

Students entering 9th Grade

Please read *The House of Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer. You will need to annotate the book. Please see the page below on how to annotate a text. Please note that simply underlining or highlighting without commentary is not enough.

Assignment: Writing Component and Visual Component

Read and study The Hero's Journey Cycle. Become familiar with it as you will need these notes to evaluate Matt's character.

When you return to school in the fall, you will bring your completed assignment the first week of school, and you will take a test on the novel as well.

As you read, you should annotate *House of the Scorpion* from beginning to end. Your annotations will be checked during the first week of school. Your assignment and test will be the first grades for the semester. Use the guidelines below as you take notes on your reading.

Part 1: Writing Component:

Hero Cycle: See the attached guide for more information

In a well-developed essay, explain how Matt's life journey makes him a hero. Keep in mind, you are not writing a biography about this person. You are also not writing to outline the entire hero's journey. Instead, you are writing to explore what makes this person heroic. You will focus on the following:

- Two main obstacles Matt faced
- The physical, mental, emotional, or interpersonal struggles the person endured to overcome those obstacles
- Personal character traits that aided the hero in overcoming the obstacles (strengths)
- Personal character traits that hindered the person's success in overcoming the obstacles (weaknesses) with information/explanation of how he overcame those weaknesses
- Accomplishments that have a local, national, or international impact/significance
- The lesson(s) YOU learned from this hero's journey (obstacles, struggles to overcome, and accomplishments)

All essays must follow these rules:

Typed, black ink only

Times New Roman font, 12 pt. font, double spaced

One inch margins

In-text parenthetical citations

Your essay must be a minimum of five distinct sections/paragraphs. Suggested organization includes:

1. Introduction with basic information about the person
2. Obstacle #1 with character traits, struggle, and outcome
3. Obstacle #2 with character traits, struggle, and outcome
4. Ultimate accomplishments, judgment as hero
5. Conclusion with lesson learned by YOU

Part 2: Visual Component:

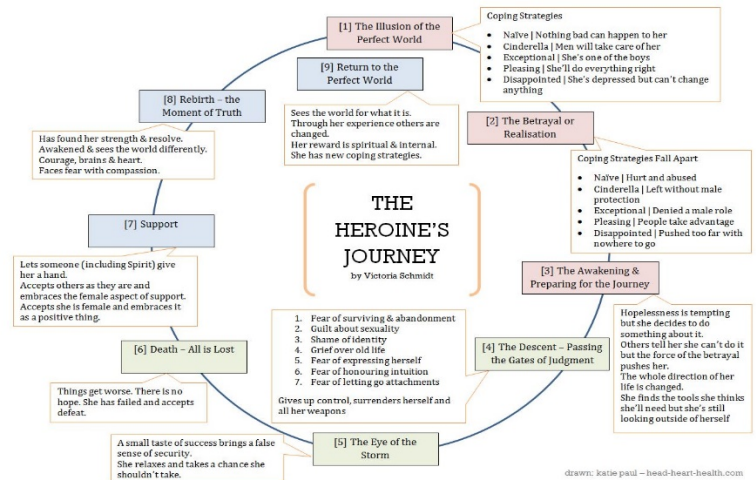
Create a visual representation of the entire hero's journey. Your project may be organized in one of two ways:

1. Circle structure – in a circular template, use the information about your hero to illustrate and identify the 12 stages of the hero's journey. For each stage, you will need a picture/illustration and a brief explanation. In the center of the circle, you will place your hero's name, and a portrait, and an original epithet about the hero.

2. Road map structure – You may use a road map design instead. You are still required to incorporate 12 life events that closely match the hero's journey, but the structure and order are not as strict. At the top of the map, you will place your hero's name, portrait, and an original epithet about the hero.

Either design choice may be presented on a small poster or construction paper. Either design choice should be neatly constructed in full color. Maximum effort must be demonstrated for credit to be given. It is quite obvious when visuals are thrown together at the last minute.

Presentation: You will prepare and present a brief 2-3 minute presentation about the person you researched and his/her journey map. You will NOT read your essay or read directly from the map. Instead, you will share the key obstacles, struggles, accomplishments, and lessons learned in a short memorized (note-cards are allowed) speech. You may reference your journey map as a visual aide only. For this presentation, you will be assessed on your voice projection, word choice, connection with the audience, preparation, appearance, and other skills to be discussed in class.



The Hero Cycle in *The House of the Scorpion*

The protagonist of *The House of the Scorpion* provides an excellent example of the hero cycle. As you annotate, look for and make note of each stage of the hero cycle. You may not find every stage but most will be easily identifiable. Below is a review of the particular details associated with each stage:

The Hero's Journey: Summary of the Steps by: Joseph Campbell

1. The Ordinary World

Here the person is introduced to the audience. She/he doesn't know her/his personal potential or calling.

