertextuality, discussion of cultural pluralism, and importance of the fantasy genre in student education play a role in the measurement of the text complexity of The Hobbit.

In addition to reading The Hobbit, students will be presented with numerous texts that present themes and structures similar to those in The Hobbit. The unit takes an intertextual approach to the study of the Hero's Journey which means that students will be examining multiple texts together to create a unified understanding. Students will start this unit without knowing that the end product will be knowledge of the hero's journey. As students read the novel and the supplemental texts, they will look for similarities and relationships among the stories until the students can recognize and define aspects of the hero's journey. Students will be analyzing each individual text, and then synthesizing the information into a single definition of what the hero's journey is. These additional texts fall at all ranges of complexity and come in multiple formats which will help to complicate the complexity of The Hobbit, making it more appropriate for 10th grade.

In discussing The Hobbit, students will begin developing a perspective on multicultural literature through the concept of cultural pluralism seen in the story. Cultural pluralism is a phenomenon in which groups with unique cultural identities are able to exist within a larger society. Tolkien introduces hobbits, elves, dwarves, and wizards—all races of Middle Earth—who have unique cultures yet coexist in this large
social structure. This analysis of the novel will be extrapolated to real-life where students will be able to examine the cultural pluralism that surrounds them in their own society. Examining culture and society can open up the floor for discussion of cultures and cultural identities through the more approachable genre of fantasy.

Fantasy is perfect for an educational setting because students are able to engage with it. Though some may see it as “escapist fluff” (Thomas 60), fantasy literature is “ripe with mythic structures, heroic cycles, and social and religious commentary” (Thomas 60). The Hero’s Journey is readily seen in most examples of the genre, and students are able to recognize aspects of their own lives through the safety of these stories. Students can connect the hero to themselves, the helper to their need for direction, and the evil force to any obstacle they may be facing (Thomas 60-61). “Tolkien’s name has become synonymous with fantasy” (Thomas 61); therefore, The Hobbit is a perfect text to use when studying the monomyth through fantasy.

The unit contained in the following pages was designed for a 10th grade English course. It was created with the basic ideas of MAISA’s narrative reading unit in mind but was modified to allow the students to discover the monomyth instead of learning about it through a lecture model. The Hero’s Journey is important for students to learn because it can be applied to real life, and The Hobbit, along with other texts in this unit, functions well as a scaffold for this student discovery. Though the quantitative complexity of the story falls short of 10th grade, the genre’s relevance to student life and The Hobbit’s cultural pluralism help to adjust the complexity into the 10th grade range.
Prior Knowledge

Students will need to know the following information, and meet the following requirements to succeed in this unit:

- Read at approximately a 7th grade reading level
- Write at a 7th grade level
- Utilize correct capitalization and punctuation
- Write in paragraph format
- Write dialogue in the correct format
- Remember types of figurative language
Unit Standards

Key Ideas and Details:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1**
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2**
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3**
Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Craft and Structure:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6**
Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective
technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A
Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation,
establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or
characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple
plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C
Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create
a coherent whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D
Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid
picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.E
Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or
resolved over the course of the narrative.

Production and Distribution of Writing:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are
appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5**

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 9-10 here.)

**Range of Writing:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.10**

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Unit Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: The Hobbit

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to get the students a copy of their book to use throughout the unit. It is also to help students become interested in the story by having it read to them.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Recall what happens in the first pages of The Hobbit.

Materials:
- Class sets of The Hobbit - Sign out sheet

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by introducing the next novel that we will be studying as a class: The Hobbit.
2. I will call students up by name, have them take a copy of the novel, and write the novel’s number down next to their name on the sign-out sheet.
3. Once all students have their novels, we will begin reading aloud as a whole class.
   a. We will have approximately 40 minutes to read in class.
   b. I will stop periodically to ask if there are any questions while we’re reading.
4. I will assign the homework for tonight, which is to read to page 31.

Assessment:
Formative- Questions while reading.
Lesson 2: Clearing up Characters in *The Hobbit*

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to help the students visualize and recall the characters from the first chapter. We are introduced to many significant characters that we’ll be dealing with throughout the story, so we’ll need a good understanding of the characters moving forward.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Create a visual representation of the characters from *The Hobbit*.
- Justify their representation using quotes from the novel.
- Describe the relationship between the characters.

Materials:
- Printer paper
- Drawing supplies (pencils, markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.)
- Character map / dictionary assignment directions

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by passing out the directions for our character map activity and explaining why it is so important to do this activity.
   a. Students will work individually to draw each character introduced in chapter 1, justify their drawing with a quote, connect the character to other characters with a line that is labeled with the type of relationship, and justify that relationship choice with a quote.
2. Students will collect their printer paper and drawing supplies from the front of the classroom, and will work independently for the remainder of the hour.
3. At the end of class, I will assign the homework for the night which is to read pages 32-75.

Assessment:
Formative- checking in with students during the activity in class.
Lesson 3: Clearing up Characters in *The Hobbit* continued

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to help the students visualize and recall the characters from the first chapter. We are introduced to many significant characters that we’ll be dealing with throughout the story, so we’ll need a good understanding of the characters moving forward.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Create a visual representation of the characters from *The Hobbit*.
- Justify their representation using quotes from the novel.
- Describe the relationship between the characters.

Materials:
- Printer paper
- Drawing supplies (pencils, markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.)
- Character map / dictionary assignment directions

Process:
1. I will begin the hour with a journal prompt.
   a. Today’s prompt: Write a journal entry as Bilbo detailing the events of last night’s reading.
   b. Students will have 10 minutes to respond to this.
2. Next, I will explain that students will continue their character map activity from the previous lesson. What they don’t finish in class will be homework.
3. Students will continue to work independently for the remainder of the hour to complete the assignment.
4. At the end of class, I will assign the homework for the night which is to read pages 76-122.

