CREATE HEROES AND VILLAINS

WRITING AN ADVENTURE STORY

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NOTE: A duplicate set of student worksheet pages is provided. These perforated pages, which appear at the back of the book, may be detached for photocopying for use by the buyer in the classroom. This allows the teacher to keep the set of Teacher Directions and Student Pages side by side in the book.
Introduction to the Teacher

Students like to create, write, and share stories; however, they can be baffled and become resentful when told to write a short story without being shown how to write one. Not knowing where nor how to begin, much less how to develop and end, they often write one skimpy paragraph and call it a short story. Conversely, when they are led through the structure of a story step by step, they often surprise themselves with the results.

Wise teachers capitalize on popular culture in the classroom. They begin with what is already familiar and interesting to students and use that knowledge and interest as springboards to introduce new knowledge. *Create Heroes and Villains: Writing an Adventure Story* builds on the existing knowledge of and interest in super heroes, folk heroes, villains, mythological and legendary heroes, and monsters.

Heroes and heroines are always of special interest to students. Styles in heroes and heroines might change, but heroes and heroines never go out of style. They develop all over the world and at all levels of civilization. During Classic times heroes were god-men; during the Middle Ages heroes were God’s men; the Renaissance period heroized universal men; gentlemen in the eighteenth century and self-made men in the nineteenth century were admired. Today, we list among our heroes and heroines the underdog, the outsider, the common man, athletes, rock stars, astronauts, and scientists.

Hero worship satisfies a special hunger in the human heart; it meets a deep psychological need. Heroes and heroines lose some of their humaness and become mirrors held up to a culture, reflecting the time and the place in which they live and the people’s innermost hopes, values, and beliefs. The kinds of heroes or heroines a culture reveres reveals the values and purposes of that culture.

Children can write—some better than others, of course, but they all have the raw materials needed for creative writing floating around in their lives. *Create Heroes and Villains* is designed to bring order to those raw materials, help students sort and arrange that which is already familiar, and use the results to create stories. In the process of creating their stories, students will examine, discuss, and learn many new concepts. The by-products can be as rewarding as the finished stories.

Teachers will readily see that *Create Heroes and Villains* may be used as a creative-writing unit or in conjunction with a literature unit on heroes and heroines. Either way, teachers using the unit will need to read aloud to students (or assign them to read) appropriate literature to generate interest and discussion. With only a few modifications, it can be used with grades 4 through 12.

*Create Heroes and Villains* will help develop students’ abilities in observing, concluding, recalling, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, divergent thinking, and convergent thinking. At the same time it will contribute to the development of their oral, written, and imaginative skills, with the additional advantage of being fun. Finally, it can give students a final product of which they can be proud!

The unit is designed to save thinking time and preparation time for teachers and to encour-
age planned creativity. Some teachers neither need nor want minute descriptions of teaching approaches and objectives while other teachers, because of time limitations, need more detailed instructions. All are capable of modifying an idea to suit their own purposes and most prefer to innovate rather than copy. Therefore, teachers may use Create Heroes and Villains any way they wish, only their imaginations limiting the various possibilities.

Create Heroes and Villains is divided into four parts. The first part, comprising Activity No. 1 through Activity No. 10, is sequential, building up to the writing of an adventure story featuring super heroes/sheroes. The second part, comprising Activity No. 11 through Activity No. 17, follows a similar format with folk heroes/sheroes. The third part, which includes Activity No. 18 through Activity No. 20, deals with mythological heroes/sheroes. Detailed teacher directions are given for each activity, with several options suggested for additional consideration. The last section, comprising Activity No. 21 through Activity No. 23, simply offers additional choices. These last three activities may be used in many different ways, some of which are suggested in the teacher’s directions at the beginning of the last section.

Behavioral objectives are not included as they are too precise and lengthy to include in a teaching unit of this type. No bibliography of suggested fiction is included because a quick trip to a library will yield sufficient information. Only a few examples are included because teachers will need to vary their examples depending upon the ages and abilities of their students.

I sincerely hope that Create Heroes and Villains will be as educational and as much fun for other teachers and students as it has been for my students and me.

Good luck!
What Is a Hero?

Activity No. 1

Objectives: To introduce students to the concept of heroism
To help students to understand that the words “hero” and “heroine” have several different but related meanings
To encourage students to analyze their definitions of “hero” and “heroine” and to encourage them to broaden their definitions

Thinking Skills: Recall
Application
Analysis
Divergent Thinking
Evaluation

Directions: Discuss the following: What is a hero/heroine? Who is your favorite hero/heroine who actually lived? Is he or she living now? Why is he or she your favorite? Who is your favorite fictional hero/heroine? Why?

Tell the students: In this unit on heroes and heroines, we are going to create three major types of heroes/heroines—super heroes/heroines, folk heroes/heroines, and mythological heroes/heroines—and write stories about them. These three types of heroes/heroines evolved differently but for the same reasons. Mythological heroes/heroines and most folk heroes/heroines are rooted in oral stories while super heroes/heroines are literary inventions. All three types serve to mirror the time and place where they live and they reflect people’s most innermost hopes and beliefs; they are symbols of what people admire most.

Discuss each of the six definitions of hero/heroine. Fill in the bottom half of Activity No. 1 as a group, discussing each choice and why it fits the definition.

Options: Other definitions of hero/heroine
What Is a Hero?

Activity No. 1

There are many definitions of hero and heroine. Some of the most commonly accepted are listed below:

1. A hero/heroine is a person admired for his/her achievements and outstanding character.

2. A hero/heroine is a person who shows great courage.

3. A hero/heroine is the main character in a dramatic or literary work.

4. A hero/heroine is the central figure in an event or historical period.

5. A hero/heroine is an illustrious warrior.

6. A hero/heroine is a mythological or legendary figure, often of half-divine descent, endowed with extraordinary strength and/or ability.

List heroes and heroines who fit the above definitions. Be able to defend your choices.

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