

I Need a (Super)hero

Literary Elements and Narrative Writing

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Grade Level	7th – 8th Grade	**Time Frame**	3–4 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	180 minutes
Course	Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

What are the elements of a story? What makes someone (or something) a hero? What role do heroes play in stories?

Summary

This lesson guides students to investigate literary elements and character traits as they examine and create superheroes. Students begin the lesson by sharing prior knowledge of and experiences with superheroes and superhero stories. Students then watch videos about superheroes and literary elements then read and analyze a short narrative. After assessing representations of superheroes in media, students collaborate to create an original superhero that they then feature as the protagonist of a comic strip and narrative. To conclude the lesson, students present their works while their classmates take notes over literary elements and superhero traits present in each story.

Snapshot

Engage

Students write down their prior knowledge of and experiences with stories during a Quick Write activity, then revise their writing after watching an informational video.

Explore

Students identify and discuss characteristics of modern superheroes.

Explain

Students read and annotate a short story then discuss the literary elements and superhero traits present in the work.

Extend

Students create a comic strip featuring an original superhero then describe the events of their comic strip in a narrative that includes literary elements and a description of the superhero's traits.

Evaluate

Students present both their comic strips and narratives and take notes over the literary elements and superhero traits present in their classmates' work.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR202: Draw simple logical conclusions about the main characters in somewhat challenging literary narratives

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 7)

7.2.R.2: Students will analyze details in literary and nonfiction/informational texts to distinguish genres.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 7)

8.3.R.3: Students will analyze how authors use key literary elements to contribute to the meaning of a text:

- setting
- plot
- characters (i.e., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization
- theme
- conflict (i.e., internal and external)

8.3.W.1: Narrative: Students will write narratives incorporating characters, plot (i.e., flashback and foreshadowing), setting, point of view, conflict , dialogue, and sensory details.

Attachments

- KWHL Graphic Organizer—I Need a (Super)hero - Spanish.docx
- KWHL Graphic Organizer—I Need a (Super)hero - Spanish.pdf
- KWHL Graphic Organizer—I Need a (Super)hero.docx
- KWHL Graphic Organizer—I Need a (Super)hero.pdf
- Lesson Slides—I Need a (Super)hero.pptx
- Mind Map—I Need a (Super)hero - Spanish.docx
- Mind Map—I Need a (Super)hero - Spanish.pdf
- Mind Map—I Need a (Super)hero.docx
- Mind Map—I Need a (Super)hero.pdf
- Triangle-Square-Circle Handout—I Need a (Super)hero - Spanish.docx
- Triangle-Square-Circle Handout—I Need a (Super)hero - Spanish.pdf
- Triangle-Square-Circle Handout—I Need a (Super)hero.docx
- Triangle-Square-Circle Handout—I Need a (Super)hero.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- KWHL Graphic Organizer handout (attached; one per student)
- Triangle-Square-Circle handout (attached; one per student)
- Mind Map handout (attached; one per group of three to four students)
- “Theseus and the Minotaur” short story (linked; one per student)
- Writing utensils
- Paper
- Chart Paper

30 minutes

Engage

Introduce the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides**. Display **slide 3** and go over the essential questions.

Have students take out a piece of paper and writing utensil. Show **slide 4** and introduce the following Quick Write prompts:

- What prior experiences have you had with reading and writing stories?
- What elements make up a story?
- What components must be present for something to be considered a story?

Encourage students to consider their prior knowledge and experiences with writing as they work. Start the 5-minute timer.

Display **slide 5** and have students find an Elbow Partner. Have partners share their responses with each other then ask for volunteers to share their writing with the whole class.

Transition to **slide 6** and play the Khan Academy video, *Story Spine*.

Show **slide 7** and invite students to discuss the similarities and differences between their writing and the story structure presented in the video. Display **slide 8** and have students revise and add to their writing using the information they learned from the video.

After students have revised their work, have them share their changes with their Elbow Partner. Encourage each partner to consider one change they made to their work that they are particularly proud of. Invite students to share out their changes.

Lead a whole class discussion on the key elements of a story. Have students consider the structure of their Quick Writes and stories they have read. As students share, guide discussion towards the key elements that will be the focus of the lesson: plot, setting, characters, conflict, and theme.

Show **slide 9** and review the five elements of a story that are the focus of the lesson. Encourage students to share out prior knowledge of these literary elements and identify examples of these elements in their own Quick Writes. Invite students to share out any additional literary elements that they are familiar with.

Sample Student Responses

Students might also add that dialogue is an important part of narrative writing.

Display **slide 10** and share the following learning objectives with students:

- Explore different character traits and develop a complex character.
- Write narrative stories including plot, setting, characters, conflict, and theme.

40 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 11**. Pass out one copy of the attached **KWHL Graphic Organizer** handout to each student. Alternatively, you could have students draw their own KWHL Graphic Organizer on paper.

Introduce the topic of superheroes to students. Have them begin by filling out the "K" column with everything they know about superheroes. Allow students time to fill in the column, then have them pair up with a classmate and compare and contrast responses.

Have students fill out the "W" column with what they don't know or what they want to know regarding superheroes. Have them also fill out the "H" column with how they will find the information to the questions they wrote in the "W" column. Allow students time to discuss their responses with an Elbow Partner.

Display **slide 12** and direct students' attention to the "L" column of their organizer. Play the *Spider-Man: Homecoming* movie trailer and have students record what they learned about superheroes using the knowledge gained from the trailer.

Show **slide 13**. Invite students to share out what they noticed from the trailer. As students share, record their responses in the blank space provided on the slide. Have students add information from the slide to their handouts.

