

# A hero's journey in the adventures of huckleberry finn by mark twain and the odys...

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Many modern and old stories are being analyzed and categorized as a Hero's Journey story if they follow a set template for what it means for there to be a hero's journey. Both stories, *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *The Odyssey* by Homer, show almost complete example of the hero's journey, but *The Odyssey* shows a more clearly developed hero's journey, because the *Odyssey* actually follows all the constraints of the hero's journey, while *Huck Finn* does not.

In today's day and age many people are incorrectly labeling stories as a hero's journey. People believe that if only some of the aspects of the hero's journey are shown, or even if the aspects are shown out of order, the story still counts as a hero's journey, but that is false. If the order of events isn't correct, then the story does not count as a hero's journey, this ideal is shared by the author James R Hull, in his article *Not Everything Is A Hero's Journey*, where he goes over what does and does not count for a hero's journey, and he says " Contrary to what many Hero's Journey enthusiasts believe, the order of events has meaning" (Hull 4). When the order of events for the hero's journey is crucial, *Huckleberry Finn* fails to deliver a story with a hero's journey. When looking at the text of *Huckleberry Finn*, we can find some of the events don't correlate correctly with the hero's journey, for example, in *Huck Finn* it can be argued that the threshold, which is Huck finally realizing that slavery is wrong, came before the training and discipline stage, which is when Huck is going through his adventures with Jim and begins to realize how morally incorrect his society is. Having the training and discipline come before the threshold makes *Huck Finn's* story not be a true

hero's journey, and makes Huck not count as a valid hero going on a hero's journey.

Contrasting from Huckleberry Finn, The Odyssey shows a clearly laid out and chronological order of the hero's journey, and doesn't sway from the definition of what it really means to be a hero's journey. In The Odyssey we can clearly the order of events coinciding with the hero's journey throughout the story, with Odysseus' Journey beginning with a conventional slumber, which is when he is trapped on an island for 10 years and spends everyday doing the same things. The call to adventure follows and is also quite obviously shown when Calypso literally tells Odysseus he must embark on his adventure now " Now I am willing, heart and soul, to send you off at last. Come, take bronze tools, cut your lengthy timbers, make them in a broad reamed raft" (Homer 157). The " in your face" undeniable hero's journey aspects are shown throughout all of Odysseus' journey and back up the claim that The Odyssey shows Odysseus going on a true hero's journey, while Huck Finn only shows some examples, and even then they are weak examples of the hero's journey.

The hero's journey also must not be vague or broken off from, but Mark Twain's Huck Finn breaks off from the template in one of the most crucial parts of what makes the hero's journey the hero's journey. In the start of Huckleberry's story, Huck is sharing what his normal everyday life is and says " The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would civilise me; but it was rough living in the house all the time" (Twain 4). Huck flat out tells the audience what his everyday life is, and this is a recognizable

example of the hero's journey, and is the conventional slumber stage. The audience recognizes the Widow Douglas' home as Huck's home, and this is where Huck should return to when he is done with his adventure and ends with the return and contribution stage, but he doesn't. In the end of Huckleberry Finn's story, when he has finished everything, it is expected he will go back to his hometown and finally lock in the fact that he went through a hero's journey, but instead Huck ends his story by saying " But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before" (Twain 407). With Huck deciding not to go back home he can't accomplish one of the important aspects of the hero's journey, the returning stage. Adhering to all the points of the hero's journey is crucial to prove that a character is going on a hero's journey, and as James R Hull says in his article " For a paradigm to be accurate, there should be no need to warp it or bend it to fit stories" (Hull 2). Not following all the conditions for the hero's journey doesn't make someone qualify as a hero who goes on a hero's journey, and Huck doesn't follow the hero's journey.

Both stories, Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, and The Odyssey by Homer are powerful stories in which a character goes through a great journey and finds a change in their life, but only one of the stories follows the correct ruling for being a hero's journey, so only one of the stories truly shows a hero going on a hero's journey. Following all the aspects of the hero's journey in correct order, and not missing any of the prerequisites is crucial in solidifying the hero's journey, and The Odysseys' Odysseus is an example of

someone completing all the steps in order, and having them all shown, which makes him a hero going on a hero's journey.