2. Call to Adventure

The call to adventure is the point in a person's life when she/he is first given notice that everything is going to change, whether they know it or not.

3. Refusal of Call/Reluctant Hero

Often when the call is given, the future hero refuses to heed it. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his or her current circumstances.

4. Meeting Wise Mentor

Once the hero has committed to the quest, consciously or unconsciously, his or her guide and magical helper appears, or becomes known.

5. The First Threshold

This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are not known.

6. Tests, Allies and Enemies

The road of trials is a series of tests, tasks, or ordeals that the person must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the person fails one or more of these tests, which often occur in 3s.

7. Supreme Ordeal

This is sometimes described as the person's lowest point or darkest moment. The separation has been made between the old world and old self and the potential for a new world/self. By entering this stage, the person shows her/his willingness to make a change, to die and become a new person.

8. Revisiting the Mentor

The person revisits the teachings of an old mentor or meets and learns from a new mentor and subsequently returns to the path s/he started on.

9. Return with New Knowledge

The trick in returning is to retain the wisdom gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world. This is usually extremely difficult. Just as the hero may need guides and assistants to set out on the quest, often times he or she must have powerful guides and rescuers to bring them back to everyday life, especially if the person has been wounded or weakened by the experience.

10. *Seizing the Sword (or Prize)*

Here the hero confronts and defeats old enemies with the new power and knowledge gained. S/he is able to overthrow or defeat the opponent.

11. *Resurrection*

The old self dies physically or spiritually and moves beyond the normal human state. This is a god-like state where the hero acknowledges her/his new stature. Another way of looking at this step is that it is a period of rest, peace and fulfillment before the hero begins the return.

12. *Return with Elixir**

The return with elixir is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person went on the journey to get. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the person for this step, since in many myths the elixir is like a plant, or a magic potion or medicine, that supplies immortality. For a human hero, it means achieving a balance between material and spiritual world. There is freedom to live and freedom from the fear of death. This is sometimes referred to as "living in the moment".

For more info on the hero cycle, see below for a more detailed explanation of each cycle of the Hero's Journey.

THE STAGES OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY

1.) The hero is introduced in his/her ORDINARY WORLD.

Most stories ultimately take us to a special world, a world that is new and alien to its hero. If you're going to tell a story about a fish out of his customary element, you first have to create a contrast by showing him in his mundane, ordinary world. In WITNESS you see both the Amish boy and the policeman in their ordinary worlds before they are thrust into alien worlds – the farm boy into the city, and the city cop into the unfamiliar countryside. In STAR WARS you see Luke Skywalker being bored to death as a farm boy before he tackles the universe.

2.) The CALL TO ADVENTURE.

The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure. Maybe the land is dying, as in the King Arthur stories about the search for the Grail. In STAR WARS, it's Princess Leia's holographic message to Obi Wan Kenobi, who then asks Luke to join the quest. In detective stories, it's the hero being offered a new case. In romantic comedies it could be the first sight of that special but annoying someone the hero or heroine will be pursuing/sparring with.

3.) The hero is reluctant at first. (REFUSAL OF THE CALL.)

Often at this point the hero balks at the threshold of adventure. After all, he or she is facing the greatest of all fears – fear of the unknown. At this point Luke refuses Obi Wan's call to adventure, and returns to his aunt and uncle's farmhouse, only to find they have been barbecued by the Emperor's stormtroopers. Suddenly Luke is no longer reluctant, and is eager to undertake the adventure. He is motivated.

4.) The hero is encouraged by the Wise Old Man or Woman. (MEETING WITH THE MENTOR.)

By this time many stories will have introduced a Merlin-like character who is the hero's mentor. In JAWS it's the crusty Robert Shaw character who knows all about sharks; in the mythology of the Mary Tyler Moore

Show, it's Lou Grant. The mentor gives advice and sometimes magical weapons. This is Obi Wan giving Luke his father's light saber.

The mentor can go so far with the hero. Eventually the hero must face the unknown by himself. Sometimes the Wise Old Man/Woman is required to give the hero a swift kick in the pants to get the adventure going.

5.) The hero passes the first threshold. (CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.)

The hero fully enters the special world of the story for the first time. This is the moment at which the story takes off and the adventure gets going. The balloon goes up, the romance begins, the spaceship blasts off, the wagon train gets rolling. Dorothy sets out on the Yellow Brick Road. The hero is now committed to his/her journey and there's no turning back.

6.) The hero encounters tests and helpers. (TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES.)

