

# Minnesota Writing Project

## --- Demonstration Lesson ---

**Title:** Sensory Imagery and the Hero Quest

**Grade appropriate:** 7-12

**Approximate Length of time to complete lesson/unit:** 2 class periods within the context of a 6 week unit.

**Learning objectives and significance of lesson:**

This lesson is a strategy to help students begin the process of writing their own Hero Quest stories. It is also a method of scaffolding an understanding of how sensory imagery can affect the tone and plot of a story.

**Brief summary/outline:**

Since this lesson occurs within the context of a larger unit on the Hero Quest, this should be done after the students have been introduced to the concept of the "threshold" in the Hero Quest sequence.

1) Begin by watching a film example of a hero crossing the threshold. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Platoon, A League of Their Own, and Sleeping With the Enemy* all work well. Have the students record the character's actions, and then with a partner, brainstorm why the character acts the way they do. What is the prevailing emotion?

2) Once the emotion has been defined, the students should then write a description of what the character is seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and tasting at the moment they cross that threshold. Have the students share and then discuss how the sensory imagery reflects that emotion.

*Note: this could also be done by having the students describe the moment first, then use the imagery to define the emotion. The emotion can guide the imagery or vice versa.*

3) Discuss how the emotion at the point of crossing the threshold might affect the course of the hero's journey. What do the students predict will happen? Why?

4) As a class, write a sensory description of a "threshold moment" from their experience. Something like the moment they entered the school for the 1<sup>st</sup> time works well. After discussing and defining the emotion that appears in the description, discuss how they could change the imagery to convey a different emotion. How would this affect the course of the story?

5) On their own, students choose a turning point in their lives to describe as a "threshold moment" as a beginning of their own hero quest stories. By sharing these descriptions and discussing the emotions, students can begin to predict and outline the course of their own narrative journeys.

**Related Resources:**

*The Hero With a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell

Hero Quest Powerpoint at Burnsville High School website. Go to

<http://www.rschoolday.com/se3bin/clientschool.cgi?schoolname=school15>

Click on Academics, then Language Arts, then Gloria Webber.

**Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:**

This lesson could work with any kind of narrative writing unit.

**For additional information, contact: Gloria Webber**

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