Assessment:
Formative- Character map activity.
Lesson 4: Language Use in *The Hobbit*

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to make students aware of the language choices that authors make in a text. Students will be looking at figurative language and analyzing the meaning of the language. Students will also look at syntax and diction to see how the author's writing choices create the tone and influence the reading.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Recognize figurative language in the text.
- Analyze language choices to determine meaning.
- Explain how the author uses language for a specific purpose.

Materials:
- Language tracking packet
- Language tacking activity directions

Process:
1. I will begin the with a journal prompt.
   a. Today's prompt: If you had a magic ring, what would it do, and how would you use it?
   b. Students will have 10 minutes to respond to this.
2. Next, I will pass out the directions sheet and assignment packet for the language tracking activity that students will complete throughout the novel.
3. I will then go over the directions and expectations for what students will be doing during the hour.
   a. Students will be going back through the reading they have already done to look for examples of figurative language and intriguing diction or syntax choices.
   b. Students will write the quote for the language they found, what they noticed, and what it means or how it affects the text.
   c. Students will work with their table groups to complete the first page from the previous reading. What isn’t finished in class will be homework.
   d. Moving forward, students will track a number of language uses in each night’s reading.
4. Students will work on this activity for the remainder of the hour.
5. At the end of the hour, I will assign the night’s homework which is to finish the language tracking from class today, read pages 123-152, and complete tonight’s language tracking.

Assessment:
Formative- Check-ins with students while working on language tracking.
Lesson 5: Visualizing the settings of *The Hobbit*

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to help students visualize where the story is taking place. Because it is a fantasy story, it is set in locations that are fictional and may not be easy for students to picture while they’re reading. This activity will help students engage with the story and get a better feeling for what is happening in the story and where it is set.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Create a visual representation of the settings of *The Hobbit*.
- Justify their settings with a quote, or quotes, from the text.

Materials:
- Setting visualizer template
- Setting activity directions
- Drawing supplies (pencils, markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.)

Process:
1. I will begin the hour with passing out the directions for today’s setting illustration activity.
2. Next, I will go over the directions with the students.
   a. Students will work independently and quietly during the hour to complete their setting illustrations. What isn’t finished in class will be homework.
   b. Students will need to complete five illustrations
      i. Bilbo’s home
      ii. The goblin caves
      iii. The forest of pines
      iv. Beorn’s house
      v. Mirkwood
   c. Each illustration needs to have at least one quote that supports their drawing choices.
3. At the end of the hour, I will assign the homework for the weekend. Students will need to finish the setting illustrations, read pages 153-204, and continue tracking language use for each reading.

Assessment:
Formative- Setting illustrations and justification quotes.
Lesson 6: Introducing Other Hero’s Journeys

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to begin introducing additional Hero’s Journey stories so that the students can start to make their connections between the plots for these characters.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Identify the plot points in “Cinderella.”
- Create a plot diagram, or EKG, for “Cinderella.”

Materials:
- “Cinderella” Texts
- EKG directions
- Printer paper
- Rulers
- Pencils

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by passing out the print out of “Cinderella” to every student.
2. We will then begin reading the story together in class.
   a. I will start the reading, and then I will pass it off to a student. This student will read a few paragraphs, then pass it off to another student.
   b. If at any point no students want to read, I will pick up the reading again and continue to check for volunteers.
3. Once we finish the story, I will pass out the directions for the EKG plotting activity.
   a. Students will find the highs and the lows in the story and create a readout of the story’s plot.
   b. For each high and low, the students will label the point with a 3x1 sentence that includes a subject, active verb, and an abstract noun.
   c. Students will work individually and quietly during the hour to complete the EKG. What isn’t finished in class is homework.
4. At the end of the hour, I will go over the homework for the night which will be to finish the “Cinderella” EKG, read pages 205-229, and complete the language tracking for the night’s reading.

Assessment:
Formative- Questions that students ask during or after the reading and EKG plot of the story’s events.
Lesson 7: Introducing More Hero’s Journeys Through Film

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to engage students with another example of the Hero’s Journey through a medium all students seem to enjoy—film.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Identify the plot points in *Evan Almighty*.

Materials:
- Digital copy of *Evan Almighty*  
- Computer  
- Projector  
- Screen  
- Notebook paper and pencils

Process:
1. I will begin the hour with a journal prompt.
   a. Today’s prompt: What is the genre of *The Hobbit*? What other stories come to mind when you think of *The Hobbit*?
2. Next, I will explain to the students that we will be watching a movie during the next two class periods.
   a. Students will need to be taking literal summary notes of what is occurring throughout the movie. They must have at least six bullet points of summary.
3. We will then watch the movie for the remainder of the hour.
4. At the end of the hour, I will assign the homework for the night which will be to read pages 230-265 and continue tracking language use.

Assessment:
Formative- Summary note taking.
Lesson 8: Introducing More Hero’s Journeys Through Film

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to engage students with another example of the Hero’s Journey through a medium all students seem to enjoy—film.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Identify the plot points in *Evan Almighty*.
- Create a plot diagram, or EKG, for *Evan Almighty*.

Materials:
- Digital copy of *Evan Almighty*
- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- Notebook paper and pencils
- EKG activity directions
- Printer Paper
- Rulers
- Pencils

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by reminding students that we are watching *Evan Almighty* again today and that they should be taking summary notes. Students will need to have at least three bullet point notes from today.
2. We will finish watching the movie and taking notes.
3. Once we finish the movie, I will check if there are any questions about the story.
4. Next, I will pass out the EKG directions sheet for the story.
   a. The students will spend the remainder of the hour working on the EKG activity individually. This EKG will have the same directions as the “Cinderella” EKG. What isn’t finished in class is homework.
5. At the end of the hour, I will assign the homework for the night which will be to finish the *Evan Almighty* EKG, read pages 266-295, and continue tracking the language use.

