

The Magic of Structure: Analyzing the Hero's Journey in **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone**

Materials Needed

- Copy of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Physical or Digital)
- Pen, pencil, or digital writing tool
- Printed or drawn graphic organizer template (A large circle divided into 12 sections, or a simple three-column chart)
- Access to brief clips or summaries of common "Hero's Journey" stories (e.g., *Star Wars*, *Lion King*, *The Hobbit*) for comparison (Optional)

I. Introduction: Why Do Stories Feel Familiar? (15 Minutes)

Hook: The Universal Story

Educator Prompt: Think about your favorite stories—like *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, or even a video game quest. Haven't you noticed that they often follow a similar pattern? The hero starts small, gets pulled into a quest, faces huge challenges, and returns changed. Why do you think that is?

The answer is the "Monomyth," or the Hero's Journey, a blueprint used by storytellers for thousands of years. Today, we're going to act as literary detectives and uncover the secret formula J.K. Rowling used!

Learning Objectives (We will be able to...):

- Identify the primary stages of the Hero's Journey as outlined by Joseph Campbell.
- Analyze specific plot points in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and accurately map them onto the Hero's Journey structure.
- Determine and articulate at least two major themes of the novel (e.g., friendship, choice, sacrifice) using concrete textual evidence.

Success Criteria

You know you are successful when you have:

1. Completed your Hero's Journey map with at least 8 key moments from the novel.
2. Identified two major themes and provided a specific quote or event from the book to support each one.

II. Body: Deconstructing the Magic (65 Minutes)

A. I DO: Modeling the Blueprint (20 Minutes)

Content Delivery: The Stages of the Journey

The Hero's Journey typically has 12 stages, but we will focus on 8 core stages that make up the structure. (Use the graphic organizer or chart provided.)

Stage	Definition	Example (Non-HP: e.g., Luke Skywalker/Moana)
1. Ordinary World	The hero's normal life before the adventure begins.	Luke on his uncle's farm; Moana on her safe island.
2. The Call to Adventure	Something disrupts the ordinary world and invites the hero into the quest.	R2-D2 delivers the message; the ocean "chooses" Moana.
3. Refusal of the Call	The hero hesitates, fearing the unknown.	Luke says he can't leave; Moana's father forbids travel.
4. Meeting the Mentor	The hero meets someone wise who gives advice, training, or magical aid.	Obi-Wan Kenobi; Maui (the demigod).
5. Crossing the Threshold	The hero leaves the familiar world and enters the special world. (A point of no return.)	Leaving Tatooine; sailing beyond the reef.
6. The Ordeal	The major crisis or turning point where the hero faces their greatest fear or enemy. (Often results in death/rebirth.)	Attacking the Death Star; confronting Te Ka.
7. The Reward	The hero survives the ordeal and receives a treasure, knowledge, or power.	The medal/freedom; the heart of Te Fiti.
8. The Return	The hero comes back to the ordinary world, changed by the experience.	Returning to the rebellion; returning to the island with new knowledge.

B. WE DO: Mapping Harry's Journey (25 Minutes)

Activity: Collaborative Story Mapping

Now, let's map Harry Potter's first year onto this structure. Use your notes and the book to find specific examples.

- 1. Ordinary World:** Where does Harry start? (*Example: Living under the stairs at the Dursleys', neglected and unaware of magic.*)
- 2. The Call to Adventure:** What specifically pulls him away? (*Hint: Chapter 3 - The letters arriving/Hagrid's arrival.*)
- 3. Refusal of the Call:** Did Harry refuse? This stage is often subtle in children's literature. Sometimes it's the Dursleys trying to stop him, or Harry being skeptical. (*Discussion point: The Dursleys are the refusal for him.*)
- 4. Meeting the Mentor:** Who helps him prepare? (*Hint: Hagrid guides him; Dumbledore/McGonagall provide wisdom.*)
- 5. Crossing the Threshold:** When does he leave his old life behind? (*Example: Stepping onto Platform 9 3/4 and boarding the Hogwarts Express.*)
- 6. The Ordeal:** What is the absolute lowest point or greatest confrontation? (*Example: Facing Quirrell/Voldemort under the trapdoor and in the Mirror of Erised room.*)

Formative Assessment Check: Ask the learner to verbally state how the Mirror of Erised scene fits the definition of "The Ordeal." (Answer should touch on facing death/fear and making a crucial, challenging choice.)

C. YOU DO: Theme Hunter and Quest Designer (20 Minutes)

Instructional Shift: The journey is the structure; the theme is the meaning. Great stories teach us something about life.

Activity 1: Theme Hunt

Identify two main themes from *Sorcerer's Stone*. (Possible themes: The power of love/sacrifice; the importance of choice over destiny; the necessity of friendship.)

- 1. Theme 1:** _____

- Text Evidence (Quote or specific scene):
2. **Theme 2:** _____
- Text Evidence (Quote or specific scene):

Activity 2: Application - Designing a Minor Quest

Imagine Dumbledore wanted to test Harry, Ron, and Hermione on the theme of "Friendship and Loyalty" before the final chamber. Design one simple, short obstacle or puzzle they would have to solve together. The solution must require all three of them to demonstrate loyalty or teamwork.

- **Quest Name:**
- **The Obstacle:** (What do they face?)
- **The Solution:** (How do they solve it together?)

III. Conclusion: Reflecting on the Formula (10 Minutes)

Recap and Discussion

Educator Prompt: How does knowing the structure of the Hero's Journey change the way you read *Harry Potter*? Did J.K. Rowling invent a totally new story, or did she use an ancient template and make it magical?

Summary Review

- We identified the core stages of the Hero's Journey.
- We successfully mapped Harry's entry into the wizarding world onto this structure.
- We analyzed how the challenges (like the traps leading to the Stone) reinforce the overall themes of the book.

Summative Assessment: Exit Ticket

Answer the following question in 2-3 sentences:

If Harry had refused the Call to Adventure (e.g., if he never left the Dursleys), what major theme of the story would have been completely lost or impossible to demonstrate? Use evidence from the early chapters to support your answer.

Differentiation and Extensions

Scaffolding (For learners needing extra support):

- **Pre-selection:** Provide four multiple-choice options for the two main themes instead of requiring independent identification.
- **Chapter Focus:** Provide chapter ranges for the Hero's Journey mapping (e.g., Stages 1-3 are Chapters 1-4; Stages 4-5 are Chapters 5-7).

Extension (For advanced learners or longer engagement):

- **Archetype Analysis:** Analyze the role of Snape. How does he fit or deviate from the "Shadow" archetype? Find 3 instances where he acts like a villain and 3 where he acts like a protector.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Choose a non-Harry Potter book or film and create a full 8-stage map, comparing and contrasting how that hero's journey differs from Harry's journey into the magical

world.