

Name: _____

6th Grade Summer Reading Project

This assignment will need to be completed on paper. You can print a copy of the packet or complete each activity on lined notebook paper. It will be due on September 15, 2026.

DIRECTIONS: For this project, you will pick a book from the table below to read over summer. Then you will complete the activities that follow.

Book Choices	Lexile
The following books are available to purchase on Amazon , Barnes and Noble , or a local bookstore (like Park Road Books!). You can also borrow these books FOR FREE from a Charlotte Mecklenburg Library branch near you. Students can also access the books online through Sora or Libby. They will use their student ID number as their library card!	
The Hobbit by J.R. Tolkein	1000L
A Wrinkle in Time by Madeline L'Engle	740L
Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card	780L
The Hunger Games by Susan Collins	810L
The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis	940L
Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky by Kwame Mbalia (on Battle of the Books list)	680L
Nyxia by Scott Reintgen (on Battle of the Books list)	650L

- ☐ STEP 1: The Hero's Journey Background Knowledge: Watch the video linked below to get an understanding of the elements of a hero's journey. Then read the *Time Magazine* article called "Want to Give Your Life More Meaning? Think of It As a 'Hero's Journey'". Complete the Step 1 Questions below.
 - ☐ (LINK: <https://bit.ly/HerosJourneyIntro>)
- ☐ STEP 2: Hero's Journey One Pager: After reading the book you chose, follow the directions below to complete a one pager using your novel. (Details in the rubric at the bottom)
- ☐ STEP 3: So What?: After learning about the Hero's Journey and thinking about how it applies to the book that you chose, you will complete the writing prompts at the bottom of this document.

TIME

Want to Give Your Life More Meaning? Think of It As a ‘Hero’s Journey’

BY ANGELA HAUPT AUGUST 14, 2023

You might not think you have much in common with Luke Skywalker, Harry Potter, or Katniss Everdeen. But imagining yourself as the main character of a heroic adventure could help you achieve a more meaningful life.

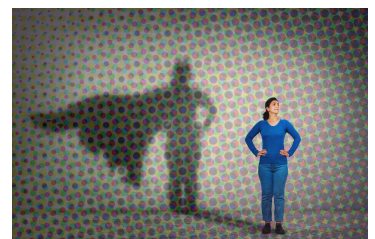
Research published earlier this year in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* touts the benefits of reframing your life as a Hero’s Journey—a common story structure popularized by the mythologist Joseph Campbell that provides a template for ancient myths and recent blockbusters. In his 1949 book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell details the structure of the journey, which he describes as a monomyth. In its most elementary form, a hero goes on an adventure, emerges victorious from a defining crisis, and then returns home changed for the better.

“The idea is that there’s a hero of some sort who experiences a change of setting, which could mean being sent off to a magical realm or entering a new thing they’re not used to,” says study author Benjamin A. Rogers, an assistant professor of management and organization at Boston College. “That sets them off on a quest where they encounter friends and mentors, face challenges, and return home to benefit their community with what they’ve learned.”

According to Rogers’ findings, perceiving your life as a Hero’s Journey is associated with psychological benefits such as enhanced well-being, greater life satisfaction, feeling like you’re flourishing, and reduced depression. “The way that people tell their life story shapes how meaningful their lives feel,” he says. “And you don’t have to live a super heroic life or be a person of adventure—virtually anyone can rewrite their story as a Hero’s Journey.”

The human brain is wired for stories, Rogers notes, and we respond to them in powerful ways. Previous research suggests that by the time we’re in our early 20s, most of us have constructed a narrative identity—an internalized and evolving life story—that explains how we became the person we are, and where our life might go in the future. “This is how we’ve been communicating and understanding ourselves for thousands of years,” he says. Rogers’ research suggests that if people view their own story as following a Hero’s Journey trajectory, it increases meaning regardless of how they initially perceived their lives; even those who thought their lives had little meaning are able to benefit.

While Rogers describes a “re-storying intervention” in his research, some psychologists have used the Hero’s Journey structure as part of their practice for years. Lou Ursa, a licensed psychotherapist in California,



attended Pacifica Graduate Institute, which is the only doctoral program in the country focused on mythology. The university even, she notes, houses Campbell's personal library. As a result, mythology was heavily integrated into her psychology grad program. In addition to reflecting on what the Hero's Journey means to her personally, she often brings it up with clients. "The way I talk about it is almost like an eagle-eye view versus a snake-eye view of our lives," she says. "So often we're just seeing what's in front of us. I think that connecting with a myth or a story, whether it's the Hero's Journey or something else, can help us see the whole picture, especially when we're feeling lost or stuck."

Practice reflective journaling

Campbell described more than a dozen key elements of a Hero's Journey, seven of which Rogers explored in his research: protagonist, shift, quest, allies, challenge, transformation, and legacy. He says reflecting on these aspects of your story—even if it's just writing a few sentences down—can be an ideal first step to reframe your circumstances. Rogers offers a handful of prompts that relate back to the seven key elements of a Hero's Journey. To drill in on "protagonist," for example, ask yourself: What makes you you? Spend time reflecting on your identity, personality, and core values. When you turn to "shift," consider: What change or new experience prompted your journey to become who you are today? Then ponder what challenges stand in your way, and which allies can support or help you in your journey. You can also meditate on the legacy your journey might leave.