Assessment:
Formative- Summary notes, *Evan Almighty* EKG, and check-ins with students while they’re working.
Lesson 9: Introducing Another Hero’s Journey to *The Hobbit*

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to give students another Hero’s Journey text to compare the plot of *The Hobbit* too.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Identify the plot points in “A Sound of Thunder.”
- Create a plot diagram, or EKG, for “A Sound of Thunder.”

Materials:
- “A Sound of Thunder” print out
- EKG directions
- Printer paper

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by passing out the text, “A Sound of Thunder,” to each student.
2. I will begin reading the story and will pass the reading off to a student after a few paragraphs.
   a. Each student will read a few paragraphs, and then they will call on another student to read a few paragraphs.
   b. I expect students to remain silent, awake, and respectful while the story is being read.
3. Once we finish our reading, we will take a few minutes to ask questions and discuss the story.
4. Next, I will pass out the directions for the EKG activity that will be the same from the EKGs for “Cinderella” and *Evan Almighty*.
   a. Students will work individually and quietly on this activity for the rest of the hour. What is not completed in class will be homework.
5. At the end of the hour, I will go over the homework with the students. The homework will be to finish the EKG activity, read pages 295-330, and finish the language tracking activity.

Assessment:
Formative- EKG plot of “A Sound of Thunder” and discussion during and after reading.
Lesson 10: *The Hobbit* Wrap-Up Discussion and EKG

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to give students a chance to ask questions and discuss what happened in *The Hobbit*. It also will provide them with the opportunity to return to the story and find the important plot points.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Interpret the theme or themes of *The Hobbit*.
- Create a plot diagram, or EKG, for *The Hobbit*.

Materials:
- Computer
- Word Processor
- Projector and screen
- EKG activity directions

Process:
1. I will begin the hour with a journal prompt.
   a. Today’s prompt: What questions do you have about *The Hobbit*? What is/are the theme/themes of *The Hobbit*?
   b. Students will have 10 minutes to respond to this prompt.
2. Once students finish responding to the prompt, I will ask that students share what questions they came up with.
   a. As the students share these questions, I will collect them in a word document.
   b. Once we collect all our questions, I will ask if anyone can respond to an item from the list. We will do this until we’ve answered as many questions as we can.
3. After we go through our questions, I will ask what the theme or themes of the novel are.
   a. I will ask the students to do a think-pair-share, and we will discuss our thoughts as a class.
4. Once we get through our theme discussion, I will pass out the EKG directions for *The Hobbit*.
   a. Students will work on this quietly and individually for the rest of the hour. What is not finished in class will be homework.
5. At the end of the hour, I will go over the homework which will be to work on the EKG over the weekend.

Assessment:
Formative- Class discussion and EKG for *The Hobbit*.
Lesson 11: Introducing Even More Hero’s Journeys Through Film

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to continue engaging students with another example of the Hero’s Journey through a medium all students seem to enjoy—film.

Outcomes: SWBAT
- Identify the plot points in *Mulan*.

Materials:
- Digital copy of *Mulan*
- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- Notebook paper and pencils

Process:
5. I will begin the hour by explaining to the students that we will be watching a movie, *Mulan*, during the next two class periods.
   a. Students will need to be taking literal summary notes of what is occurring throughout the movie. They must have at least six bullet points of summary.
6. We will then watch the movie for the remainder of the hour.
7. At the end of the hour, I will inform students that there is no homework for the night.

Assessment:
Formative- Summary note taking.
Lesson 12: Introducing Even More Hero’s Journeys Through Film

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to continue engaging students with another example of the Hero’s Journey through a medium all students seem to enjoy—film.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Identify the plot points in *Mulan*.
- Create a plot diagram, or EKG, for *Mulan*.

Materials:
- Digital copy of *Mulan*  
- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- Notebook paper and pencils

Process:
6. I will begin the hour by reminding students that we are watching *Mulan* again today and that they should be taking summary notes. Students will need to have at least three bullet point notes from today.
7. We will finish watching the movie and taking notes.
8. Once we finish the movie, I will check if there are any questions about the story.
9. Next, I will pass out the EKG directions sheet for the story.
   a. The students will spend the remainder of the hour working on the EKG activity individually. This EKG will have the same directions as the “Cinderella,” *Evan Almighty*, “A Sound of Thunder,” and *The Hobbit* EKGs. What isn’t finished in class is homework.
10. At the end of the hour, I will assign the homework for the night which will be to finish the *Mulan* EKG.

Assessment:
Formative- Summary notes, *Mulan* EKG, and check-ins with students while they’re working.
Lesson 13: Story Comparison

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to compare the four stories we were presented with in class to *The Hobbit* to begin noticing the common elements in the Hero’s Journey.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Compare the five stories to each other to determine common elements.

Materials:
- Comparison activity directions
- Pencils
- Printer paper

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by placing students into groups of three.
2. Once the groups are created, I will pass out the directions for today’s activity.
   a. The students will be comparing the five stories we’ve read or watched in the last two weeks.
   b. The groups will be working together to discuss and compare ideas, but each student will be completing their own work.
   c. Students will first create a 5-column list with each column representing a story. In the columns, the students will write down what they noticed about character and plot elements.
   d. Once the lists are created, the students will develop a list of elements that are seen in all five stories, elements that are often seen in the stories, and elements that are sometimes seen in the stories.
   e. Students will have the hour to work on this, and what isn’t finished will be homework.
3. At the end of the hour, I will go over the homework with the students which will be to finish working on the story comparisons.

Assessment:
Formative- Comparisons and check-ins with students while they work.
Lesson 14: Introducing the Hero’s Journey

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to review what the students came up with in class yesterday and compare it to the model of the Hero’s Journey discussed by Joseph Campbell.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Recognize the steps and stages of the Hero’s Journey in *The Hobbit*.
- Locate the parts of *The Hobbit* that fit the stages of the Hero’s Journey.
- Justify choices for the stages of the Hero’s Journey in *The Hobbit*.

