

# The Hero's Journey in Myth, Literature & Film | Mr. Trafton

## 2013 Summer Reading Study Guide

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*The world begins to exist when the individual discovers it.*

**C. G. Jung**

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Welcome to Hero's Journey!

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### STEP 1: Read This

*“The Hero's Journey is an ancient story motif. The earliest known written text is the Hero's Journey of Gilgamesh that comes to us from about 2750-2500 BC from Ancient Sumeria. The Hero's Journey is such a powerful myth that it has been incorporated into virtually every culture that has existed. From Beowulf to Luke Skywalker, from Theseus to Neo we have been enthralled by the challenges our heroes face, and we cheer at their victory. A hero is defined by Joseph Campbell as someone who has given his life to something bigger than himself. The hero may set off on the adventure intentionally, like Beowulf or Sir Gawain, or the hero may be thrown into the adventure. However, the hero is always prepared for the journey. The hero's life lessons have prepared him/her for the trials that will be faced while on the journey.”*

(Francie Quass-Berryman)

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### STEP 2: Pick a Book

Please select one (1) book of your choice from the list below:

*A Man for All Seasons* (Robert Bolt); *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (John Irving); *Autobiography of a Face* (Lucy Grealy); *Burro Genius* (Victor Villasenor); *China Boy* (Gus Lee); *Dharma Punx* (Noah Levine); *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Philip K. Dick); *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (Miguel de Cervantes); *Dreams from My Father* (Barak Obama); *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Jonathan Safran Foer); *Forgotten Fire* (Adam Bagdasarian); *From the Barrio to the Board Room* (Robert Renterio); *Grendel* (John Gardner); *Gulliver's Travels* (Jonathan Swift); *House Made at Dawn* (N. Scott Momaday); *Invisible Man* (Ralph Ellison); *Passage to India* (E. M. Forster); *Postcards from No Man's Land* (Aidan Chambers); *Raising Stony Mayhall* (Daryl Gregory); *Sharp Teeth* (Toby Barlow); *Silent Spring* (Rachel Carson); *Speak* (Laurie Halse Anderson); *The Alchemist* (Paulo Coelho); *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (Michael Chabon); *The Bone Woman* (Clea Koff); *The Book Thief* (Marcus Zusak); *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Mark Haddon); *The Empty Mirror* (James Lincoln Collier); *The Handmaid's Tale* (Margaret Atwood); *The Name of the Rose* (Umberto Eco); *The Odyssey* (Homer); *The Power of One* (Bruce Courtenay); *The Rule of Four* (Ian Caldwell & Dustin Thomason); *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Robert Louis Stevenson); *The Stranger* (Albert Camus); *The Translator* (Daoud Hari); *Up From Slavery* (Booker T. Washington); *The Work of Wolves* (Kent Meyers); *Wasted* (Marya Hornbacher)

Any bookstore will be glad to order your book (be sure to give them the correct title and author's name), or, for a less-hassle approach, try amazon.com.

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### STEP 3: Find the Hero's Journey

As you read, please take notes and then *briefly* answer the following questions:

#### PART A . . .

Who is the hero/protagonist of the novel? (Describe him or her in a concise, healthy paragraph of about seven to nine sentences, using direct quotations to support your description.)

#### PART B . . .

What is the plot of the novel? (Summarize it in a concise, healthy paragraph of about seven to nine sentences, being careful not to copy any pre-existing synopsis.)

#### PART C . . .

Using the stages identified by mythographer Joseph Campbell in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, chart the heroic progress, the hero's journey of your novel's main protagonist. Please use properly-cited (MLA) direct quotations to support each of your responses.

1. **Birth/Home:** What is the home or world of the hero?
2. **Call to Adventure:** What is the external event or messenger who gets the story going? What is the call to adventure?
3. **Helper/Amulet:** Who or what acts as protection, help or aid to the hero at this early stage of the story?
4. **Crossing the Threshold:** How does the hero cross from the ordinary world into another world, from a familiar world into an unfamiliar world? Describe the transition.
5. **Tests:** How is the hero tested on his or her path? Be specific; describe the tests.
6. **Helpers:** Who assists the hero acting as helper and/or companion?
7. **Climax/ Battle:** What are the major conflicts, struggles or obstacles the hero faces? How do he or she resolve them? Are they resolve-able?
8. **Flight:** How does the hero prepare to return to the ordinary world? Does life return to normal? What has changed?
9. **Return:** After the adventure is over, how does return to the ordinary world? (Is it even possible to return, to go home, or back to some previous state of existence or thinking?)
10. **Elixir:** After the adventure is over, what does the hero bring back to the ordinary world? What knowledge do they gain? What price has he or she paid for taking the journey? What does the hero learn as a result of going on the journey?

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### STEP 4: Proofread

Make a great first impression: proofread. (Put it aside for a day, and then get back to it.)

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### STEP 5: Turn It In

This project will be due the second day of class. If you have any questions, please contact me at [Ed.Trafton@jesuithighschool.org](mailto:Ed.Trafton@jesuithighschool.org). See you in the fall! Have a great summer.