

## 1. The Hero's Journey (Final "Coming-of-Age" Project)

Ever notice how certain movies have similar arcs? Have you ever watched a movie and said "hey, they just ripped off *The Empire Strikes Back* and changed a few characters!"

What do "The Princess Diaries," "The Little Mermaid," "Enchanted," "A Star is Born," "Pretty Woman," "Ella Enchanted," "Into the Woods," "Ever After," and "Shrek the Third" all have in common? They are all retellings of **Cinderella**. Author [Kurt Vonnegut once described that all stories follow one of a handful of possible trajectories](#).

Today we will be discussing the most universal story of all: [The Hero's Journey](#).

Joseph Campbell was a literature professor who studied myths and stories from all over the world and noted surprising commonalities between them. He believed that all stories were incarnations of the [monomyth](#).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1Zxt28ff-E&feature=youtu.be>

Christopher Vogler is a story consultant in Hollywood who applied Joseph Campbell's theory to film. He wrote [a now-famous memo](#) while working at Disney that directly led to what is considered to be Disney's "[Renaissance](#)" period, creating films such as *The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Lion King*. Here you can find [Christopher Vogler](#) summarizing his personal experience and the twelve stages of the journey that he has identified. [You can apply the framework to just about any film](#), although it's not always as easily applied to short films.

1. **THE ORDINARY WORLD.** The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different directions and causing stress.
2. **THE CALL TO ADVENTURE.** Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.
3. **REFUSAL OF THE CALL.** The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.
4. **MEETING WITH THE MENTOR.** The hero comes across a seasoned traveler of the worlds who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.
5. **CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.** At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.
6. **TESTS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES.** The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.

7. **APPROACH.** The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world.
8. **THE ORDEAL.** Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.
9. **THE REWARD.** The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.
10. **THE ROAD BACK.** About three-fourths of the way through the story, the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.
11. **THE RESURRECTION.** At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero's action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.
12. **RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR.** The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

## 2. Put It To The Test!

[Lets look at some of our favourite movies and see how they fit!](#)

## 3. Character Archetypes

[What is an archetype?](#) All of the characters in these fulfill the role of one or several archetypes are recurring patterns of human behavior, symbolized by standard types of characters in movies and stories. [You can find a summary of these main types here](#) or you can [watch this video to hear about a few of these archetypes in detail.](#)

- **HEROES/LEADERS.** Central figures in stories. Everyone is the hero of his or her own myth.
- **SHADOWS.** Villains and enemies, perhaps the enemy within. The dark side of the Force, the repressed possibilities of the hero, his or her potential for evil. Can be other kinds of repression, such as repressed grief, anger, frustration or creativity that is dangerous if it doesn't have an outlet.
- **MENTORS.** The hero's guide or guiding principles. Yoda, Morpheus, Merlin, a great coach or teacher.
- **HERALD.** One who brings the Call to Adventure. Could be a person or an event.
- **THRESHOLD GUARDIANS.** The forces that stand in the way at important turning points, including jealous enemies, professional gatekeepers, or your own fears and doubts.
- **SHAPESHIFTERS.** In stories, creatures like vampires or werewolves who change shape. In life, the shapeshifter represents change. The way other people (or our perceptions of them) keep changing. The opposite sex, the way people can be two-faced.
- **TRICKSTERS.** Clowns and mischief-makers, Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy. Our own mischievous subconscious, urging us to change.

- **ALLIES.** Characters who help the hero through the change. Sidekicks, buddies, girlfriends who advise the hero through the transitions of life.

[You can find more information on each of these category types here.](#)