

World Literature/EN 101 Summer Reading:

The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien

“The Quest” Plot Structure



Assignment: Read the unabridged version of the novel. Write a literary analysis essay explaining how the novel fits into the archetypal plot pattern of “The Quest.” Essays are due in TurnItIn.com on August 10, 2017.

See below for detailed requirements for the essay and an explanation of the terminology and concept above. You will receive login information for TurnItIn.com on the course syllabus the first day of class.

Explanation of literary theory:

An **archetypal plot** is a **pattern** of telling a story. Different types of stories use different patterns. One pattern is known as “The Quest.” *The Hobbit* by British author J.R.R. Tolkien is a classical story which follows this pattern of development. Other stories which follow this pattern are *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Faerie Queen*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, *The Odyssey*, and *Watership Down*.

Each of these “Quest” stories have **5 meta-plot structures** in common:

1. The Call
2. The Journey
3. Arrival and Frustration
4. The Final Ordeals
5. The Goal

Your challenge is to read *The Hobbit*, and then write a seven paragraph essay in which you analyze how the novel fits into the archetypal plot of “The Quest.” After an introductory paragraph, each of the five stages should be described in one paragraph, and then you should compose a concluding paragraph, discussing the work as a whole, and making a broader point about literature in this category. The five body paragraphs should include details from the text (that means quotations) and an explanation of how the details prove the stage occurred. Be reminded that our school’s policy regarding plagiarism will be administered and applied to this and all other essay assignments throughout the year.

If you need any help with this assignment, contact me at rebeccahagues@calvaryknights.com . Don’t be shy to ask. I teach because I love to help :)

The 5 meta-plot structures of “The Quest” Plot Pattern

1. The Call: “Life in some “City of Destruction” has become oppressive and intolerable, and the hero recognizes he can only rectify matters by making a long, difficult journey. he is given supernatural direction as to the distant, life-renewing goal he must aim for” (Booker 83).

2. The Journey: “The hero and his companions set out across hostile terrain, encountering a series of life-threatening ordeals. These include horrific monsters, temptations, and perils. The ordeals each end with a thrilling escape and alternate with periods of respite when the hero and his companions receive help, hospitality or advice, often from wise old men or beautiful young women” (Booker 83).

3. Arrival and Frustration: The hero arrives within sight of his goal. But he is far from having reached the end of his story, because now, on the edge of his goal, he sees a new and terrible series of obstacles looming up between him and his prize, which have to be overcome before it can be fully and completely secured” (Booker 83).

4. The Final Ordeals: “The hero has to undergo a last series of tests (often 3) to prove he is truly worthy of the prize. This culminates in a last great battle or ordeal which may be the most threatening of all” (Booker 83).

5. The Goal. “After a last thrilling escape from death, the kingdom is won with an assurance of renewed life stretching indefinitely into the future” (Booker 83).

Note:

Not every “Quest” story will follow the pattern perfectly. If there are deviations from the core pattern, you should definitely explain those in your essay.

Works Cited

Booker, Christopher. *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*. Bloomsbury Continuum, 2016.

Senior Lit Rubric: Summer Reading Literary Analysis Essay	/100
(__/15) MLA Style, 8th edition: Format: heading, header, double space, margins, title, font. Citations, Works Cited Page for novel, Bible, and all other resources used.	
(__/10) Introduction. Opening Hook	
Background information for a Literary Analysis Essay: Author, title, time, period, & setting of work	
Thesis of Paper. example: {Novel} follows the archetypal plot structure of the _____.	
(__/10) Plot Stage 1: The Call	
Explain stage (Include citation for Christopher Booker. Follow my example)	
Give 2 pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use " " and novel page numbers to cite the quote	
Give commentary or explanation of how the quotation you chose proves your point about the stage	
(__/10) Plot Stage 2: The Journey	
Explain stage (Include citation for Christopher Booker. Follow my example)	
Give 2 pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use " " and novel page numbers to cite the quote	
Give commentary or explanation of how the quotation you chose proves your point about the stage	
(__/10) Plot Stage 3: Arrival and Frustration	
Explain stage (Include citation for Christopher Booker. Follow my example)	
Give 2 pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use " " and novel page numbers to cite the quote	
Give commentary or explanation of how the quotation you chose proves your point about the stage	
(__/10) Plot Stage 4: The Final Ordeal	
Explain stage (Include citation for Christopher Booker. Follow my example)	
Give 2 pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use " " and novel page numbers to cite the quote	
Give commentary or explanation of how the quotation you chose proves your point about the stage	
(__/10) Plot Stage 5: The Goal	
Explain stage (Include citation for Christopher Booker. Follow my example)	
Give 2 pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use " " and novel page numbers to cite the quote	
Give commentary or explanation of how the quotation you chose proves your point about the stage	
(__/15) Conclusion	
Restate Thesis	
Synthesize body paragraphs	
Address Broader Picture: Identify a message the author might be conveying in writing this book. Does this message line up with a biblical worldview? Or does it contradict what Scripture teaches?	
(__/10) Grammar & Conventions	