Transition to **slide 14** and introduce the topic of credible sources. Use the guiding questions on the slide to facilitate a whole class discussion on how to assess the credibility of a source.

Teacher's Note: Student Responses

Students may simply refer to using Google to find sources, but guide students to further consider specific types of websites they may use to find sources. Consider warning students about the AI responses generated from Google searches and encourage them to find the original source of the information.

Have students individually conduct research over superheroes and the process of writing superhero stories. Tell students to gather three different sources and list them in the "H" column of their KWHL Graphic Organizers. Allow students time to work then have them share out the resources they found and discuss how they evaluated the credibility of their sources.

Display **slide 15** and have students navigate to the HIVE on the slide. Have students explore each link in the collection and read the information about superheroes and literary elements of superhero stories. As they read, encourage them to add to the "L" column of their KWHL Graphic Organizers. Have them also add to the "H" column as they discover more resources about different aspects of superheroes.

Teacher's Note: Class Discussion

You may want to lead a class discussion about what students read in the sources from the HIVE collection. Consider recording student responses as they share out, or complete a KWHL chart as a class. This will allow students to have the information to refer to throughout the lesson.

Once students have completed the “L” and “H” column of their organizers, distribute one copy of the **Triangle-Square-Circle Graphic Organizer** handout to each student. Display **slide 16** and introduce the activity based on a modified version of the Triangle-Square-Circle instructional strategy. Have students include the following information in each shape:

- **Triangle:** Write down one idea for the plot of your story.
- **Square:** Write down one idea for the central conflict of your story.
- **Circle:** Using what you learned about superheroes, write down your favorite idea for your story.

Encourage students to share out what they recorded in each shape. Facilitate a whole class discussion about what students learned from their research.

40 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Story Preparation

For this activity, students need access to the short story "Theseus and the Minotaur." You must sign in or create a CommonLit account to access the story. Consider navigating to the linked story, downloading a PDF of the work, and printing a copy for each student.

Display **slide 17** and pass out copies of the "Theseus and Minotaur" short story. Review the Stop and Jot strategy with students and have them annotate the short story as they read.

Introduce the activity to students using the directions on the slide. Tell students to read the story silently and jot down literary elements, characteristics of superheroes, and their reaction to the text in the margins of each paragraph.

Once students have read and annotated the text, facilitate a whole class discussion about the literary elements and superhero traits students noted.

45 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Tech Tool Preparation

Prior to the activities in this portion of the lesson, create an account for Pixton or log in to your existing account. Follow the directions provided on the tech tool card to create your class groups before this activity.

Arrange students into groups of three or four. Introduce the next activity by notifying students that they will collaborate with group members to create a comic strip and write a narrative about an original superhero.

Display **slide 18** and distribute one copy of the **Mind Map** handout to each group. Explain to students how to brainstorm ideas and fill in their Mind Maps. Have students brainstorm ideas for the elements present on the slide and on the handout including story title, plot, setting, characters, conflict, and theme. Begin the 10-minute timer and have groups begin brainstorming.

Teacher's Note: Rubrics and Evaluation

You may evaluate the narrative essay and comic strip activities in this portion of the lesson however you choose. You are able to add slides to the Lesson Slides to list your own requirements for the activities. If you would like to create a rubric for this assignment, consider using Magicschool AI to quickly and effectively create a rubric.

Display **slide 19** and review how to use the Pixton tech tool. Consider presenting a brief tutorial to students that addresses the uses of the tool and any questions students have. At this time, review the rubric or evaluation method you plan to use to evaluate student work.

Teacher's Note: Modeling

Consider creating a model comic strip to demonstrate the activity to students. Guide students to understand where each requirement is present in your model. Additionally, you may consider adjusting the comic strip criteria so that each comic square or scene has individual criteria.

Review the following criteria for the comic strips as presented on the slide:

- a minimum of three different settings
- a minimum of two characters (superhero, archenemy) with unique characteristics
- the name of superhero
- a representation of how the superhero gained their powers
- a representation of the superhero's powers
- a representation of the superhero's weakness

Have groups begin working and start the 20-minute timer on the slide.

Show **slide 20** and review the following criteria for narrative portion of the assignment:

- a minimum of two paragraphs
- third-person point of view
- plot
- settings
- characters
- conflict
- theme

Tell students that their narrative must follow the sequence of events that they created in the comic strip. Encourage students to personalize their superhero by giving them a catchphrase and fatal flaw. Have students begin working and start the 15-minute timer on the slide.

Teacher's Note: Clarification

Students may be inclined to simply describe their comic strip, but stress that their writing must be in the form of a narrative written using third-person point of view. If necessary, refer back to the short story “Theseus and the Minotaur” as an example of a narrative.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Teacher's Note: Presentations

Consider having groups submit their comic strips ahead of the presentations. This will allow you to display them in the classroom or prepare a digital presentation for students to reference as they present their narratives.

Display **slide 21** and have students take out a piece of paper and a pencil. Tell students that they must now present their superhero narratives and comic strips to the class.

Invite students to begin sharing their stories. As students share out, have their classmates take notes over the literary elements and superhero traits they notice.

After all students have shared their comics, consider inviting audience members to share common literary elements and traits they recorded. Consider having students pair up and have their superheroes challenge each other. Their classmates can then decide which superhero would win the battle and describe why based on the characteristics and traits present in each story. Encourage students to cite specific details in each story to support their claims.

Teacher's Note: Displaying Work

Consider celebrating students' comic strips by hanging them in the classroom or hallway.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). CommonLit. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2170
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
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- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). *K20 Center 5 minute timer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVS_yYQoLJg
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- Sony Pictures Entertainment. (2016, December 9). *Spider-Man: Homecoming - Official trailer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rk-dF1lIbIg