Materials:
- TedEd Hero’s Journey lesson
- Computers for all students
- *The Hobbit* Hero’s Journey template

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by having the students pull out their laptops and go to this link: [https://ed.ted.com/on/eFU9rCra](https://ed.ted.com/on/eFU9rCra)
2. The students will watch the video, take the quiz, and respond to the discussion.
   a. This work will be done individually.
3. Once students are done with the TedEd lesson, they will come to the front table to collect the next activity directions sheet.
   a. The students will fill out that stages of template with the steps of the Hero’s Journey seen in *The Hobbit*.
   b. Students will work on this in class and finish it as homework.
4. At the end of the hour, I will let the students know that their homework is to finish both the TedEd lesson and the template for class tomorrow if they were not completed in class.

Assessment:
Lesson 15: Choice Story Comparison

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to have students interact with a story of their choice to analyze how the Hero’s Journey is present in the choice text.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Recognize the steps and stages of the Hero’s Journey in a student selected text.
- Locate the parts of the choice text that fit the stages of the Hero’s Journey.
- Justify choices for the stages of the Hero’s Journey in their selected text.

Materials:
- Choice story stages google doc
- Computers for all students

Process:
1. We will begin the hour by having students share what they selected in *The Hobbit* as the stages of the Hero’s Journey.
   a. As a class, we will discuss why these are, or are not, good choices, and come up with our own class template for the Hero’s Journey in *The Hobbit*.
2. Once we finish our class template, the students will pull out their laptops and go to our Google Classroom to access the Choice Story Stages assignment.
   a. The students will choose a story from the list provided on the worksheet. They will then work through each stage of the Hero’s Journey and explain what part of their selected text fits that stage. The students will also need to explain why that fits the particular stage of the Hero’s Journey they placed it with.
   b. Students will do this in a table format in a Google Doc and submit it to the assignment when they’re done.
   c. Students will work on this quietly and individually for the entire hour
3. I will pass out a blank Hero’s Journey template in the last portion of the hour. I will then explain to the students that they will be writing their own Hero’s Journey, and they should begin planning and brainstorming over the weekend.
4. At the end of the hour, I will go over the homework with the students. The homework is to finish filling out the table if they did not finish it in class and brainstorm the stages of their story.

Assessment:
Formative- Choice story Hero’s Journey stages activity.
Lesson 16: Developing the Hero with Song Lyrics

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to analyze the qualities of Bilbo as a hero and begin planning who the hero of the students' stories is going to be.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Explain the qualities of a hero.
- Apply the hero qualities to Bilbo.
- Create their own heroes.

Materials:
- "Superman" by Five for Fighting music video
- "Superman" by Five for Fighting lyrics
- "Holding Out for a Hero" by Bonnie Tyler music video

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by playing the "Holding Out for a Hero" and "Superman" music videos.
2. I will then pass out the song lyrics for students and the hero song lyrics analysis sheet.
   a. Students will work in pairs to answer the questions about heroes on the worksheet.
3. Once the students answer the questions, we will go over what makes up a hero in a whole class discussion.
4. After we discuss what makes a hero as a class, we will analyze the main characters from our 5 class stories.
   a. We will do a think-pair-share for each hero. I will ask the question "how is ______ a hero in their story? What qualities make them a hero?"
5. Next, I will pass out the hero planning activity and explain that the students will be working on creating their hero to go on the hero journey they have been brainstorming for.
   a. Students will work quietly and individually for the rest of the hour on planning their hero. What isn’t finished in class will be homework.
6. At the end of the hour, I will remind students that their homework is to finish planning their character and brainstorming for their story.

Assessment:
Formative- Class discussions, lyric analysis sheet, Bilbo analysis sheet, and hero planning.
Lesson 17: Writing the Hero’s Journey

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to assess students’ understanding of The Hero’s Journey and give them time in class to create their best work.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Create their own Hero’s Journey narrative.

Materials:
- Hero’s Journey project directions
- Hero’s Journey project rubric
- Computers for all students

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by passing out the directions and rubric for the Hero’s Journey narrative writing assignment and going through what the directions say.
   a. I will stop to ask students if there are any questions before moving on.
2. Once we understand the directions, I will explain to students that the rest of the hour today will be a writing work day.
   a. Students can work on more brainstorming, planning, and outlining, or students can begin typing their stories on their laptops.
   b. Students will work quietly for the rest of the hour on their story.
3. At the end of the hour, I will remind students of the due date for this writing assignment, and tell them that they should be working on this at home.

Assessment:
Summative- Ongoing writing assignment.
Lesson 18: Writing the Hero’s Journey

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to assess students’ understanding of The Hero’s Journey and give them time in class to create their best work.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Create their own Hero’s Journey narrative.

Materials:
- Computers for all students

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by checking in on how the writing process is going so far. I will be asking students what stage they’re at and what problems they’re running into.
2. Students will have the rest of the hour to work on their writing.
3. At the end of the hour, I will remind students that they need to be working on this assignment as homework.

Assessment:
Summative- Ongoing writing assignment.
Lesson 19: Writing the Hero's Journey

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to assess students’ understanding of The Hero's Journey and give them time in class to create their best work.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Create their own Hero's Journey narrative.

Materials:
- Computers for all students

Process:
4. I will begin the hour by checking in on how the writing process is going so far. I will be asking students what stage they’re at and what problems they’re running into.
5. Students will have the rest of the hour to work on their writing.
6. At the end of the hour, I will remind students that they need to be working on this assignment as homework. Students need to bring in a printed copy of their story to class tomorrow.

