

Mythic Hero's Questionnaire (Frey)

Adapted from *The Key*, by James N. Frey (New York: St.Martin's Griffin, 2000).

Novel Title:

The Hero's Journey—Outline of Acts, Stages, and Character Arc

<i>ACTS</i>	<i>STAGES (links)</i>	<i>CHARACTER ARC</i>
ACT 1 – Separation	1. Ordinary world	Limited awareness of a problem
	2. Call to adventure	Increased awareness
	3. Refusal of the call	Reluctance to change
	4. Meeting with the mentor	Overcoming reluctance
	5. Crossing first threshold	Committing to change
ACT 2 – Descent	6. Tests, allies, and enemies	Experimenting with first change
	7. Approach to the inmost cave	Preparing for big change
Midpoint – Initiation	8. Ordeal	Attempting big change
	9. Reward (seizing the sword)	Consequences of attempt (setbacks and improvements)
	10. The road back	Rededication to change
ACT 3 – Return	11. Resurrection	Final attempt at big change
	12. Return with the elixir	Final mastery of problem

CRISIS...

Climax

Your Hero's Name:

Required Qualities for Your Hero

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A hero of a myth-based work of fiction will always possess the following qualities in addition to being a great dramatic character.

1. **The hero has courage** (or finds it in the course of the story). Readers can't identify with your hero unless he has courage. Readers are repelled by cowards. A hero will not hesitate unless there's real peril.

How is your hero courageous, or how does he come to develop courage in your story?

2. **The hero is clever and resourceful.** Readers have to patience for stupid and inept heroes. The hero need not be a genius. But he must be resourceful in dealing with challenges.

How is your hero clever and resourceful?

3. **The hero has a "special talent."** The special talent is one of the qualities that endears the hero to the reader and convinces the reader that the hero's cause is just. It also makes the hero more interesting, separates him from the everyday person. Sometimes the special talent relates (or comes to relate) to the hero's mission in the story. It proves that the hero is "blessed by the gods."

What is your hero's special talent?

4. **The hero is an "outlaw," living by his or her own rules.** Not a nasty criminal, but someone who is unconventional or rebels against the norms of society in some way. He is a non-conformist.

How does your hero live by his own rules?

5. **The hero is good at what he does for a living.** In Western cultures, people are repulsed by those who don't do a good job. Readers respect characters who are good at their jobs. In the beginning of a story, the hero may be stuck in a horrible job that he hates and does poorly, but the reader must see that the hero is not fit for this work and will soon have another occupation.

What is your hero's job, and how is he good at it? How can you show this to the reader?

6. **The hero is a protagonist** (takes the lead in a cause or action at some point in the story).

How does your hero take the lead or push the action in your story? Why?

7. **The hero has been wounded** (maimed, disgraced, grieving for a lost loved one, abused, etc.), or is wounded in the course of the story. The wound makes the hero human and draws the reader's sympathy. The wound can be physical, psychological, spiritual, social—anything that causes the hero to suffer. The wound may be, in some sense, self-inflicted (like a drinking problem to cover up childhood abuse). The deeper and more painful this wound, the better.

What is your hero's wound? What kind of a wound is it? How did he receive it? What kind of person has it caused him to become?

8. **The hero is motivated by idealism** (at some point in the story). The hero is not motivated by selfish reasons but sacrifices himself for the good of others. Loss of selfishness is one of the strongest motifs in myth-based fiction.

What is ideal to the hero? What is he willing to fight for, to risk himself for? How does he seek to help others by his idealistic action?

9. **The hero is sexually potent.** Sexual tension turns up the voltage in your story. Readers can't identify with a eunuch. Your hero must be sexually potent and desirable.

How is your hero sexually potent? How can you show that to the reader?

Optional Qualities for Your Hero

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10. **The hero often has a big head** (hubris).

Does your hero have a big head? About what? How can you show this to the reader?

11. **The hero is usually stoic.** The hero usually accepts pain and suffering without complaint and is sometimes extremely stoic, enduring torture without flinching.

How is your hero stoic? How can you show this to the reader?

12. **The hero is usually loyal** to something or someone.

What is your hero loyal to? How can you show this?

13. **The hero is usually considered sexually appealing.**

How is your hero sexually appealing? To whom? How can you show this?

14. **The hero is sometimes physically superior** in some way (strength, speed, hearing, reflexes, etc.)

How is your hero physically superior? Is this superiority inherent, or acquired? How does he use this ability to his advantage? How can you show this ability?

15. **The hero sometimes has a special birth** (a parent might be a king, a doomed prisoner, a goddess, an aristocrat, an Apache warrior, etc.).

Has your hero had a special birth? How did it happen? Who are his parents? How can you work this information into the story? How does your hero feel about it?

16. **The hero sometimes has a special destiny** (predicted by a seer, prophet, etc.).

What is your hero's special destiny? How was this predicted? Does he know this? How does he feel about it? How can you show this?

17. **The hero is sometimes branded**—has a special mark, scar, tattoo, etc.

Does your hero have a special mark? What does he think of this? How can you show this?

18. **The hero is sometimes cynical.** The cynicism usually comes from a jaded idealism. The hero is wounded, suffering stoically; the cynicism is a symptom and sometimes a balm for the hero's wounds.

How is your hero cynical? Why? How does this crop up in the story? How do other characters respond to it?

19. **The hero is sometimes mouthy**, known as a wise-guy, if a man. If a woman, she's sharp-tongued. The hero, being a cynic, usually can't keep quiet, and is therefore known to be mouthy.

Is your hero mouthy? What sets it off? Why? How can you show this?

Stages of Character Development Along the Hero's Journey:

	STAGES	CHARACTER ARC	YOUR HERO'S STAGES
Act 1	1. Ordinary world	Limited awareness of a problem	
	2. Call to adventure	Increased awareness	
	3. Refusal of the call	Reluctance to change	
	4. Meeting with the mentor	Overcoming reluctance	
	5. Crossing first threshold	Committing to change	
Act 2	6. Tests, allies, and enemies	Experimenting with first change	
	7. Approach to the inmost cave	Preparing for big change	
	8. Ordeal	Attempting big change	
CRISIS...	9. Reward (seizing the sword)	Consequences of attempt (setbacks & improvements)	
	10. The road back	Rededication to change	
Act 3 - Climax	11. Resurrection	Final attempt at big change	
	12. Return with the elixir	Final mastery of problem	