Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“*…we have not even to risk the adventure alone, for all heroes of all time have gone before us.” – Joseph Campbell*

Joseph Campbell was a scholar who studied myths.  Many cultures, he noticed, have similar myths, even cultures that have never had contact with one another.  One common theme he noticed in many myths and stories was that of the Hero, and the Hero’s Journey.

**Here are some of Campbell’s observations about the Hero’s Journey**:

1. A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than him or her (even if he or she does it unknowingly).

2. Heroes are usually guided in some way by a wise elder or mentor.

3. The hero goes through suffering and learns from it.

4. A heroic journey means moving from the known into the unknown.  Sometimes this involves contact with the “other side” – the supernatural, divine, or “great mystery.”

5. A hero on an adventure usually comes back with a message for the rest of us. Sometimes this “message” is just the examples set by the hero’s life and way of living.

6. A hero undergoes a series of tests or trials along the way.

7. The hero always goes through a transformation.

8. The hero leaves home (sometimes involves a direct conflict with the father or father figure).

**Some common trappings of the Hero’s Journey:**

-a sidekick (sometimes an animal)

-omens/signs (also sometimes in the form of an animal)

-the ego gets humbled

-sometimes comes full circle (hero ends up at home, but changed)

-reconciliation (either with a person or an ideal, sometimes ending in death)



**DIRECTIONS:** Using Joseph Campbell’s definition of a hero, chart and chronicle Beowulf’s journey. Keep up with this chart throughout your readings. Once you have finished, argue whether or not you feel Beowulf fits each of Campbell’s attributes of a hero. Provide textual examples to support your assertions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Campbell’s Characteristic | Example from text (w/line number) | Explanation – How does it fit? |
| Gives his life to something bigger than himself |  |  |
| Guided by an elder or a mentor |  |  |
| Suffers and learns from it |  |  |
| Moves from the known into the unknown |  |  |
| Returns with a message |  |  |
| Undergoes tests and trials |  |  |
| Goes through a transformation |  |  |
| Leaves home |  |  |
| Common trappings (see above definitions) |  |  |