Assessment:
Summative- Ongoing writing assignment.
Lesson 20: Peer Review Day

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to give students an opportunity to get feedback on their writing to create a stronger Hero’s Journey narrative.

Outcomes:
SWBAT
- Create their own Hero’s Journey narrative.
- Evaluate the writing of peers.

Materials:
- Peer review sheets
- Printed copies of student stories
- Pens

Process:
1. I will begin the hour by having every student pull their printed stories out and checking them in. Students who do not have a story do not get to participate in the peer review activity and will spend the hour working on their draft.
2. Next, I will ask students to get into groups of 3 students.
3. I will pass around the peer review sheets so that every student has a copy of each sheet.
4. Next, the students will begin peer reviewing.
   a. The students will pass their paper and peer review sheets clockwise to the next person in their group.
   b. The students will read the story they were just handed and complete the first review form.
   c. Once the first reviewer is done, the students will pass their paper clockwise again.
   d. The students will read the story they were handed and complete the second review form.
   e. Once both forms are complete, the students will pass the stories back to the author of the story.
   f. Students should then take a look at the comments of the reviewers and ask any questions while they are still in their groups.
5. Once the review process is over, students can get their laptops out and continue working on their narratives and implementing the suggestions of the reviewers.
6. At the end of the hour, I will remind students that these stories are to be turned in on Google Classroom at 11:59 pm.

Assessment:
Summative- Hero’s Journey narrative writing assignment.
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Character Mapping Dictionary

In the first chapter of *The Hobbit*, we are introduced to a total of 15 characters. That’s a lot of names to keep straight! To help us remember the character names, how they’re related, and what they look like, we’ll be creating character maps and dictionaries to refer to as we read. Here’s what you’ll need to do:

Part 1:

1. Grab 6 sheets of printer paper, drawing supplies, and your book.
   a. You’ll need 5 of the pages for part 1, put the other page aside for part 2.
2. Divide your 5 pages into 3 equal spaces. Note: You now have 15 sections. You will be creating a dictionary type entry for each character in Chapter 1.
3. In each entry include:
   a. The name of the character
   b. A colored drawing
   c. Key details the text includes about the character
   d. At least 1 quote that provides insight into the character
   e. Any relations the character has to the other characters in Chapter 1.

Part 2:

1. Once you’ve completed part 1, you can start working on the character map activity. Use your remaining piece of paper to complete this part of the activity.
2. Create a character map with Bilbo’s name at the center.
3. From there, add the other characters’ names to the sheet.
   a. More important characters should be grouped near the middle, while more peripheral characters should be near the edges.
4. Draw a line connecting the characters to each other.
   a. Above each line- label the type of relationship (friends, cousins, acquaintances, etc.)
   b. Below each line- include a quote from the text that supports your choice in labeling the relationship.
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Language Use Tracking Directions

Author's use many stylistic tools to weave their stories. Some choices help the reader understand the story better, and some choices create a specific effect in the story that the author wants to portray. To do this, Authors, like J.R.R. Tolkien, use figurative language and variations in diction or syntax.

**Figurative Language:**
Words or expressions that have deeper meaning that the literal words.

Examples-
- Simile
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Onomatopoeia
- Oxymoron
- Hyperbole
- Allusion
- Idiom
- Imagery
- Symbolism
- Alliteration
- Assonance
- Consonance
- Metonymy
- Synecdoche
- Sarcasm
- Litotes
- Pun
- Anaphora
- Tautology
- Understatement
- Irony

**Syntax:** The arrangement of words to create well-formed sentences.

**Diction:** The specific choice of words in writing.

In your Language Tracking packet, you will be keeping track of sentences that stand out to you. When you find one, you will write the quote down and include the page number. Next, you will make note of what stands out to you. Do you see a simile? Is there personification? Maybe you really like the word choice (diction), or the specific way Tolkien chose to order the words speaks to you. Write down if you’re noticing figurative language, diction, syntax, or something else. Then write the effect it has on the text in the last column.

You must track at least 4 language choices for each night’s reading. Feel free to keep track of more on additional sheets of paper if you find more than 4 in a night.
Setting Illustration Directions

Because *The Hobbit* is set in a fictional world, it might be hard for us to visualize what is taking place and where it's all happening. To help fix that problem, you're going to draw what 5 different setting look like in *The Hobbit*. You need to draw the following scenes:

1. Bilbo's Home- An Unexpected Party
2. The Goblin Caves- Over Hill and Under Hill / Riddles in the Dark
3. The Forest of Pines- Out of the Frying-Pan into the Fire
4. Beorn's Home- Queer Lodgings
5. Mirkwood Forest- Flies and Spiders

When completing the setting template, there are a few things you need to be sure to include:

- A colored drawing of the setting
- The characters in the scene
- A quote, or quotes, to support your setting illustration
Cinderella EKG Story Plotting

Have you ever seen an electrocardiogram before? It’s a measure of the electrical activity of your heart, and it tracks your heartbeats. It looks a little something like this:

As you can see, there are highs and lows on the EKG. There are also highs and lows in every story we read. What you’re going to do is create an EKG readout of the events of “Cinderella.” Each high point in the story will be a peak, and each low point will be a valley. The climax, or the turning point of the story, should be your highest peak.

At each peak and valley, you need to include a 3x1 sentence. A 3x1 is a sentence that has the following word types in this order: Subject + Active Verb + Abstract Noun. You can only have three words in your sentence, so choose carefully. Look up a list of abstract nouns and active verbs to help you out with this activity.

Note: your subject may not be a pronoun or proper noun!

Here are some examples:

- Firefighter reveals past.
- Curiosity drives decisions.
- Decisions create path.
- Arachnid tries persistence.
Evan Almighty EKG Story Plotting

Create an EKG readout of *Evan Almighty*. Include the highs of the story as peaks, and the lows as valleys. Make your highest peak your climax.