The hero is forced to make allies and enemies in the special world, and to pass certain tests and challenges that are part of his/her training. In STAR WARS the cantina is the setting for the forging of an important alliance with Han Solo and the start of an important enmity with Jabba the Hutt. In CASABLANCA Rick's Café is the setting for the "alliances and enmities" phase and in many Westerns it's the saloon where these relationships are tested.

7.) The hero reaches the innermost cave. (APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE.)

The hero comes at last to a dangerous place, often deep underground, where the object of the quest is hidden. In the Arthurian stories the Chapel Perilous is the dangerous chamber where the seeker finds the Grail. In many myths the hero has to descend into hell to retrieve a loved one, or into a cave to fight a dragon and gain a treasure. It's Theseus going to the Labyrinth to face the Minotaur. In STAR WARS it's Luke and company being sucked into the Death Star where they will rescue Princess Leia. Sometimes it's just the hero going into his/her own dream world to confront fears and overcome them.

8.) The hero endures the supreme ORDEAL.

This is the moment at which the hero touches bottom. He/she faces the possibility of death, brought to the brink in a fight with a mythical beast. For us, the audience standing outside the cave waiting for the victor to emerge, it's a black moment. In STAR WARS, it's the harrowing moment in the bowels of the Death Star, where Luke, Leia and company are trapped in the giant trash-masher. Luke is pulled under by the tentacled monster that lives in the sewage and is held down so long that the audience begins to wonder if he's dead. IN E.T., THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL, E. T. momentarily appears to die on the operating table.

This is a critical moment in any story, an ordeal in which the hero appears to die and be born again. It's a major source of the magic of the hero myth. What happens is that the audience has been led to identify with the hero. We are encouraged to experience the brink-of-death feeling with the hero. We are temporarily depressed, and then we are revived by the hero's return from death.

This is the magic of any well-designed amusement park thrill ride. Space Mountain or the Great Whiteknuckler make the passengers feel like they're going to die, and there's a great thrill that comes with surviving a moment like that. This is also the trick of rites of passage and rites of initiation into fraternities and secret societies. The initiate is forced to taste death and experience resurrection. You're never more alive than when you think you're going to die.

9.) The hero seizes the sword. (SEIZING THE SWORD, REWARD)

Having survived death, beaten the dragon, slain the Minotaur, her hero now takes possession of the treasure he's come seeking. Sometimes it's a special weapon like a magic sword or it may be a token like the Grail or some elixir which can heal the wounded land.

The hero may settle a conflict with his father or with his shadowy nemesis. In RETURN OF THE JEDI, Luke is reconciled with both, as he discovers that the dying Darth Vader is his father, and not such a bad guy after all.

The hero may also be reconciled with a woman. Often she is the treasure he's come to win or rescue, and there is often a love scene or sacred marriage at this point. Women in these stories (or men if the hero is female) tend to be shape-shifters. They appear to change in form or age, reflecting the confusing and constantly changing aspects of the opposite sex as seen from the hero's point of view. The hero's supreme ordeal may grant him a better understanding of women, leading to a reconciliation with the opposite sex.

10.) THE ROAD BACK.

The hero's not out of the woods yet. Some of the best chase scenes come at this point, as the hero is pursued by the vengeful forces from whom he has stolen the elixir or the treasure.. This is the chase as Luke and friends are escaping from the Death Star, with Princess Leia and the plans that will bring down Darth Vader.

If the hero has not yet managed to reconcile with his father or the gods, they may come raging after him at this point. This is the moonlight bicycle flight of Elliott and E. T. as they escape from "Keys" (Peter Coyote), a force representing governmental authority. By the end of the movie Keys and Elliott have been reconciled and it even looks like Keys will end up as Elliott's step-father.

11.) RESURRECTION.

The hero emerges from the special world, transformed by his/her experience. There is often a replay here of the mock death-and-rebirth of Stage 8, as the hero once again faces death and survives. The Star Wars movies play with this theme constantly – all three of the films to date feature a final battle scene in which Luke is almost killed, appears to be dead for a moment, and then miraculously survives. He is transformed into a new being by his experience.

12.) RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

The hero comes back to the ordinary world, but the adventure would be meaningless unless he/she brought back the elixir, treasure, or some lesson from the special world. Sometimes it's just knowledge or experience, but unless he comes back with the elixir or some boon to mankind, he's doomed to repeat the adventure until he does. Many comedies use this ending, as a foolish character refuses to learn his lesson and embarks on the same folly that got him in trouble in the first place.

Sometimes the boon is treasure won on the quest, or love, or just the knowledge that the special world exists and can be survived. Sometimes it's just coming home with a good story to tell.

