

Grade 8**Curriculum Map**
Unit 1: The Challenge of Heroism**Essential Questions**

- What defines a hero?
- How does the Hero's Journey archetype appear in stories throughout time?

Embedded Assessments

[Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Definition Essay](#)

W.8.2, W.8.9

Summative Assessment Standards**Reading - Literature**

RL.8.2
RL.8.3
RL.8.4

Reading - Informational

RI.8.1
RI.8.2
RI.8.5
RI.8.6

Writing

W.8.2.b
W.8.2.f

Language

L.8.1
L.8.4.a

Key Texts

Genre: film, poetry, short story, narrative poetry, novel, graphic novel, article, sermon, autobiography, essay

- *Big Hero 6*
- ["Ithaka"](#)
- ["The Drummer Boy of Shiloh"](#)
- [Excerpts from the *Odyssey*](#)
- [Excerpt from *A Wrinkle in Time*](#)
- Excerpt from *A Wrinkle in Time: The Graphic Novel*
- ["Frederick Douglass"](#)
- [Excerpt from *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#)
- ["A Man"](#)
- ["Soldier home after losing his leg in Afghanistan"](#)
- ["Where I Find My Heroes"](#)
- [Excerpt from *White House Funeral Sermon for Abraham Lincoln*](#)
- ["O Captain! My Captain!"](#)
- ["A Definition of a Gentleman"](#)

Vocabulary

Academic: concise, nuance, function, negation, coherence

Literary: archetype, pacing, mood, point of view, epic, mnemonic devices, tone, diction, denotation, connotation, allegory

Reading

Goals:

- To analyze and synthesize a variety of texts to develop an original definition of hero
- To analyze and evaluate informational and narrative texts for ideas, structure, and language

Speaking and Listening

Goals:

- To share and discuss textual evidence
- To collaborate when analyzing a text, applying an archetype, and creating a presentation

Writing and Research

Goals:

- To create and present an original illustrated narrative based on the Hero's Journey Archetype
- To compose texts that convey information about a topic using strategies of definition

Language

Skills:

- Sentence boundaries
- Transitions
- Pronouns
- Antecedents

Additional Assessment Opportunities

Summative Assessment

[Grade 8 Summative Assessment Unit 1](#)
[Grade 8 Summative Assessment Unit 1 Answer Key](#)

Embedded Assessment

[Writing a Definition Essay](#)

Activity Quizzes

[1.3](#), [1.7](#), [1.8](#), [1.9](#), [1.11](#), [1.12](#), [1.14](#), [1.16](#), [1.17](#)

Grade 8

Curriculum Map

Unit 1: The Challenge of Heroism

Dates	SpringBoard Lessons	Opportunities for Assessment	Differentiation for Student Needs	Resources
Week of August 25-28	Unit Launch and Culture Building	Based on feedback, the first week is dedicated to building relationships and establishing strong systems and structures before Tier 1 instruction begins. Investing this time up front ensures high engagement and smooth transitions all year. Teachers have the complete flexibility to design this launch period to fit their style. Focus areas include: • Systems & Structures: Teaching routines, practicing behavioral norms, and reviewing the syllabus/grading expectations. • Relationship & Rapport Builders: Facilitating community activities (e.g., Six-Word Memoirs, Book Speed Dating, Scavenger Hunts, or Reading Inventories). • Accountable Independent Reading: Launching routines where students choose their own books, set an annual reading goal, and understand the teacher's regular progress-checking plan (e.g., Status of the Class checks). Begin your exploration of "heroism" by choosing a fiction or nonfiction text about a historical or modern hero for independent reading.		Launching an ELA Classroom: Sy...
Week of Aug. 31-Sept. 4	1.10 Unpacking Embedded Assessment 2			PowerPoint: • Embedded Assessment
	Reading Plus Benchmark 1 • Day 1: Motivation Inventory and Vocabulary • Day 2: Comprehension			2627 Reading Plus Benchmark Ad...

Dates	SpringBoard Lessons	Opportunities for Assessment	Differentiation for Student Needs	Resources
	1.3 Understanding the Hero's Journey Archetype	Activity Quiz 1.3 Graphic Organizer: Create a plot diagram and label each step. Then provide examples of each step from the film, <i>Big Hero 6</i>.		Texts: - Big Hero 6 DVD Word Wall - Archetype - Pacing - Theme - Exposition - Rising Action - Climax - Falling Action - Resolution Anchor Charts: - Hero's Journey Archetype
Week of Sept. 8-11	1.7 Building Background and Vocabulary Activities	Vocabulary Choose one vocabulary word. Draw a picture representing the word. Write a sentence using the word. Explain how the word might connect to a hero. Building Background Choose one to respond to: One characteristic of an epic hero: One way heroes overcome challenges: One question I have about heroes:	Beginning: A person is cunning when ____. Developing Hospitality means ____ because ____. Expanding A hero might need cunning because ____. Bridging Cunning is more important than strength when ____.	Word Wall - Cunning - Hospitality - Savage - Premonition