Ask yourself who would star in the movie of your life

One way to assess your inner voice is to figure out who would star in a movie about your life, says Nancy Irwin, a clinical psychologist in Los Angeles who employs the Hero's Journey concept personally and professionally. Doing so can help us "sufficiently dissociate and see ourselves objectively rather than subjectively," she says. Pay attention to what appeals to you about that person: What traits do they embody that you identify with? You might, for example, admire the person's passion, resilience, or commitment to excellence. "They inspire us because there's some quality that we identify with," Irwin says. "Remember, you chose them because you have that quality yourself." Keeping that in mind can help you begin to see yourself as the hero of your own story.

Go on more heroic adventures—or just try something new

In classic Hero's Journey stories, the protagonist starts off afraid and refuses a call to adventure before overcoming his fears and committing to the journey. Think of Odysseus being called to fight the Trojans, but refusing the call because he doesn't want to leave his family. Or consider Rocky Balboa: When he was given the chance to fight the world's reigning heavyweight champion, he immediately said no—before ultimately, of course, accepting the challenge. The narrative has proven timeless because it "reflects the values of society," Rogers says. "We like people who have new experiences and grow from their challenges."

He suggests asking yourself: "If I want to have a more meaningful life, what are the kinds of things I could do?" One possible avenue is seeking out novelty, whether that's as simple as driving a new way home from work or as dramatic as finally selling your car entirely and committing to public transportation.

Be open to redirection

The Hero’s Journey typically starts with a mission, which prompts the protagonist to set off on a quest. “But often the road isn’t linear,” says Kristal DeSantis, a licensed marriage and family therapist in Austin. “There are twists, turns, unexpected obstacles, and side quests that get in the way. The lesson is to be open to possibility.”

That perspective can also help you flip the way you see obstacles. Say you’re going through a tough time: You just got laid off, or you were diagnosed with a chronic illness. Instead of dwelling on how unfortunate these hurdles are, consider them opportunities for growth and learning. Think to yourself: What would Harry do? Reframe the challenges you encounter as a chance to develop resilience and perseverance, and to be the hero of your own story.

When you need a boost, map out where you are on your journey

Once you find a narrative hero you can relate to, keep their journey in mind as you face new challenges. “If you feel stuck or lost, you can look to that story and be like, ‘Which part do I feel like I’m in right now?’” Ursa says. Maybe you’re in the midst of a test that feels so awful that you’ve lost perspective on its overall importance—i.e., the fact that it’s only part of your journey. (See: When Katniss was upset about the costume that Snow forced her to wear—before she then had to go fight off a pack of ferocious wolves to save her life.) Referencing a familiar story “can help you have that eagle-eye view of what might be next for you, or what you should be paying attention to,” Ursa says. “Stories become this map that we can always turn to.” Think of them as reassurance that a new chapter almost certainly awaits.

Step 1: Background Information Questions

Be sure to answer each question fully and use complete sentences. You also need to use textual evidence.

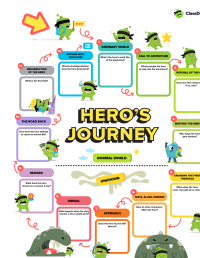
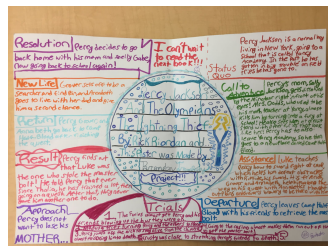
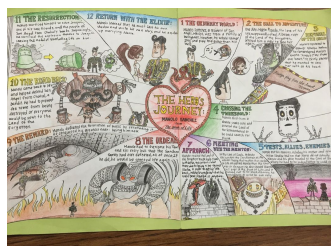
1. “Monomyth” is another name for the Hero’s Journey. What does the prefix “mono” mean? Why do you think Joseph Campbell calls the hero’s journey a “monomyth?”	
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2. What is the central idea of the <i>Time</i> article? Support your answer with one quote from the text.	
3. What do you think is the author's purpose for writing this article? Why?	

Step 2: Hero's Journey

Directions: Create a one pager (on your own paper - typed, handwritten or drawn) to describe each element of your hero's journey, summarizing the action of the novel with pictures. Use quotes from the text to support the steps. Here is a link to the elements of the hero's journey: [Hero's Journey](#). Here are a couple of examples of one-pagers...

[Example 1](#)
[Example 2](#)
[Example 3](#)
[Example 4](#)



Step 3: So What? Questions

Be sure to restate each question in your answer, use textual evidence from the video, article, or your chosen novel to support your answer, and to write at least 5 complete sentences.

1. Why do you think “hero’s journey” stories are told? What purpose do they serve?	
2. What defines a hero? How did the hero of your novel fit this definition?	

