

Your Hero's Journey

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Joseph Campbell provides a detailed model (seventeen stages) of the hero's journey, and other scholars, including Dan Vogler, have provided models with fewer stages. In a nutshell, though, in a hero's journey, the protagonist goes on a journey, overcomes adversity, and is changed by the experience. Books, films, and television shows are filled with such journeys—*e.g.*, *Star Wars*, *The Little Engine That Could*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Jane Eyre*, multiple Harry Potter books and movies, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *The Lion King*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, *Men in Black*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Jumanji*, *Moby Dick*, home-improvement shows, and many more.

By the way, it's no secret that Hollywood is addicted to telling stories that portray the hero's journey. See, for example, the television commercial for the 2022 Nissan Frontier in which Brie Larson summarizes the hero's journey in Hollywood movies:

<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/qMZk/2022-nissan-frontier-hollywood-story-featuring-brie-larson-song-by-guns-n-roses-t1>

Christopher Vogler's twelve-stage model of the hero's journey (see Dan Bronzite):

1. Ordinary World
2. Call To Adventure
3. Refusal Of The Call
4. Meeting The Mentor
5. Crossing The Threshold
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
7. Approach To The Inmost Cave
8. Ordeal
9. Reward (Seizing The Sword)
10. The Road Back
11. Resurrection
12. Return With The Elixir

All of us and all of our families have experienced such journeys in our lives. In this workshop we will discuss the features of a hero's journey, write about one of our own hero's journeys (or a family member's), and share that story with other participants.

Questions for Discussion and Writing

1. What are some of your favorite books that are examples of the hero's journey?
2. What are some of your favorite movies that are examples of the hero's journey?
3. What are some of your favorite television shows that are examples of the hero's journey?
4. For one of the examples that you listed in response to questions 1, 2, and 3 above, explain—as best you can—how it fits the model of the hero's journey. Don't worry if you can't address all

twelve of Vogler's steps. (You might find it helpful to read Dan Bronzite's short overview cited in the list of resources below.)

5. What are some hero's journeys—longer or shorter—that you have experienced?
6. If you earned a college degree, how did that experience illustrate the hero's journey?
7. What are some hero's journeys that your family as a unit has experienced?
8. What are some hero's journeys that your ancestors and other family members have experienced?
9. For one of the examples that you listed in response to questions 5--8 above, explain—as best you can—how it fits the model of the hero's journey. Don't worry if you can't address all twelve of Vogler's steps. (You might find it helpful to read Dan Bronzite's short overview cited in the list of resources below.)
10. How widely do you see the hero's journey applying to life in general?

Some Resources and Works Cited/Consulted

Bronzite, Dan. "The Hero's Journey - Mythic Structure of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth." <https://www.movieoutline.com/articles/the-hero-journey-mythic-structure-of-joseph-campbell-monomyth.html>

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"The Hero's Journey—A Complete Guide." The Novel Factory. <https://www.novel-software.com/heros-journey/>

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