I Need a (Super)hero
Literary Elements and Narrative Writing

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Grade Level	6th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	3-4 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	180 minutes

Essential Question

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

Summary

Students rely on prior knowledge and experiences as they discuss literary elements and their importance in a story. After watching a video, students discover characteristics of modern-day superheroes. Bringing literary elements and superhero traits together, students read and analyze a short narrative. Finally, students collaboratively create an original superhero and write a narrative focusing on one or multiple characters. As students present their narratives to the class, audience members take notes on literary elements and superhero traits in each story. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 8th-grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 6 through 12, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students complete a Quick Write activity about their prior knowledge of and experiences with stories. They revise their writing after watching an informational video.

Explore

Students determine and discuss characteristics of modern superheroes.

Explain

Students actively read a short story and determine literary elements and superhero traits present in the story.

Extend

Students write an original superhero narrative, focusing on the integration of literary elements and superhero traits.

Evaluate

Students present their narratives to their classmates, who take notes on literary elements and superhero traits in each story.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 8)

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

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- KWHL Graphic Organizer (attached; one per student)
- "The Shadow" (linked below; one print or digital copy per student)
- "How to Create a Super Hero" (linked below; one print or digital copy per group)
- Writing materials: pens, pencils, paper, etc.
- Computer, internet, and projector access for teacher use
- Computer and internet access for student research
- White copy paper
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils

Engage

As students arrive to class, introduce the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides**. Display **slide 3** and go over the essential questions.

Display **slide 4**. Instruct students to complete a 5-minute Quick Write on the following prompts:

- What are your prior experiences with reading and writing stories?
- What makes up a story?
- What components have to be present for something to be considered a story?

Encourage students to consider their prior knowledge and experiences as they write.

Display **slide 5**. Instruct students to share their responses with an Elbow Partner. Pairs should essentially compare notes with one another. Ask a few volunteers to share out with the whole class. The goal is for students to verbalize what they already know about writing narratives based on their past experiences and prior knowledge.

Display **slide 6**. Inform students that they will watch a short video and then compare the information they wrote down with what is presented.

Display **slide 7** and play the "Five Elements of a Story" Flocabulary video for students. Once the video has ended, discuss the similarities and differences between elements in the video and students' Quick Writes.

Display **slide 8**. Instruct students to revise their original Quick Writes, adding information as necessary. Once students have revised their Quick Writes, encourage them to share with a partner once again before a whole-class discussion commences on the five important parts of a narrative that will be the focus for this lesson: plot, setting, characters, conflict, and theme.

Display **slide 9**. Allow students to further discuss their prior knowledge of and experiences with these literary elements in terms of both reading and writing. Encourage students to add to these five aspects based on their Quick Writes. For example, students might also add that dialogue is an important part of narrative writing.

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

1. We will explore character traits and develop a complex character.
2. We will write narrative stories including plot, setting, characters, conflict, and theme.

Explore

Display **slide 11**. Pass out the attached **KWHL Graphic Organizer** or have students create their own KWHL Graphic Organizer.

Pose the topic of "superheroes" to students. Instruct them to fill out the "K" column with what they already know about superheroes. Encourage them to work both individually and collaboratively. Students could fill out the column first on their own and then pair up with a classmate to compare and contrast responses.

Next, instruct students to also fill out the "W" column with what they don't know/what they want to know or need more information about. Students also may begin to fill out the "H" column with how they will find the information. Let students know that one source you will provide is a video. Allow ample time for writing and discussion.

Inform students that they will watch a short video. As they watch, they will take notes in the "L" column with what they have learned.

Display **slide 12** and share the following video with students to build on literary elements and transition to superhero traits.

> **Embedded video**
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4YScSnwb6U

After the video, provide some time for students to share out what they noticed. Display **slide 13**. You will notice this slide is titled "Class Observations of Superheroes," but the content is missing. In this space, type students' responses as they share out. Instruct students to add information to their own charts during the share out.

Display **slide 14**. Again, you will notice this slide is titled "Class Resources for Superhero Information," but the content is missing. Ask students what other resources they listed in the "H" column. In this space, type students' responses as they share out. Continue brainstorming how to find out information about superheroes. Instruct students to add information to their own charts during the share out.

Display **slide 15**. Instruct students to visit the Superhero Nation website, which offers a plethora of information on superpowers, hero names, origins, plots, etc. Encourage students to explore at a minimum the first five (5) links on the left listed under "Superhero Writing Advice."

