
Children of the Ancient Heroes
Teacher's Companion

First, thank you for trusting me to take you and your students on an adventure. A atory is never complete without the reader and every reader brings something new to the story. It will be a thrilling, magical time and I cannot wait to hear all about it.

This Teacher's Companion to my book Children of the Ancient Heroes is broken into three sections designed to accompany you and your students in a flexible reading pattern. This guide can be used to help with classes that utilize a read-aloud format, a self-reading format, or any format that fits your classroom best.

Before You Read

FBefore you begin is a section to start a discussion with your students about their favorite stories and characters. Ask them what makes the stories special to them. Then show them Children of the Ancient Heroes and ask the following:

While You Read

NeWhile You Read is a section where you can begin to talk with your students about the elements of storytelling. Instruct them to keep these in mind as they read the book to see if they can find how this story exhibits each element. This is where you can also choose which reading format you will use: Reading aloud, self-reading, structured self-reading, or any format that best fits your classroom dynamic.

HIn the While You Read section, there are some sample passages that you can use, or you can skip them in favor of reading the book as you go. Following the passages are some deeper-dive question sheets to look at each element if you wish to use them. The object is to explore each element of storytelling as you go along your reading journey.

After You Read

The After You Read section is set up to explore the art of storytelling further once you have finished reading the book. This section explores story structure and invites you to discuss wiith your students the book's structure using some of the most popular methods. You can use any of the methods described. You are more than welcome to use more than one, or all of them, or only one, whichever works best for your classroom.

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BEFORE YOU READ

First, thank you for trusting me to take you and your students on an adventure. A atory is never complete without the reader and every reader brings something new to the story. It will be a thrilling, magical time and I cannot wait to hear all about it.

Before you begin, start a discussion with your students about their favorite stories and characters. Ask them what makes the stories special to them. Then show them Children of the Ancient Heroes and ask the following:

1. What do you notice about the cover? What kind of story do you imagine this book will be? Who do you imagine the two people on the cover are?

Now read the blurb on the back of the book and ask the following:

2. Did this change what you had imagined the book to be about? In what way? What are some of your expectations now?

While You Read

Next, talk with your students about the elements of storytelling. Instruct them to keep these in mind as they read the book to see if they can find how this story exhibits each element.

Theme

What is your story about? Can be more than one thing.

Character

Who is your story about and why should we care?

Setting

When or where does the story take place? How does it affect the story?

Point of View

Who is telling the story? Can they be trusted?

Plot

How the story unfolds.

Conflict

What keeps your character from achieving their ultimate goal.

Resolution

How the story comes to a close - either your character achieves their goal or they don't and what happens as a result.

While You Read

Here are some deeper-dive sheets to look at each element if you wish to use them. They can be used in conjunction with the book reading, separately, or not at all.

Theme

- Heartbeat of your story
- Can have multiple themes
- Avoid making it too obvious - let your reader discover it over course of story
- Some stories set big clue to theme near beginning

Tirza stretched out her legs and let them dangle on both sides of the branch. She patted the spot in front of her, but Eli shook his head.
"I'm too angry right now. Aren't you mad?"
"No." She smiled.
Eli rolled his eyes. "Why? Because we have our family, and that's all that matters?" he asked with the mocking voice she had told him a million times she hated. He only used it when he wanted to annoy her.
She let it slide and laughed. "Yeah. Even with an annoying little brother who likes to push his luck. Can't be mad when I have that."
Eli clasped his hands in front of him and looked down. He stayed silent for a long time but then scooted toward her and leaned his back against her."
- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares

While You Read

What does this passage reveal about theme?

While You Read

Here are some deeper-dive sheets to look at each element if you wish to use them. They can be used in conjunction with the book reading, separately, or not at all.

CHARACTER

- Protagonist(s)/Antagonist(s)/Mentors/Side Characters/Background
- What do they want? What stands in their way? What will they do about it?
- Character Arc - growth and change
- Relatable - realistic and flawed - well-rounded

Cal slapped her tail in frustration and dove beneath the lake's surface. She had peace and freedom in the water. Here, she was lithe and agile. Here, she moved faster than the landborn could fathom. No creature was faster.