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	1.7 The Initiation	Activity Quizzes 1.7 Use what you have learned so far about heroes and your knowledge from reading the Odyssey about what that Odysseus overcame challenges. Write an informational essay that responds to the question: What are some outstanding ways heroes overcome challenges.		Word Wall: • Epic • initiation
Week of Sept. 14 – 18	1.7 The Initiation (con't)	Activity Quizzes 1.7 Use what you have learned so far about heroes and your knowledge from reading the Odyssey about what that Odysseus overcame challenges. Write an informational essay that responds to the question: What are some outstanding ways heroes overcome challenges.		Word Wall: • Epic • initiation

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	1.8 Building Background	Complete the sentence: - I predict Meg will defeat IT by using _____ because _____. - Collect responses and revisit after reading.		The Hero's Journey Archetype Graphic Novels Terms- Anchor Chart - Panel - Gutter - Dialogue Balloon - Thought bubbles - Caption - Sound Effect - Long Shot - Extreme Long Shot - Close up - Extreme close up
	1.8 The Return- First Part	Activity Quizzes 1.8 Write 3-4 sentences explaining how Meg represents the hero in the hero's journey archetype. Use text evidence from the excerpt to support your claim.		
	Benchmark Assessment			
Week of Sept. 21 – 25	1.8 The Return- First Part	Activity Quizzes 1.8 Write 3-4 sentences explaining how Meg represents the hero in the hero's journey archetype. Use text evidence from the excerpt to support your claim.		

Dates	SpringBoard Lessons	Opportunities for Assessment	Differentiation for Student Needs	Resources
	1.11 The Nuance of Tone	Activity Quizzes: 1.11 Writing Prompt: Read the sentences and identify the tone. Explain how word choice changes the connotation of each sentence. • Jack skipped out of the house. • Jack stormed out of the house.		Word Wall • Tone • Diction • Nuance
	1.12 Physical and Emotional Challenges	Activity Quizzes: 1.12 Writing Prompt: Compare how the characters in the poem and the article exemplify the concept of a hero. How are these heroes similar and different? Include evidence from each text in your response.		Texts: • "A Man" • "Soldier home after losing his leg in Afghanistan" Anchor Charts: • TP-CASTT • TP-CASTT Analysis
	Independent Reading	Writing Prompt: Think about the historical or modern hero you are reading about independently. How is he/she an example of a heroic type?		

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Week of Sept. 28 – Oct. 2	Prior to teaching Activity 1.13, create and teach - a vocabulary lesson - background-building lesson Reference the model from above in Activity 1.8 as a model to support student access to the text.			
	1.13: Definition Strategies	Writing Prompt: Think about how to define a hero by how he or she functions or acts. Draft a paragraph that establishes the function of a hero. Cite examples from texts you have read throughout this unit.	Language Workshops 1B.7: Language Checkpoint: Pronouns & Antecedents	Anchor Charts- Defining a Concept - Function - Example - Negation Graphic Organizers Venn Diagram
	Prior to teaching Activity 1.16, create and teach - a vocabulary lesson - background-building lesson Reference the model from above in Activity 1.8 as a model to support student access to the text.			

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	1.16: Negation Strategy of Definition	Activity Quizzes 1.16 Annotations: Exchange your draft with a partner. List your partner's ideas of what heroism is not. Check to see if his or her ideas make sense.	Writing Workshop: • Activity 2: Argumentative Writing	
Week of Oct.5-0	1.14 Historical Heroes: Examples	Activity Quiz 1.14 Writing Prompt: Explain how Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass were heroic. Draft a definition paragraph using the elements of a well-developed explanatory body paragraph. • Model Response	Language Workshops • 1B.2: Building Knowledge	

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	Independent Reading	Writing Prompt: Your independent reading choice can be used as a source in your definition essay. Write about how the protagonist of your reading faced and overcame obstacles and challenges. Then discuss with a classmate why you think this text will be valuable in writing your definition essay. Be sure to provide clear reasons for your recommendation.		
Week of Oct. 14 – Oct. 17	1.15: Transitions and Quotations	Annotations: Return to the paragraph you wrote about Lincoln and Douglass as historical heroes. Mark your draft to indicate missing or ineffective transitions. Then, revise the organization by adding or substituting transitional words and phrases to create coherence both within and across paragraphs. Next, find a significant quote in two of the texts you have read and add those ideas into your paragraph by smoothly embedding the quotes and adding academic citations.		Anchor Charts: • How to Quote Text • Adding/Transitions

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	1.17 Explanatory Writing Focus: Organization	Activity Quizzes 1.17 Writing Prompt: Think about people who deserve status as a hero from the past, from the present, from life, and from literature. What defines a hero? Draft an insightful thesis statement using a complex sentence structure.	LC 1.8 Language Checkpoint: Understanding Sentence Boundaries	Anchor Charts: - Collaborative Dialogue Graphic Organizers: Writer's Checklist
Week of Oct. 19 – Oct. 23	IAB Implementation and Unit Integration - Teacher Led (2 days) Focus Blueprint Standards: Claim 2, Target 6: Brief Writes / Revision Claim 2, Target 9: Editing			PDF Grade 8 Claim 2 Target 6.pdf PDF Grade 8 Claim 2 Target 6.pdf PDF Grade 8 Claim 2 Target 9 (part ...
	Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Definition Essay			
Week of Oct. 26– Oct. 30	Grade 8 Summative Assessment Unit 1		Summative Assessment Study Guide Template	Grade 8 Summative Assessment Unit 1 Answer Key Summative Assessment Roadmap