The hero's journey, once more: The hero is introduced in his ORDINARY WORLD where he receives the CALL TO ADVENTURE. He is RELUCTANT at first to CROSS THE FIRST THRESHOLD where he eventually encounters TESTS, ALLIES and ENEMIES. He reaches the INNERMOST CAVE where he endures the SUPREME ORDEAL. He SEIZES THE SWORD or the treasure and is pursued on the ROAD

BACK to his world. He is RESURRECTED and transformed by his experience. He RETURNS to his ordinary world with a treasure, boon, or ELIXIR to benefit his world.

The myth is easily translated to contemporary dramas, comedies, romances, or action-adventures by substituting modern equivalents for the symbolic figures and props of the hero story. The Wise Old Man may be a real shaman or wizard, but he can also be any kind of mentor or teacher, doctor or therapist, crusty but benign boss, tough but fair top sergeant, parent, grandfather, etc. Modern heroes may not be going into caves and labyrinths to fight their mythical beasts, but they do enter and innermost cave by going into space, to the bottom of the sea, into their own minds, or into the depths of a modern city.

How to Annotate a Text

Marking and highlighting a text is like having a conversation with a book – it allows you to ask questions, comment on meaning, and mark events and passages you want to revisit.

Below are some suggestions that will help with annotating.

- Use a pen, pencil, post-it notes, or a highlighter (although use it sparingly!).
- Summarize important ideas in your own words.
- Add examples from real life, other books, TV, movies, and so forth.
- Define words that are new to you.
- Mark passages that you find confusing with a ???
- Write questions that you might have for later discussion in class.
- Comment on the actions or development of characters.
- Comment on things that intrigue, impress, surprise, disturb, etc.
- *Note how the author uses language. A list of possible literary devices is attached.*
- *Note symbolism, motifs, themes*
- Draw a picture when a visual connection is appropriate
- Explain the historical context or traditions/social customs used in the passage.
- **Diction** (word choice): the denotative and connotative meanings of words
 - different words for the same thing often suggest different attitudes (e.g., happy vs. content)
 - denotative vs. connotative (e.g., dead vs. passed away)
- **Images:** Vivid appeals to understanding through the five senses
- **Details:** Facts that are included or those that are omitted
- **Language:** The overall use of language such as formal, clinical, informal, slang, syntactical structure
- **Sentence Structure:** How the author's use of sentence structure affects the reader

Suggested methods for marking a text:

- * Use sticky notes if you cannot write in the book
- * Color code your annotations by using different color post-its, highlighters, or pens.
- * Use brackets if several lines seem important, just draw a line down the margin and underline/highlight only the key phrases.
- * Place an asterisk (*) next to an important passage; use two if it is really important.
- * Use the space in the margins to make comments, define words, ask questions, etc. (marginal notetaking)

*Underline/highlight: Caution! Do not underline or highlight too much! You want to concentrate on the important elements, not entire pages (use brackets for that).

*Use circles, boxes, triangles, squiggly lines, stars, etc. to mark important elements such as figurative language

Literary Term Definitions:

1. Alliteration – the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same consonant sound: e.g., “The twisting trout twinkled below.”
2. Allusion – a reference to something outside the text such as a mythological, literary, or historical person, place, or thing to make a connection for the reader: e.g., “He met his Waterloo.”
3. Flashback – a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event.
4. Foreshadowing – the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action
5. Hyperbole – a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration; it may be used for either serious or comic effect: e.g., “The shot heard ‘round the world.”
6. Idiom – an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal: e.g., to drive someone up the wall.
7. Imagery – the words or phrases a writer uses that appeal to the senses.
8. Irony – there are three types; -

Verbal irony – when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite; sarcasm is a form of verbal irony: e.g., “It is easy to stop smoking. I’ve done it many times.”

Situational irony -- when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect; often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic.

Dramatic irony – when a character or speaker says or does something that has different meaning from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications: e.g., Anne Frank looks forward to growing up, but we, as readers, know that it will never be.
9. Metaphor – a comparison of two unlike things not using “like” or “as”: e.g., “Time is money.”
10. Mood – the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work.
11. Oxymoron – a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression: e.g., “sweet sorrow” or “cold fire.”
12. Paradox – occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g., “Much madness id divinest sense.”
13. Personification – a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics: e.g., “The wind cried in the dark.”
14. Rhetoric – the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking.
15. Simile – a comparison of two different things or ideas using words such as “like” or “as”: e.g., “The warrior fought like a lion.”
16. Suspense – a quality that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events.
17. Symbol – any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g., a tortoise represents slow but steady progress.
18. Theme – the central message of a literary work. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life

or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied: e.g., pride often precedes a fall.

19. Tone – the writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience; it is conveyed through the author’s choice of words (diction) and details. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, etc.
20. Understatement (meiosis, litotes) – the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., “I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year.”