How could I have ever thought differently?

On land, her tail transformed into the legs of the landborn; she was slow and awkward. On land, she was a slave.

She settled among the tall green lake weeds and schools of orange-and-black striped dart!sh. How long would it be before Ravena came looking for her? Cal hoped it wouldn't be anytime soon. Ravena had been holed up alone in her throne room for hours. At least Cal hadn't seen anyone enter. But there was that voice— that man's voice, dark and full of malice. Cal ran from the castle not long after hearing Ravena arguing with it. Running was cowardly, but she wanted nothing to do with the man. She also didn't desire to be around Ravena when she !nished with whomever it was. Cal had never heard Ravena so frightened. If she even thought Cal had heard her like that... Cal did not want to think about the consequences.

- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares

While You Read

What does this passage reveal about one of Cal's wants?

What does this passage tell us about the personality of Ravena?

WHILE YOU READ

Here are some deeper-dive sheets to look at each element if you wish to use them. They can be used in conjunction with the book reading, separately, or not at all.

SETTING

- Where and When
- Engage the senses (all the senses - but don't overdo it - seasoning, not the meal)
- Show, don't tell

E li woke to a stench so pungent he began dry heaving before he even opened his eyes. Eli's body ached all over, and his shoulder throbbed worse than the time he fell out of a tree when he was six. His head spun, and he couldn't focus, so he kept his eyes closed to stave off the gurgling in his stomach.

He rolled onto his back, and it !nally registered that the ground was rough. Lots of sharp, pointy things jabbed him in the back.

Gah! Must have scraped the skin right off my elbows and knees. Urrrrgh... it burns...

He opened his eyes, but only darkness met him. He rubbed his eyes and looked around again. No change. "What's going on?"

He touched the ground; cold, gritty stone pressed against his skin. Panic seized him, and his heart rocketed like a jet breaking the sound barrier.

- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares

While You Read

What is the first thing Eli noticed about his new surroundings?

_____

_____

What was the first thing Eli saw?

_____

_____

How many senses are used in this passage?

_____

_____

While You Read

Here are some deeper-dive sheets to look at each element if you wish to use them. They can be used in conjunction with the book reading, separately, or not at all.

Point of View

- Who's telling the story?
- First/Second/Third Person
- Omniscient/Limited
- Trustworthy?

Eli hopped down the thirty or more feet he had climbed, ran back into the forest, and searched for a large stick. Maybe he could keep his footing better if he had something to keep him stable. It was worth a shot. It had to be better than tearing his hands to shreds every time he tried to stop himself from sliding down.

Something growled behind him.

Eli spun around and searched the thick tangle of trees, vines, and foliage.

Nothing.

A rushing wind whooshed over him, and something scampered away. The ferns and bushes near him rustled, but he ignored them and turned his eyes skyward. A huge blue-green dragon soared through the sky, #ying away from the mountain. Its passing stirred the forest canopy as if a wild, powerful gale blew overhead.

- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares

While You Read

POINT OF VIEW

Who is telling the story in this scene?

_____

_____

Is the point of view first, second, or third person?

_____

_____

Is the point of view limited or all-knowing?

_____

_____

Why do you think the author chose this point of view for this scene?

_____

_____

While You Read

Here are some deeper-dive sheets to look at each element if you wish to use them. They can be used in conjunction with the book reading, separately, or not at all.

