

Characteristics of an epic hero: definition, traits, attributes essay



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- Character traits of a hero

Epic Hero definition

It was the Greeks who first identified the protagonist, known as the epic hero. These heroes of the tragedy should evoke a sense of heroism in the audience thanks to legendary, impressive knowledge. The epic hero must be a man whose condition is caused by his own amazing characteristics. Many of the famous Greek epic poems, such as the Odyssey and the Iliad, contain these heroes more than life and their actions. King Arthur, Beowulf, Siegfried, Gilgamesh and Rama are all examples of epic heroes.

1. Excels in skill, strength, and courage
2. Succeeds in war and adventure
3. Values honor and glory
4. Usually has a guide
5. Battles demons or monsters
6. Is generous to his followers but ruthless to enemies
7. Is a man of action
8. Accepts challenges and sometimes invites problems
9. Sometimes make rash decisions and takes unnecessary risks
10. Meets monsters and temptations
11. Encounters women who tempt him
12. Descends into darkness (often the underworld)
13. Achieves his goal
14. Student guide

Main characteristics of an epic hero

ATTRIBUTE	DESCRIPTION
Noble birth	Usually a king, prince, demigod or nobleman of some kind of ability.
Inhuman possibilities	A warrior has a potential of greatness based on their attributes, for example, cunning, courage, humility, wisdom, virtue.
Huge traveler	It is known that the epic hero travels to exotic

	places of his choice or by chance, usually to fight evil.
Unrivaled warrior	This hero, as a rule, has a reputation as an excellent warrior, even before the start of the story.
Cultural legend	Before an Epic hero can be well known, he must first become a legend in his culture.
Humility	The hero does great things for

	<p>their own sake, not glory. Heroes who boast or show pride can be punished and humiliated.</p>
<p>Battles Supernatural Enemies</p>	<p>Opponents and obstacles faced by the hero are usually supernatural creatures, such as Grendel, Poseidon or the Cyclops.</p>

- The hero often possesses supernatural abilities or qualities
 Luke Skywalker and the force
- the hero is charged with a quest
 Lord of the Rings: destroy the ring
- the hero is tested to prove the worthiness of himself and his quest
 Harry Potter: get passed the mirror

- the hero gets help from mythical beings, magical and helpful animals, human helpers and companions Harry Potter: Hermione and Ron
- the hero's travels take him to a supernatural world, often one that normal human beings are barred from entering Orpheus goes to Hades.
- the hero reaches a low point where he almosts gives up his quest or appears defeated by his enemies Darth Vader appears to have defeated Luke Skywalker.
- The hero experiences a resurrection. Frodo defeats the evil power.
- The hero regains his rightful place. on the throne as the leader of his people. Frodo goes home.
- A noble birth above average station of lifethey will be kings, princes, or nobles of some sort
- capable of deeds of great strength and courage hero has potential for great deedsthe magnitude of heroes actions is much greater than commoners
- great warrior has already established himself in combat during a warspent much time in battle or is currently in war
- travels over a vast setting father away hero has traveled from home the better, more places they have traveled the betterDistance makes the hero's actions greater, because they aren't selfish; they are fighting or making a quest for another country or people.
- national heroism before a hero can be recognized around world must first be celebrated in his own country
- humility never a bragger even willing to take applausecommits deeds cuz they need to be done not for fame or glory

- faces supernatural foes and/or receives supernatural help Most epic heroes either receive aid from a god or goddess or battle some superhuman enemy.

TELEMACHY first four books of the Odyssey

What are the seven main characteristics of a hero faces monsters or monstrous people humility national heroism travels over a vast setting great warrior capable of great deeds of strength and courage a noble birth

Theme main idea (s) of the novel

Homer wrote the Odyssey in a _____ dactylic hexameter

what is a dactylic hexameter Each line of the epic has six metrical feet, or small groups of sounds. They are made up of dactyls and spondees

MAIN THEMES OF ODYSSEY

1. A boy must struggle to become a man. 2. A warrior/soldier must struggle to get home from a war 3. A king must struggle to reclaim a kingdom (Ithaca).

kleos glory – usually won through great deeds

nostos homecoming

nostoi homeward journey; the Greek heroes had to make homeward journeys on their own

xenia and hubris hospitality and excessive pride

Respect for the Gods shown through the numerous descriptions of sacrifices and offerings especially before a feast, a voyage, or from returning home from a voyage

Disrespect for the Gods leads to disaster, the gods never forget disrespect, some gods are not easy to appease (Poseidon, Athena, Aelous, Helios)

The importance of lineage usually when we meet a new person in the story we usually learn their family, Zeus is usually apart of the lineage, most things and events have a lineage as well

Loyalty Loyalty of Penelope to Odysseus Loyalty of father and son Loyalty of Argos (the dog) Loyalty of the Achaeans Loyalty of Eurycleia

Pride and Honor Hubris – excessive pride Telemachus needs more pride to stand up to the suitors Odysseus has hubris when he tells the cyclops a fake name You need pride and honor but you can't have too much of it

Resisting Temptation Most of the time Odysseus resists temptation, but he still has his weaknesses The suitors cannot resist temptation Odysseus's men are tempted by the lotus eaters, Circe's, greed

Cunning over Strength Odysseus not as strong as some other heroes but uses his wits where other heroes use their strength famous for his skill and trickery – he is quick-witted and cunning

Live life to the Fullest/Curiosity Odysseus cannot resist opportunity to explore, he stays out of trouble by not being reckless sirens episode example of both, makes the most of every moment – Achilles montra

The Importance of Leadership This is a top down society. The leaders we meet (Odysseus, Nestor, Alcinous, etc.) do not rule democratically. The rule is by “divine right” and by force of character. Probably, the most important quality of leadership is courage.