At each peak and valley, be sure to include a 3x1 sentence. Remember that a 3x1 consists of a Subject + Active Verb + Abstract Noun.

You can look up a list of active verbs and abstract nouns to create your 3x1 sentences.
A Sound of Thunder EKG Story Plotting

Create an EKG readout of “A Sound of Thunder.” Include the highs of the story as peaks, and the lows as valleys. Make your highest peak your climax.

At each peak and valley, be sure to include a 3x1 sentence. Remember that a 3x1 consists of a Subject + Active Verb + Abstract Noun.

You can look up a list of active verbs and abstract nouns to create your 3x1 sentences.
The Hobbit EKG Story Plotting

Create an EKG readout of *The Hobbit*. Include the highs of the story as peaks, and the lows as valleys. Make your highest peak your climax.

At each peak and valley, be sure to include a 3x1 sentence. Remember that a 3x1 consists of a **Subject + Active Verb + Abstract Noun**.

You can look up a list of active verbs and abstract nouns to create your 3x1 sentences.
Mulan EKG Story Plotting

Create an EKG readout of *Mulan*. Include the highs of the story as peaks, and the lows as valleys. Make your highest peak your climax.

At each peak and valley, be sure to include a 3x1 sentence. Remember that a 3x1 consists of a **Subject + Active Verb + Abstract Noun**.

You can look up a list of active verbs and abstract nouns to create your 3x1 sentences.
5 Story Plot Comparisons

The 5 texts that we just experienced have are all quite different. They come from different genres, have different characters, and are placed in various settings. However, for all these differences, there are many similarities. Your job is to discuss with your groups the similarities of these 5 stories.

Here’s what you’ll do:

1. Create a 5-column chart with the title of each story at the top of a column.
2. Each group member will be creating their own list, but you will be discussing your ideas with the group.
3. In each column, write down what you and your group members noticed about each story. Pay particularly close attention to characters and plot.
4. Once you’ve finished these lists, highlight ideas that you see on every list. Then with a different color, highlight things you see on most of the lists. And last, with a new color, highlight the points you see on only some of the lists.
5. On a new sheet of paper, create a 3-column chart with the following titles:
   a. Similarities for all
   b. Similarities for most
   c. Similarities for some
6. Copy your highlighted points into where they belong on these lists.
As we learned in class today, there is a common storyline that many of our favorite tales through time have followed. *The Hobbit* is one of these texts that follows the steps of The Hero's Journey. In the spaces below, fill in the parts of the *The Hobbit* that fit the stages of the Hero's Journey.

Step 1: _________________________ 

Step 2: _________________________ 

Step 3: _________________________ 

Step 4: _________________________ 

Step 5: _________________________ 

Step 6: _________________________ 

Step 7: _________________________ 

Step 8: _________________________ 

Step 9: _________________________ 

Step 10: _________________________ 

Step 11: _________________________ 

Step 12: _________________________
### Hero's Journey in Choice Text

Complete the following table using a story of your choice from the list provided.

Your story options include:
- Star Wars
- The Matrix
- How to Train Your Dragon
- The Lion King
- Up
- Spirited Away
- Brave
- Other: ________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Hero's Journey</th>
<th>Part of story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary World</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to Adventure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal of the Call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Figures or Supernatural Aid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing the Threshold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests, Allies, and Enemies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordeal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Bottom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atonement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Superman (It's Not Easy) By Five for Fighting

I can't stand to fly
I'm not that naive
I'm just out to find
The better part of me

I'm more than a bird, I'm more than a plane
I'm more than some pretty face beside a train
And it's not easy to be me

Wish that I could cry
Fall upon my knees
Find a way to lie
About a home I'll never see

It may sound absurd, but don't be naive
Even heroes have the right to bleed
I may be disturbed, but won't you concede
Even heroes have the right to dream
And it's not easy to be me

Up, up and away, away from me
Well, it's all right, you can all sleep sound tonight
I'm not crazy
Or anything

I can't stand to fly
I'm not that naive
Men weren't meant to ride
With clouds between their knees

I'm only a man in a silly red sheet
Digging for kryptonite on this one way street
Only a man in a funny red sheet
Looking for special things inside of me

Songwriters: John Ondrasik
Superman (It's Not Easy) lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC
Holding Out for a Hero By Bonnie Tyler

Where have all the good men gone
And where are all the gods?
Where's the streetwise Hercules to fight
the rising odds?
Isn't there a white knight upon a fiery
steed?
Late at night I toss and I turn
And I dream of what I need

Chorus
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the end of
the night
He's gotta be strong
And he's gotta be fast
And he's gotta be fresh from the fight
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the
morning light
He's gotta be sure
And it's gotta be soon
And he's gotta be larger than life!
Larger than life

Somewhere after midnight
In my wildest fantasy
Somewhere just beyond my reach
There's someone reaching back for me
Racing on the thunder and rising with
the heat
It's gonna take a superman to sweep me
off my feet

[Chorus]

I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the end of
the night

Up where the mountains meet the
heavens above

Out where the lightning splits the sea

I could swear there is someone,
somewhere
Watching me
Through the wind, and the chill, and the
rain
And the storm, and the flood
I can feel his approach like a fire in my
blood

I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the end of
the night
He's gotta be strong and he's gotta be
fast
And he's gotta be fresh from the fight
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the
morning light
He's gotta be sure
And it's gotta be soon
And he's gotta be larger than life
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the end of
the night
He's gotta be strong and he's gotta be
fast
And he's gotta be fresh from the fight
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the
morning light
He's gotta be sure
And it's gotta be soon
And he's gotta be larger than life
I need a hero
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the end of
the night

Songwriters: Dean Pitchford / Jim
Steinman
Holding Out for a Hero lyrics ©
Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC
Hero Song Lyric Analysis