Plot

- What is going on?
- Story Structure
- An Opener/An Inciting Incident that changes everything/A series of crises that build tension/A Climax/A Resolution (or Conclusion)

Eli spun to face her. "Spells? You're reading a book of spells?"
Tirza raised an eyebrow. "Oh, c'mon. They're not real. As much as I would love it to be, magic isn't real. You know that, and I know that."
"Fine then," Eli said, folding his arms across his chest as if trying to look unafraid, though his voice quavered. "If you're so sure, finishit."
Tirza's stomach knotted.
This is ridiculous. I'm letting my imagination take control. There's no such thing as magic.
She had wished for it every day of her life, and there had never been any evidence to say otherwise. And it was only a coincidence that Papa used the same name for the evil monster in his stories. Just to prove it to Eli—and herself—she stood with the book in her hand to finish the poem, not an incantation, a poem.
"Open Wide, Blood of Time, Light the Way, Soul of Space, Link our Worlds and Rip the Veil, Show me now Your Hidden Trail."
"Noooo!" someone screamed—a woman's scream but not one Tirza had ever heard before.
The room hummed with electricity, and Tirza's hair rose in the air as if pulled by static. She tried to turn and look at Eli, but it felt like she was moving through thick mud. Something was burning. A heavy, acrid stench !lled her nostrils. Suddenly, the woman's scream stopped. The humming ceased. Tirza's ears felt stuffed with cotton. Eli was jumping, leaping toward her with his mouth wide open, but he moved as if in a slow-motion movie. Sparks zapped the air all around him, around her. Then, a bright, white light consumed everything else, blinding her vision.
- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares

While You Read

What does Eli say that Tirza is doing?

What does Eli say that Tirza is doing?

Why does Tirza continue reading the spell?

What plot point takes place in this scene?

While You Read

Here are some deeper-dive sheets to look at each element if you wish to use them. They can be used in conjunction with the book reading, separately, or not at all.

CONFLICT

- Engine of the story
- Readers crave conflict and desire to see where it leads
- Moves the story forward

"I understand completely, child. It is you who does not understand. The nymph deserves to die. She helped your worth-less mother steal my king and all my Wildings. She kept them all away from me for hundreds of years. Now, "nally, thanks to Ravena, I will have my revenge!" The vines in the dome slithered and wriggled, and the walls closed in on Tirza.

Tirza spun in a circle and tried to "nd a weak point in the vines with her hands, an opening. Anywhere. There had to be a spot she could exploit. "So, you're willing to kill us all, including yourself and my Papa? Is that the revenge you really want? If the queen dies, the sun in my world dies. All life dies." Tirza knew there had to be cracks between the vines, but where? It was too dark to see.

Willow laughed. "Then they die. If I can't have my king, then no one can. What do I care if your pathetic world dies?"

While You Read

What problem is presented in the scene above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does this conflict help move the story forward?

_____

_____

_____

_____

WHILE YOU READ

For the Resolution element, we're borrowing from another story since Children of the Ancient Heroes is the first book in a series and doesn't have a clean resolution, yet. Although it does have a technical resolution if you wish to use it when your class has finished reading.

RESOLUTION

- Where is your story headed?
- Keep the end in front of you
- Keep MC centered - growth must match resolution

Curdie was gone in a moment, and soon returned with a great rich fur, and the news that dead goblins were tossing about in the current through the house. They had been caught in their own snare; instead of the mine they had flooded their own country, whence they were now swept up drowned. Irene shuddered, but the king held her close to his bosom. Then he turned to Sir Walter, and said:

'Bring Curdie's father and mother here.'

'I wish,' said the king, when they stood before him, 'to take your son with me. He shall enter my bodyguard at once, and wait further promotion.'

Peter and his wife, overcome, only murmured almost inaudible thanks. But Curdie spoke aloud.

'Please, Your Majesty,' he said, 'I cannot leave my father and mother.'

'That's right, Curdie!' cried the princess. 'I wouldn't if I was you.'

The king looked at the princess and then at Curdie with a glow of satisfaction on his countenance.

'I too think you are right, Curdie,' he said, 'and I will not ask you again. But I shall have a chance of doing something for you some time.'

'Your Majesty has already allowed me to serve you,' said Curdie.

'But, Curdie,' said his mother, 'why shouldn't you go with the king? We can get on very well without you.'

'But I can't get on very well without you,' said Curdie. 'The king is very kind, but I could not be half the use to him that I am to you. Please, Your Majesty, if you wouldn't mind giving my mother a red petticoat! I should have got her one long ago, but for the goblins.'

