

Interpretations of Joseph Campbell and the Hero's Journey

The Hero's Journey:

1. Heroes are introduced in the ORDINARY WORLD, where
2. they receive the CALL TO ADVENTURE.
3. They are RELUCTANT at first or REFUSE THE CALL, but
4. are encouraged by a MENTOR to
5. CROSS THE FIRST THRESHOLD and enter the Special World, where
6. they encounter TESTS, ALLIES, AND ENEMIES.
7. They APPROACH THE INMOST CAVE, crossing a second threshold
8. where they endure the ORDEAL.
9. They take possession of their REWARD and
10. are pursued on THE ROAD BACK to the Ordinary World.
11. They cross the third threshold, experience a RESURRECTION, and are transformed by the experience.
12. They RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR, a boon or treasure to benefit the Ordinary World.

The Seven Archetypes:

1. Hero: "The Hero is the protagonist or central character, whose primary purpose is to separate from the ordinary world and sacrifice himself for the service of the Journey at hand - to answer the challenge, complete the quest and restore the Ordinary World's balance. We experience the Journey through the eyes of the Hero."
2. Mentor: "The Mentor provides motivation, insights and training to help the Hero."
3. Threshold Guardian: "Threshold Guardians protect the Special World and its secrets from the Hero, and provide essential tests to prove a Hero's commitment and worth."
4. Herald: "Herald characters issue challenges and announce the coming of significant change. They can make their appearance anytime during a Journey, but often appear at the beginning of the Journey to announce a Call to Adventure. A character may wear the Herald's mask to make an announcement or judgment, report a news flash, or simply deliver a message."
5. Shapeshifter: "The Shapeshifter's mask misleads the Hero by hiding a character's intentions and loyalties."
6. Shadow: "The Shadow can represent our darkest desires, our untapped resources, or even rejected qualities. It can also symbolize our greatest fears and phobias. Shadows may not be all bad, and may reveal admirable, even redeeming qualities. The Hero's enemies and villains often wear the Shadow mask. This physical force is determined to destroy the Hero and his cause."
7. Trickster: "Tricksters relish the disruption of the status quo, turning the Ordinary World into chaos with their quick turns of phrase and physical antics. Although they may not change during the course of their Journeys, their world and its inhabitants are transformed by their antics. The Trickster uses laughter [and ridicule] to make characters see the absurdity of the situation, and perhaps force a change."

The Twelve Stages of the Journey

1. **Ordinary World:** “The Hero’s home, the safe haven upon which the Special World and the Journey’s outcome must be compared.” The Journey begins in the Ordinary World, travels to the Special World, and returns to the Ordinary World.
2. **Call to Adventure:** The Call to Adventure sets the story rolling by disrupting the comfort of the Hero’s Ordinary World, presenting a challenge or quest that must be undertaken.
3. **Refusal of the Call:** “A Hero often refuses [or is reluctant] to take on the Journey because of fears and insecurities that have surfaced from the Call to Adventure. The Hero may not be willing to make changes, preferring the safe haven of the Ordinary World. This becomes an essential stage that communicates the risks involved in the Journey that lies ahead. Without risks and danger or the likelihood of failure, the audience will not be compelled to be a part of the Hero’s Journey.”
4. **Meeting with the Mentor:** “The Hero meets a Mentor to gain confidence, insight, advice, training, or magical gifts to overcome the initial fears and face the Threshold of the adventure. The Mentor may be a physical person, or an object such as a map, a logbook, or other writing.”
5. **Crossing the Threshold:** “Crossing the threshold signifies that the Hero has finally committed to the Journey. He is prepared to cross the gateway that separates the Ordinary World from the Special World.”
6. **Tests, Allies, Enemies:** “Having crossed the threshold, the Hero faces Tests, encounters Allies, confronts Enemies, and learns the rules of this Special World. The Hero needs to find out who can be trusted. Allies are earned, a Sidekick may join up, or an entire Hero Team forged. The Hero must prepare himself for the greater Ordeals yet to come and needs this stage to test his skills and powers, or perhaps seek further training from the Mentor. This Initiation into this Special World also tests the Hero’s commitment to the Journey, and questions whether he can succeed.”
7. **Approach to the Inmost Cave:** “The Hero must make the preparations needed to approach the Inmost Cave that leads to the Journey’s heart, or central Ordeal. Maps may be reviewed, attacks planned, a reconnaissance launched, and possibly the enemies forces whittled down before the Hero can face his greatest fear, or the supreme danger lurking in the Special World.” The Approach may be a time for some romance or a few jokes before the battle, or it may signal a ticking clock or a heightening of the stakes.
8. **Ordeal:** “The Hero engages in the Ordeal, the central life-or-death crisis, during which he faces his greatest fear, confronts his most difficult challenge, and experiences “death”. His Journey teeters on the brink of failure. The Ordeal is the central magical Stage of any Journey. Only through “death” can the Hero be reborn, experiencing a resurrection that grants greater power or insight to see the Journey to the end.”
9. **Reward (Seizing the Sword):** “The Hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear, slain the dragon, or weathered the crisis of the heart, and now earns the Reward that he has sought. The Hero’s Reward comes in many forms: a magical sword, an elixir, greater knowledge or insight, reconciliation with a lover. Whatever the treasure, the Hero has earned the right to celebrate. The Hero may have earned the Reward

outright, or the Hero may have seen no option but to steal it. The Hero may rationalize this Elixir theft, having paid for it with the tests and ordeals thus far. But the consequences of the theft must be confronted as the Shadow forces race to reclaim the Elixir that must not see the light of the Ordinary World."

10. **The Road Back:** "The Hero must finally recommit to completing the Journey and accept the Road Back to the Ordinary World. A Hero's success in the Special World may make it difficult to return. Like Crossing the Threshold, The Road Back needs an event that will push the Hero through the Threshold, back into the Ordinary World. The Event should re-establish the Central Dramatic Question, pushing the Hero to action and heightening the stakes. The Road Back may be a moment when the Hero must choose between the Journey of a Higher Cause versus the personal Journey of the Heart."
11. **Resurrection:** "The Hero faces the Resurrection, his most dangerous meeting with death. This final life-or-death Ordeal shows that the Hero has maintained and can apply all that he has brought back to the Ordinary World. This Ordeal and Resurrection can represent a "cleansing" or purification that must occur now that the Hero has emerged from the land of the dead. The Hero is reborn or transformed with the attributes of the Ordinary self in addition to the lessons and insights from the characters he has met along the road. The Resurrection may be a physical Ordeal, or final showdown between the Hero and the Shadow. This battle is for much more than the Hero's life. Other lives, or an entire world may be at stake and the Hero must now prove that he has achieved Heroic status and willingly accept his sacrifice for the benefit of the Ordinary World. Other Allies may come to the last minute rescue to lend assistance, but in the end the Hero must rise to the sacrifice at hand. He must deliver the blow that destroys the Death Star (*Star Wars*), or offer his hand and accept the "magic" elixir of love."
12. **Return with the Elixir:** "The Return with the Elixir is the final Reward earned on the Hero's Journey. The Hero has been resurrected, purified and has earned the right to be accepted back into the Ordinary World and share the Elixir of the Journey. The true Hero returns with an Elixir to share with others or heal a wounded land. The Elixir can be a great treasure or magic potion. It could be love, wisdom, or simply the experience of having survived the Special World. Even the tragic end of a Hero's Journey can yield the best elixir of all, granting the audience greater awareness of us and our world (*Citizen Kane*)."