

FACING CALLS TO ACTION & HISTORICAL HEROES



Grades 8-12 Facing Calls to Action & Historical Heroes English Language & Social Studies

Purpose of the Lesson:

Historical figures who have made positive change in the world have faced calls to action. This lesson provides students with the opportunity to explore calls to action through the lens of historical figures who have made progress in our world. Through the metaphor of The Hero's Journey, students are invited to write the story arch of a call to action taken up by a historical hero. They can choose a historical figure who has made an impact on them, research their story and write a creative writing piece about their response to a call to action that follows the arch of the hero's journey.

Curriculum Competencies:

English Language Arts

- Recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in texts (Grade 8/9/10/11/12)
- Recognize how language constructs personal, social, and cultural identity (Grade 8/9/10/11/12)
- Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world (Grade 8/9/10/11/12)
- Respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways (Grade 8/9)
- Transform ideas and information to create original texts (Grade 8/9/10)
- Access information for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources to inform writing (Grade 10/11/12)

Social Studies

- Determine which causes most influenced particular decisions, actions, or events, and assess their short-and long-term consequences (Grade 8)
- Assess how prevailing conditions and the actions of individuals or groups affect events, decisions, or developments (Grade 9)
- Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and determine appropriate ways to remember and respond (Grade 9/10/11/12)

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First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Video

[What Makes A Hero? - Matthew Winkler](#)

Guiding Questions:

- How do heroes respond to calls to action, according to the hero's journey?
- What calls to action have you faced in your life?
- How do the ways we respond to calls to action impact the world?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Queue up video/set up projector

1. Begin the lesson by watching the video “What Makes A Hero?.” This can be found [HERE](#). This video explains the literary trope of the Hero’s Journey and explains how this journey plays out in fiction while also connecting it to our lives.

2. **Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.**

3. Write down some of the students’ responses on the board to the questions as you go along. **Create the visual aid of a mind-map** - one for heroes in literature/movies/TV shows, and one for heroes throughout history. The students can also add to the mind map by including who helped the hero along their journey and what tools they used to overcome the obstacles they faced along the way. Also take this time to display [this graphic](#) of the arch of the Hero’s Journey so they can refer back to it for the activity.

4. **Use this opportunity to connect the metaphor of a Hero’s Journey to activism.** See where you can make connections between the heroes they highlighted in real life and fiction on the mind-maps. Discuss with your students how the Hero’s Journey can align with historical events and people who have responded to calls to action. Have your students brainstorm some examples of **historical figures/activists** that they know about and feel inspired by.

5. **Explain the curriculum connections to your students.** Invite your students to select a historical figure they feel inspired by to write their creative writing piece about. They should do quite a bit of research on the person they’ve selected so they can use this information to inform their writing. Explain to them that they should use the arch of the Hero’s Journey as a general structure for their piece, but that the form can be as creative as they want, this can be in any format they choose: a short comic book, a poem, a short story, a song, etc.

Accommodation/modification:

- Students who require technological assistance can use a computer and type their stories.
- Students who struggle with writing can dictate their story to the educator who can act as a scribe for them.
- Students whose first language isn’t English can write the story in their native language first and then have it translated to English with the help of the teacher.

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6. Follow-up Activity: Invite the students to read their stories to each other in pairs or small groups. Pose these guiding questions for them to spark a dialogue with their small groups or partners about each other's stories.

Invite students who wish to share their story with the class to do so.

7. Lesson Closure: Facilitate a whole-class discussion about the activity. Allow the students to reflect on their experience writing these stories. You can also use this opportunity to connect these calls to action to mental health by discussing how standing up for ourselves and others shows bravery and strength and how these calls to action empower us to advocate for ourselves and one another. Discuss the concept of being an ally and how allyship affords us the opportunity to raise up the voices of those who are being silenced.