Have students add to the "L" column of their KWHL charts as they read. Students should also feel free to add to the "H" column by exploring other resources as they research different aspects of superhero stories.

Display **slide 16**. Inform students that they will complete a Triangle-Square-Circle activity by drawing a triangle, square, and circle on a blank sheet of paper. They should include the following information in their graphic organizer:

- Triangle: Write an idea you would share with a friend.
- Square: Write an idea you might want to include in your story.
- Circle: Write your favorite idea that you have learned about superheroes.

Before moving on to the next activity, have a whole-class discussion centering on what students learned as a result of their research. It would be beneficial to write students' responses on the board, or complete a KWHL chart as a class. This way, all students have a completed chart before beginning the next activity.

Explain

Teacher's Note: Preparation

If you wish to provide students with print copies of the following short story and the article used later in the lesson, be sure to access the links before class and make your own printable documents by copying and pasting the text. If students have their own devices with internet access, you may choose to share the links with students when it is time for them to read each text.

Display **slide 17**. Inform students that they will read and analyze a short story titled "The Shadow" to apply new knowledge of both literary elements and superhero characteristics.

Display **slide 18** and pass out copies of **"The Shadow"** short story, or have students access it online. This slide has a 5-minute timer to help with the Stop and Jot instructional strategy.

- Ask students to read silently (or read aloud as a whole class) until time is up.
- Give students 1 minute to jot down their reactions to the text. Encourage them to focus specifically on literary elements and superhero characteristics.

Teacher's Note: Digital Jot

If reading online, students may jot down their reactions on a piece of notebook paper or in a blank document on their digital device.

Encourage a whole-class discussion on the literary elements present in the story and what superhero traits students noticed. Ask students to refer to their Stop and Jot responses during the discussion.

Extend

Display **slide 19**. Inform students that they will collaboratively (in groups of three or four) write a narrative focusing on an originally created superhero. Pass out copies or share a link to the article **"How to Create a Super Hero,"** which offers step-by-step instructions and examples for students as they create their own superheroes.

Once students have designed their own superheroes, display **slide 20**. Have each student write a story centered on their character, or have student groups write a collaborative story using one or all of their characters in a multi-superhero story. Encourage students to use the website as a guide. Students should complete the following:

- Name your superhero
- Choose their powers
- Decide how the character got those powers
- Consider how the powers have evolved
- Create a weakness for your superhero
- Give your character a tragic flaw
- Choose a gender and physical traits for your superhero
- Flesh out their personality
- Design a costume for them
- Give your superhero a catchphrase
- Decide if your superhero has an archenemy

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

This is a great lesson for teaching students how to use Google Docs to work on a collaborative assignment. However, you may choose to make this an individual or partner assignment, as students may want to write about the superhero they designed.

Display **slide 21**. As students work through brainstorming and prewriting the above criteria, be sure to remind students that their stories must also include the literary elements discussed previously. Students should blend the literary elements with the superhero characteristics throughout their story. Review with students the rubric you have chosen as a grading tool at this time.

Teacher's Note: Rubrics

Evaluation of the narrative essay is at your discretion. Therefore, you may want to make a copy of the Lesson Slides and add slides including your own specific requirements for the essay. You may choose to use the rubric for Common Core narrative essays. Alternatively, you may create a rubric that works best for students and you by using a tool such as Tech4Learning's Rubric Maker to create your own.

Students should be encouraged to be creative and colorful as they design their superheroes. Provide students with white copy paper and markers, crayons, or colored pencils for the creation of their superheroes.

Evaluate

Display **slide 22**. Students will present their superhero narratives and drawings to their classmates. As students read their stories, audience members should take note of both literary elements and superhero traits they notice. Afterward, audience members may share their responses.

As part of the whole-class share out, students may pair up and pit their superheroes against one another. Classmates may then decide which superhero would win the battle—and, most importantly, why—based on the characteristics and traits present in each story. Students should list and cite specific references to the stories to support their opinions.

Aligning with the presentation stage of the writing process, students' superhero creations and narratives may be displayed in the classroom or hallway.

Resources

- Bavillo13. (2017, July 31). Wonder Woman [Image]. https://pixabay.com/illustrations/wonder-woman-gal-gadot-super-hero-2561434/
- Flocabulary. (2019, August 25). Five Elements of a Story Rap [Video]. SchoolTube. https://www.schooltube.com/media/Five+Elements+of+a+Story+Rap/1_qvi49wjh
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- Superhero Nation. (n.d.). Superhero Nation: How to write superhero novels, comic books and superhero books. http://www.superheronation.com
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