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English 8
The Monomyth/Hero's Journey

Introducing and exploring the hero's journey as a template or pattern present in stories, especially classical myths, legends, folklore, and fantasy literature. Students will become familiar with the steps of the hero's journey, common archetypes (hero/protagonist, villain/antagonist, mentor, etc), and will develop the ability to recognize and analyse common elements across stories.

Big Ideas:

- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world
- Texts are socially, culturally, and historically constructed
- Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy

Curricular Competencies:

- Recognize and appreciate how different features, forms, and genres of texts reflect different purposes, audiences, and messages
- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- Recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in texts
- Recognize how literary elements, techniques, and devices enhance and shape meaning
- Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literary and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audiences

Content:

- Forms, functions, and genres of texts
- Literary elements, devices
- Language use and context
- Multi-paragraphing
- Reading, oral language, metacognitive strategies

Lesson Structure:

Introduction:

Before the lesson/lecture, hand out informational sheets

- Has a model of the Hero's Journey with brief explanations for each step and the three stages (separation/departure, initiation, return)
- Definitions of literary terms and devices that are relevant/commonly used in the lesson

The Hero's Journey will be introduced using a presentation and a lecture, first introducing the 'hero' as a protagonist/literary figure. The origins of the Hero's Journey, when it was first defined and by who, will be explained to the students and followed by a discussion/guiding questions wherein students are prompted to consider a movie/book/game/etc. they think follows the hero's journey.

The steps in the Hero's Journey will be further explained through a video example, and/or a short creative film that follows the Hero's Journey pattern

- On the board and with asking for students' input, identify and write on the board scenes/aspects of the short film that align with the steps

Assignment:

Students will be assigned a project where they choose a story of their choice and analyse it according to the steps, figures, and the three stages of the Hero's Cycle. They need to identify the hero, the 'mentor' figure, and identify a scene or event from the story for each of the steps.

- Students are allowed to analyse the story from any movie, TV show, book, video game, etc.
- Their project can take any shape; a poster, slideshow, comic, etc.
- Regardless of the format chosen, the students are required to write a paragraph where they give their personal opinion on the Hero's Journey, if their story aligned with the structure or not, and if they think that the Hero's Journey is a universal story structure that's present in all fictional stories.

UDL Applications:

- Engagement: providing information on the subject before the lecture as paper handouts allows students to read ahead on their own and can help them if they feel lost during the lecture
- Representation: the Hero's Journey is shown and explained through the lecture, videos, and the descriptive paper that was handed out so that students are able to take in the information in the ways that suit them
- Action and Expression: students being able to create the final assignment in the format that they choose and to analyse any story they want allows them to show their understanding in ways that are unique to them. Additionally, by giving them the option to analyse any story they are more likely to be engaged with the content and remember the lesson better by associating it with their interests.