**Subject area/course**: English/Language Arts

**Grade level/band**: 10

**Task source**: Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE); Inquiry By Design; Ohio Department of Education

**The Hero’s Journey**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

1. **Task overview**:

During this classroom performance assessment, students will have an opportunity to think carefully about the idea of a “hero’s journey.” They will be asked to think and write about the possibility and the nature of heroism in the contemporary world as they focus on a selection of short fiction they have encountered in high school. The work begins with an analysis of two perspectives on the nature of the hero’s journey—the first, Joseph Campbell’s famous theory of the “monomyth,” the second, by psychiatrist Jonathan Shay, author of the book *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. These two perspectives are intended to function as “lenses” for the analysis portion of the work. This task consists of five parts; the student completes each part and then the component pieces are scored using a holistic rubric. Students receive an overall score, but must demonstrate comprehension, analysis, presentation, and writing skills within the five parts.

1. **Aligned standards:**
2. **Common Core State Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/9-10/1/) Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/9-10/4/) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/9-10/7/) Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/1/) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/4/) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/7/) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/6/) Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

1. **Critical abilities**

Analysis of Information**:** Integrate and synthesize multiple sources of information (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to address a question, make informed decisions, understand a process, phenomenon, or concept, and solve problems while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Communication in Many Forms**:** Use oral and written communication skills to learn, evaluate, and express ideas for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting while considering the audience.

1. **Time/schedule requirements:**

This task will require approximately four weeks.

1. **Materials/resources:**

* Excerpt from Jonathon Shay’s *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (provided as the last page of the Student Task)
* Summary of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth: <http://changingminds.org/disciplines/storytelling/plots/hero_journey/hero_journey.htm>.
* Word processing software
* Access to the library and/or the Internet

1. **Prior knowledge:**

None listed.

1. **Connection to curriculum:**

None listed.

1. **Teacher instructions:**

**Part 1: Getting Oriented to Joseph Campbell’s “Monomyth”**

* + Lead students through a study and analysis of Campbell’s monomyth. Use the summary of the monomyth provided as a resource (see link in Materials/Resources section).
  + Students will then identify 3 stories (books, comic books, movies, fairy tales, biographies, etc.) they know that reflect or align, at least in part, with Campbell’s monomyth.
  + Students will create a set of notes for each of these stories. Notes should refer to specific places in each story that map to Campbell’s monomyth structure and analyze how well each story fits the monomyth structure.
  + Students may work in small groups to identify and discuss a common set of stories, but should complete their notes individually.
  + Students will submit notes at the end of the assessment.

**Part 2: Complicating Monomyth: Jonathon Shay on the Dark Side of the Hero’s Journey**

* Provide students with a copy of the excerpt from Jonathon Shay’s *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (excerpt on page 5 of the Student Task).
* Have students write a 1-2 page response to the following questions:
  + In this selection, what are Shay’s arguments about the idea of heroes?
  + How do Shay’s arguments complicate or “talk back to” Campbell’s monomyth account of the hero’s journey? Be sure to use examples from Shay and Campbell to explain what you mean.
* Students may work in small groups to study and discuss the texts, but should complete their responses individually.
* Students will submit responses at the end of the assessment.

**Part 3: Studying the Hero’s Stories**

* Help students select and/or approve student-selected texts to include in their anthologies. You may wish to require students to use one or two texts studied in class. Each student should have 3 to 5 texts. Texts can include fiction or non-fiction books, poems, songs, shorts stories, biographies/memoirs, articles, graphic novels, comic books, films, television shoes, or multimedia/digital texts.
* For EACH of the stories chosen, students will make notes in response to the following two questions:
  + Is the protagonist a hero?
  + What does this story suggest (or, what arguments does it make) about the concept of the hero in the specific time and/or culture it represents?
* In their notes, students should refer to specific lines in the story and in the Campbell and Shay texts and cite specific lines/moments to support their ideas. These notes will be submitted to the teacher to be scored as part of the task.
* Students may work in small groups to select, study, and discuss the texts, but will complete their written responses individually.

**Part 4: Synthesizing: The Hero Anthology Project**

* Students will prepare the editor’s introduction section titled either “Heroes Across the Ages” or “Heroes Across Cultures” and submit a 1000-1500 word typed introduction synthesizing their perspectives of the text.

**Part 5: Reflection Task**

* Individually, students will complete a 250-500 word typed essay reflecting on their learning from completing the performance task. They should address the following questions:
  + What did you learn from reading stories through the perspectives of Campbell and then Shay about the different things a reader/viewer sees when looking through multiple lenses, and about the value of looking from different vantage points?
  + What specific activities, processes, or strategies helped you develop and refine your ideas or your writing? Explain how these strategies helped.
  + What did you learn about yourself, and/or ways of learning that worked or did not work well for you? Do you see ways to apply your learning to your future work or other contexts?
  + In what ways could you improve on your work on the Culminating Task (the Anthology Project), OR if you could do it over, what would you have done differently?
* Students will submit the reflection essay along with the deliverables from previous parts of the project**.**

1. **Student support:**

None listed.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

None listed.

1. **Scoring:**

Student work can be scored using the SCALE Textual Analysis Rubric (Gr 10).