Superman (It's Not Easy) By Five for Fighting

1. Who is the speaker in this song?

2. What is the speaker saying about being a hero?

3. Does the speaker enjoy being a hero? Are they resentful?

4. Does being a hero make the hero feel isolated?

5. Why does this hero feel isolated?

6. What is the mood of this song?

Holding Out for a Hero By Bonnie Tyler

1. What are the qualities of a hero in this song?

2. What are the duties of a hero in this song?

3. Who is a hero in your life? What makes them a hero?
Hero's Journey Narrative Writing

Now that we've read and studied the hero's journey, it's time for you to practice writing your own. In your story, you need to include a dynamic hero and all 12 stages of the hero’s journey. This paper is due by 11:59 pm to Google Classroom on ______________. Use the following rubric to help you write your story. I will use it to grade your Hero's Journey narrative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stages x4</td>
<td>Is missing 3+ stages of the hero's journey</td>
<td>Is missing 1-2 stages of the hero's journey</td>
<td>Clearly hits all 12 stages of the hero's journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character x4</td>
<td>Character is not a hero and does not undergo transformation.</td>
<td>Character may be a hero or may undergo a transformation.</td>
<td>Character is clearly a hero who undergoes a transformation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques x2</td>
<td>Dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection are not used to develop the story.</td>
<td>Uses dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to somewhat develop the story</td>
<td>Effectively uses dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement x3</td>
<td>Introduction is missing a problem, setting, or characters, and/or is unclear.</td>
<td>Introduction provides a somewhat unclear problem, setting, and/or characters.</td>
<td>Includes a clear introduction with a problem, setting, and characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language x3</td>
<td>Writing includes many grammar errors AND doesn't utilize effective language choices (figurative language, syntax, etc.).</td>
<td>Writing includes many grammar errors. OR Doesn't utilize effective language choices (figurative language, syntax, etc.).</td>
<td>Writing includes minor grammar errors. AND Utilizes effective language choices (figurative language, syntax, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion x4</td>
<td>Story has no ending, or it doesn’t wrap up the narrative.</td>
<td>Story has a somewhat clear ending that wraps up the narrative.</td>
<td>Story has a clear ending that wraps up the narrative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: ____/60
Short Story Peer-Editing Worksheet 2
Read through the entire story completely before answering the following questions. Be sure to mark any spelling or grammar errors on the story that you notice.

1. Is the writer organized? Is there a beginning, middle, and end?

2. What is the setting?

3. Does the plot create a strong storyline? Is dialogue used to develop the story? Can a reader follow the story, or does it need more details?

4. What problems arose during the plot?

5. Are there compelling characters in the story that are developed? Write any suggestions here.

6. Does the writer have a pleasant style? Does the writer use figurative language and intriguing diction or syntax to create an intriguing story? Write any notes or suggestions here.
Short Story Peer-Editing Worksheet 3

Read through the entire story completely before answering the following questions. Be sure to mark any spelling or grammar errors on the story that you notice.

1. What are some questions you have for the writer after reading the story? Include at least 2.

2. What is one of the strongest parts of this story?

3. What would you like to learn more about in the story? Where could there be more detail or explanation?

4. What do you think the writer should change or add?

5. Fill out the steps of the table below with the part of the story that fits each step:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1:</th>
<th>Stage 2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3:</td>
<td>Stage 4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5:</td>
<td>Stage 6:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 7:</td>
<td>Stage 8:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 9:</td>
<td>Stage 10:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 11:</td>
<td>Stage 12:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection

When I first started working on this creative project almost a year and a half ago, I had a completely different end-product in mind. Along the way I encountered many challenges and struggles, some of which were of my own making while others developed on their own. My biggest challenge throughout a significant portion of this project was simply time management and procrastination. I had intended that my project would be completed and turned in during late August, but unfortunately, that didn’t happen. I made the mistake of telling myself I still had time, and found myself trying to complete this project, student teach, and take a class all at the same time.

Though this wasn’t my ideal situation for completing the project, I believe it was actually beneficial to complete my thesis while student teaching. First, it forced me to create a more authentic unit plan as I am writing it for the first time alongside the unit plans that I’m already teaching. Completing this unit under these circumstances is a situation that will often occur when I have my own classroom in the future, and it functioned to prepare me for this level of stress. Writing my unit during my student teaching semester also provided me with many new ideas to incorporate into my unit that I had never considered before. The end product is a combination of units I’ve written in the past, my practice unit written in my contracted academic course, and my learning experience while student teaching.

Aside from the time management issue for a large duration of the project, I faced other challenges. The largest of these challenges was simply selecting the additional texts I would include in the unit. At first, I thought it would be easy, as the monomyth is seen throughout so many stories today and in the past. While it’s true that most stages of the
Hero’s Journey can be seen in quite a few stories, finding ones that were clear enough for a 10th grade class to understand was a struggle.

I started planning this unit and found a fantastic resource in the MAISA unit on the hero’s journey. The unit had many suggested texts from myths to fairytales, novels to short stories, and even movies. Then I took a closer look at the unit and found that it begins by defining the Hero’s Journey for the students and asking them to analyze these suggested stories with that knowledge base already in place. I knew from day one of this project that I didn’t want my unit to be a typical lecture-type presentation of information that the students would then use with the stories I select. I wanted the hypothetical students for this unit to discover the elements of the hero’s journey on their own through reading many examples.

Because that was the model I was aiming for in this unit, I needed to find stories that had clear elements of the monomyth. *The Hobbit* was already a given as I picked the novel before I even knew the unit would be on the hero’s journey. This story follows the stages of the journey well, and it has a main character who develops into a true hero through each experience. I also am pleased with my choice of using *Mulan*. When I created my first unit on the hero’s journey in my contracted class, I chose this movie to demonstrate the hero’s journey alongside *The Horse and His Boy* by C.S. Lewis. I almost took it out of this unit as I came across another film I wanted to use, but I decided to keep it in the curriculum as it can’t hurt to have multiple good examples.

