

Heroes of the World

Your group is going to pick one hero from the following list. I'm not going to lie... some of these are far harder to research than others, so you might want to do a little poking around on the internet before you commit yourselves to a hero who you've never heard of. You will then have two jobs.

A.) Research your hero and decide whether or not you believe he/she fits into the definition of an epic hero. I expect you to go beyond the basic information and really find interesting things about your hero and how he/she fits into the heroic tradition.

B.) Present your research to the class in a way that is both entertaining AND that educates the class about the hero's life and how he/she does or does not fit the traditional definition of an epic hero.

Individual Assignments

1) A research log of at least two pages showing what you found ON YOUR OWN. You will all share research, but I want to know what you found by yourself. You must have information from THREE different websites. Normally I don't allow students to use Wikipedia because it is NOT a reliable resource. However, you may use it only because we are not writing a formal paper on it and because you are really just looking for background information.

Requirements for research sheet

Title of Website by Author (if you can find one)

Address of Website

Date you looked at the website

In your own words, summarize what you found on that website.

Sample: (Your notes would be *significantly* longer. Pull all the pertinent information from the website)

Gilgamesh (no author)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilgamesh>

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Gilgamesh built the walls around Uruk, but in some stories, it's said that the seven sages built them. He and his son fixed up a temple to one of the goddess (Ninlil). His people buried him underneath the Euphrates River after he died. The Germans might have found the city of Uruk and lots of people believe he might have been a real king (although the myth is fiction).

Gilgamesh (no author)

<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/g/gilgamesh.html>

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His mother was a less important goddess named Ninsun, but his father is described in one place using a word that might mean he's a "fool" or a "demon." In other versions of the story, his father is Lugulbanda. The legend is written on clay tablets.

More Individual Assignments

2) Your group must divide up the epic hero traits equally. Some traits (special birth) are very easy to prove. Some traits (overcoming obstacles) require you to tell entire stories about monsters and battles. So, divide up the work so that everyone has an equal amount of writing, not an equal number of traits. You are then going to write a rough draft paragraph of how you think your person shows that trait or why you think your person fails to show that trait. This is a rough draft because I'm not going to grade the writing... only the presentation.

Sample:

1. Special birth

Seeing two dragons fight (or in some stories, having a vision of two dragons), Merlin tells Uther that he is represented by the red dragon and his descendants would drive the Romans (represented by the white dragon) out of England. Uther takes the surname Pendragon (head of the dragon). Arthur was the first born son of King Uther Pendragon and the Lady Igraine (who was not his wife). He was the child of magic when Merlin allowed Uther Pendragon to disguise himself. Merlin sent Arthur away to be raised in the countryside by Sir Ector away from the evils of court and politics. Uther married the Lady Igraine. Some stories give Arthur one half-sister (Morgan le Fay) and others give him three (Margawse, Elaine, and Morgan le Fay)

2. Forced on a quest

Uther died and the kingdom fell to rebellion and fighting. Merlin told the Archbishop of Canterbury to invite all the warlords to London for Christmas and an altar (or rock or anvil, depending on the story) appeared with a sword in it. The inscription said that whoever pulled the sword out would be king, but none of the warlords could. Later (weeks, months or years later depending on the story), Sir Ector and his son (Kay) came to fight in a jousting tournament. Arthur's foster brother (Kay) left his sword behind, so Arthur, pulled the sword out of the stone and ran to give it to Kay. When everyone saw what he had done, the common people demanded that Arthur be crowned king. (The warlords were not as happy.) Arthur is given no choice, he is forced to take the throne and given the job of bringing peace and happiness to a warring world.

The traits of the epic hero are...

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Special birth | 6. Faced the darkness |
| 2. Forced on a quest | 7. Overcome temptation |
| 3. Formidable obstacles | 8. Earn special knowledge or power |
| 4. Helped by a friend or mentor | 9. Improve the world |
| 5. Special power or weapon | |

Remember, some of these will take more proving than others. Number three will generally be longer. Seven or six might be long. One will always be short. Anyway, you get the picture. After you share your individual research and have a better understanding of your hero, divide the work evenly with the traits. You will each hand in your paragraphs individually, and you are allowed to explain why you think that your hero doesn't fit into one of the categories if you want.

Group Assignment

Your group is going to present the story of your hero in twenty to thirty minutes. Each member of the group will present whichever traits he or she wrote on, so the presenting will be shared. Now remember, you are going to tell about your hero's life, but you have a choice. You can either show how he has all the traits of a hero or you can explain which heroic trait your hero is missing to be a true epic hero. Make the presentation interesting. You must have some sort of visual aid, but that could be a Powerpoint presentation, a website, a poster, a sockpuppet show, a display... get creative! And you don't have to be up front. If you have trouble with presentations, make a website and then talk from the back so people aren't looking at you. The visual aid is the ONLY part of this that will be a group grade. You need to coordinate and have everyone participating in one presentation. If one person does a poster and another does a website, that's going to feel very awkward. Work together on the presentation. For extra credit, you can branch out into the history or the culture that produced your myth. Bring food. Decorate a corner of the room. Create a history timeline. The extra credit points are awarded to individuals (not the group), but coordinate what you are doing. I should not have three people all bring hummus!

Rubric

Research

Three respectable websites	6	4	2	0
Information in student's words (not plagiarized)	15	12	10	5
Significant amount of info	15	12	10	5
Correct info	10	8	6	4
				_____ / 46

Paragraphs

Contains details	15	12	10	5
Explains how details show or do not show the trait	20	17	13	8
				_____ / 35

Presentation

Present accurate information	10	8	6	4
Present it in an interesting way	10	8	6	4
Can answer questions from the audience	10	8	6	4
Visual aid (group grade!)	20	17	13	8
				_____ / 60

Extra Credit

Showed effort	3	2	1	0
Historically/culturally accurate	4	2	1	0
Fun	3	2	1	0

_____ / 140

Since sophomore year is world literature, go explore the world...

Potential Heroes

Egypt

Imhotep

Isis

Osiris

Greece

Achilles

Hercules

Theseus

Atalanta

Jason

Bellerophon

Perseus

America

Hunahpu and Xbalanque (the Twins)

Manco Cápac

Europe

Beowulf

Roland (from the song of Roland)

Marduk (same era as Gilgamesh)

Rostam (Persian/Iranian hero)

Prince Marko (the Serbian legend)

Sir Gawain (from Arthurian legends)

Asia

Arjuna (from India)

Lu Tung-Pin or Lu Dongbin (from China)

If you choose a hero that is fairly well known (Hercules or Achilles), then you will have to really go beyond what you read in the summer assignment and discover new information or new stories about your hero. You need to be experts on your hero's life and how well your hero fits into the epic hero tradition!