

Stages of the Hero's Journey

as described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949)

English 1B—Wall

Joseph Campbell discovered a pattern in mythological and “heroic” literature. He called it the “monomyth” because these plots all follow the same twelve-stage formula.

Here is a simplified list of the stages:

1. **Ordinary World:** This stage describes the hero's normal life at the start of the story, before the adventure begins.
2. **Call to Adventure:** The hero is faced with something that makes them begin their adventure. This might be a problem or a challenge they need to overcome.
3. **Resisting the Call:** The hero attempts to refuse the adventure because they are afraid.
4. **Meeting with the Mentor:** The hero encounters someone who can give them advice and ready them for the journey ahead.
5. **Crossing the First Threshold:** The hero leaves the world they are familiar with and “crosses the threshold” into unfamiliar adventure.
6. **Tests, Allies, Enemies:** The hero learns the rules of their new world. The strength of the hero’s will is tested. They meet friends and come face to face with foes.
7. **Approach:** Setbacks occur, sometimes causing the hero to try a new approach or adopt new ideas.
8. **Ordeal:** The hero experiences a major crisis--typically a near-death experience. Perhaps the hero even dies!
9. **Reward:** After surviving death, the hero earns their reward or accomplishes their goal.
10. **The Road Back:** The hero begins their journey back to their ordinary world.
11. **Resurrection Hero** - The hero faces a final test where everything is at stake, and they must use everything they have learned.
12. **Return with Elixir:** The hero brings their knowledge (“elixir”) back to their ordinary world, where they apply it to help all who remain there.