Justice Odysseus, like Orestes, will eventually be the deliverer of justice. Justice takes time. Neither Orestes nor Odysseus can act immediately. When they do act, justice is not tempered by mercy. Helen seems to be beyond justice. Justice can seem brutal, especially, when it is meted out by Zeus or Poseidon directly??? the Phaeacians are brutally punished for their assistance to Odysseus. Odysseus’ justice regarding the maids who slept with the suitors is also brutal.

Revenge Homer thinks revenge is well-justified and people are entitled to it

Reconciliation At the end of the book, Athena ensures that the people of Ithaca are reconciled with Odysseus. The tests that Odysseus and various members of his family undergo suggest that their reunions also involve reconciliation.

Fate Fate is preordained by a power beyond that of even the gods.

Paradoxically, it does not seem “random”. A character’s fate is tied up with his “character”. Odysseus is fated to return home, but he could not fulfill his fate, if he were not who he is.

Storytelling Menelaus and Nestor both narrate their wanderings from Troy to Telemachus. In the underworld, Agamemnon tells the story of his murder by

Clytemnestra and Agisthos (her lover). Ajax's evasion prompts the story of his quarrel with Odysseus.

Disguises Odysseus natural master of disguise – Nobody with Cyclops and disguised as a beggar with the suitors

Seductress Women are important figures in the Odyssey. One of their prominent roles is that of seductress??? Circe, Calypso, the Sirens??? even Penelope uses her feminine wiles against the suitors.

SYMBOLS A person, place, object, activity, or concept that represents something beyond itself.

Food Hospitality and feasting Suitors always eating and slaughtering Odysseus' livestock Polyphemus, Scylla, and Charybdis eat Odysseus' men The Lotus eaters The Laestrygonians' queen tries to eat Odysseus' men Odysseus kills the suitors when they are eating dinner.

Eating is a symbol of lack of self-control and total absence of humanity and civility

The Wedding Bed The trick that Penelope uses to test Odysseus which revolves around the immovability of their bed is symbolic of their unshakable love and marriage.

dactyls the first five feet of a dactylic hexameter. It is composed of a long sound and two short sounds.

spondee the last foot of each line of a dactylic hexameter. Made up of two long sounds

True or False ...

- a commoner can become an epic hero false
- not all epic heroes are good true
- Family... unknown parents; doesn't know their parents
- Mentor... unusual abilities; helps hero develop abilities
- Followers... has a group of loyal followers
- Qualities... faithful and loyal to country and gods
- demonstrates courage and/or bravery
- embodies the values, strengths, and traditions of their culture
- Problem Solving... able to conquer most problems
- overcomes overwhelming odds and obstacles
- Abilities... has unique abilities, but no “superpowers”
- Smarts... relies on intelligence
- Religious Relationships... receives guidance from the gods
- Responsibilities... recognizes responsibility to defeat evil and allow good to prevail
- Fears... has fears and overcomes them
- Journey... undertakes a quest (in search of an object or person of value)
- right of passage
- integral to hero's character
- Descension... descends into the underworld or other dark place;
returns with new knowledge, wisdom, and commitment

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- The Return... celebration upon returning
 - nostos = story of homecoming
 - Impact... actions affect the order of the rest of the world
1. Brave ; noble
 2. Admired for achievements
 3. Superhuman qualities
 4. Still human (has flaws/weakness)
 5. Must conquer many difficult tasks
 6. On a quest for something of great value
 7. Villians try to keep the EH away
 8. Knows their place (gods, hereos, humans)
 9. Physically beautiful
 10. Narcissistic Self centered
 11. Journey Individual quest for honor
 12. Sacrifice Ultimately puts their desires aside for social good
 13. Abnegation Repudiation of less worthy aspects of manhood to become more powerful/responsible citizen

Character traits of a hero

- Willful Practices restraint
- Vanity Pride in own superiority
- Eager Need to test themselves
- Respectful Allegiance to the past ; traditions
- Ambitious Goal-oriented
- Brave Courageous
- Reverent Submissive to the gods

- Calm under fire Faces hardship without despair
- Resolute Determination
- Hubris Will strive towards a helpless goal
- Selfless Gives himself without complaining
- *Ruthless Willing to destroy in order to cleanse, purify, or strengthen
- Achieves his goal
- Battles demons and monsters
- Usually has a guide
- Succeeds in war and adventure
- Is a man of action
- Values honor and glory
- Excels in skill strength and courage
- Meets monsters and temptations
- Encounters women who tempt him
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