The last piece that I am quite happy with is *Evan Almighty*. Adding this film to the unit almost replaced *Mulan* as I needed more story examples with a male hero. When thinking about the stages of the hero’s journey, I was trying to recall stories I was
familiar with that would apply. I came across a list somewhere that listed some Greek myths and a few biblical stories. I knew that the stories of Moses or Noah would fit well, but I didn’t want to include passages from The Bible in the unit as I acknowledge it could be an issue in my future placements if I ever get to use this unit. Suddenly the movie *Evan Almighty* popped into my head, and I quickly ran through the stages and the plot in my mind and found that I was quite happy with including this in my unit. Though it discusses God and religion, it is a humorous movie that doesn’t force religion upon the watcher, so I decided it would be a beneficial resource to include for students.

I have two other pieces that I included in this unit that I am a little less pleased with. The first being the fairytale of “Cinderella” which is the first additional story I introduce in the unit. I wanted a story that was short and familiar with a female hero. “Cinderella” fits on these counts, but the stages of the hero’s journey are a little muddier than I was hoping for. I found a resource that explained the stages to me, so I was happy enough to include it in my unit, but I’d be willing to replace it if a better story crossed my path.

My other piece that I struggle with is the short story “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury. This story was included in a list of stories that fit the Hero’s Journey motif, and it stood out to me because I love Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. I read it through and felt that the story was interesting and thought it might work well for the unit. I figured that once the students are introduced to the pattern of the hero’s journey through the initial texts, this piece could serve as a challenge similar to recognizing the pattern in other texts from everyday life. The monomyth may not be blatantly obvious with this text, but I still chose to include it in my unit over some other options out there.
The other major challenge that I faced was time. Not in the sense of time management that I already discussed, but time in the small number of days in the unit. For the students to be able to organically discover the hero’s journey for themselves, they need to be able to read many examples of the model and compare the similarities. This much reading requires that I either frontload all the stories and drown the students in information or take longer than four weeks to get through all the information in this unit. It also didn’t help that I picked a somewhat sizeable novel to read as a class.

When I planned my first hero’s journey unit centered on *The Horse and His Boy*, I was able to fit all the reading into the first week and still make it manageable. The unit took four weeks, it had lessons to engage students with the book, lessons to study language, and it still had plenty of time to introduce additional texts to understand the hero’s journey without getting too stressful. *The Horse and His Boy* was only 221 pages as compared with *The Hobbit*’s 327 pages. Those extra 100 pages made it entirely impossible to fit into the first week of the unit. I considered the idea of returning to *The Horse and His Boy*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, or other novels, but I’ve always had a love for *The Hobbit* and J.R.R. Tolkien, so I kept moving forward.

Once I divided the reading up into manageable chunks, I had to determine what activities I would include to help the students learn and figure out what order I would put them in. I finally, after much deliberation and thought, came up with a plan that I thought would work well to introduce all the information. It left me with one week to have the students write their own hero’s journey narrative. Only one week to write wasn’t ideal, and it forced me to rethink the writing process I would take for this story, but I eventually came up with a solution.
My original plan was to assign the project on a Thursday or Friday to allow students the weekend to begin brainstorming and writing their story. Giving students the weekend to plan and write would then allow them plenty of time in class to continue working and peer reviewing. It would also provide students with an authentic writing experience as they would be “publishing” their stories to their peers on the final day by reading to each other. I found that I wasn’t able to assign the writing to the students until the beginning of the 4th week of the unit, so I had to rearrange a few things.

First, I took out the read around day at the end and replaced it with an option that I think is even better than the original idea. The students will submit their stories to me for a grade. Once I grade the stories and students have the chance to make revisions, we will take the stories to an art class in the building. The art students and the English students will be paired up, and each art student will be responsible for illustrating a scene from the story that my student wrote. The partnership between classes forces my students to complete their best work because other students will be reading their stories, and the finalized writings and drawings will be bound and kept in the school library. This idea actually came from a unit I taught while student teaching this semester, and my 9th grade English students will be having their short stories illustrated by a drawing class.

I also fixed the timing issue with the writing by pushing back the deadline for the paper. I wanted it due at the beginning of the hour on the last day of the unit so that we could spend time sharing and having an authentic assessment. Once I got rid of this read-around day for the drawing option, I found that the deadline could be pushed back to give the students a bit more time. I also bumped back peer reviews and cut some of the writing
process out so that students would get enough feedback on their narratives, but it
wouldn’t take up the whole hour.

I enjoyed the process of writing this senior thesis creative project even though it
didn’t work out exactly as I imagined it. If I’ve learned anything from this process, it’s
that I will always be learning new and better ways to write units and introduce
information. Teaching is a highly reflective process as I’ve discovered during student
teaching this semester. So, while I’m happy with the unit contained in this thesis, I’ve
already started making mental notes of what to change if I ever get the opportunity to
teach this in the classroom. I’ve already started looking at how my reflections on the unit
can inform other units I’ll plan for my future curriculum.

While it may not be a “perfect” unit, I succeeded in writing a unit that doesn’t
involve me being the expert that fills my students up with all the information I through
lectures. This unit organically asks that students engage with texts and discover the trend
of the hero’s journey on their own with the goal that students will retain this information
better through experience than listening. This unit on the Hero’s Journey teaches students
skills beyond just reading and writing. It teaches students to be problem solvers and look
for relationships and to use intertextuality to make meaning. The most important aspect
of this project though is that it taught me.
Resources

Bradbury, Ray. “A Sound of Thunder”


“English Language Arts Standards.” Common Core State Standards,


Grimm, Jacob L., Wilhelm C. “Cinderella” Pink Monkey,