'As soon as we get home,' said the king, 'Irene and I will search out the warmest one to be found, and send it by one of the gentlemen.'

'Yes, that we will, Curdie!' said the princess. 'And next summer we'll come back and see you wear it, Curdie's mother,' she added. 'Shan't we, king-papa?'

'Yes, my love; I hope so,' said the king.

Then turning to the miners, he said:

'Will you do the best you can for my servants tonight? I hope they will be able to return to the house tomorrow.'

The miners with one voice promised their hospitality. Then the king commanded his servants to mind whatever Curdie should say to them, and after shaking hands with him and his father and mother, the king and the princess and all their company rode away down the side of the new stream, which had already devoured half the road, into the starry night.

-From The Princess and the Goblin by George MacDonald

While You Read

How does the main characters stay centered in this resolution?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What questions are answered or problems solved by this passage?

_____

_____

_____

AFTER YOU READ

Story structure (Plot Points)

These next few pages give a brief introduction and description on the most common story structures used in storytelling. Use these to spark conversation after you and your students have finished reading the book to explore how stories are built. See if you can piece together the book to fit each story structure.

Types of Writers

Plotters
Uses a structured outline of their story to keep them guided through the writing process.

Pantsers
Writes completely without any guide and purely as the ideas come to mind. Still uses structure, just not planned.

Most Common Structures

3 Act Structure

5 Point Structure

7 Point Structure

Hero's Journey

Save The Cat

AFTER YOU READ

3 Act Structure

Act I (Setup)

Exposition (Introduction to Character(s) and Normal World
Inciting Incident (What starts the story going)
Plot Point 1 (Crossing the Threshold)

Act II (Confrontation)

Rising Action (obstacles/dangerous move toward climax)
Midpoint (crisis of faith/near breaking point for MC - growth too)
Plot Point 2 (Phoenix Rising - the comeback from Midpoint crisis)

Act III (Resolution)

Pre-climax (biggest set-back - all seems lost)
Climax (everything has led to here - big showdown/growth/Character Arc/etc.)
Denouement (the closing, what happens after, wrap-up, lead-in to what's next)

AFTER YOU READ

5 Point Structure

Introduction
Help us know who and what the story is about.

Inciting Incident
What sets everything in motion.

Crisis of Faith/Midpoint
Where the MC chooses to keep going or to stop. Point of no return. Breaking point.

Climax
Culmination of all the conflict - physical, mental, emotional, everything.

Denouement
The aftermath - what happens next, what is the result of the climax.

AFTER YOU READ

7 Point Structure

Hook
Makes Reader ask "What happens next?"

First Plot Point
What sets everything in motion.

Pinch Point 1
Real pressure starts - villain introduced.

Midpoint
MC goes from reaction to action - growing - deciding - investing.

Pinch Point 2
All is lost/failure/hopelessness....

Second Plot Point
Everything starts to come together - MC can win - they can do this!

Resolution
End goal - opposite state than the hook.

AFTER YOU READ

Hero's Journey

The Ordinary World
We meet our hero.

Call to Adventure
Will they meet the challenge?

Refusal of the Call:
They resist the adventure.

Meeting the Mentor
A teacher arrives.

Crossing the First Threshold
The hero leaves their comfort zone.

Tests, Allies, Enemies
Making friends and facing roadblocks.

Approach to the Inmost Cave
Getting closer to our goal.

Ordeal
The hero's biggest test yet!

Reward (Seizing the Sword)
Light at the end of the tunnel

The Road Back
We aren't safe yet.

Resurrection
The final hurdle is reached.

Return with the Elixir
The hero heads home, triumphant.

AFTER YOU READ

Save The Cat

Originally created for screenwriting, the bracketed number by each beat(headline) is the page or pages that it would take up of a standard 110-page screenplay. The beats are as follows:

Opening Image [1]
An opening snapshot.

Theme Stated [5]
We are introduced to the central theme or lesson of the story.

Set Up [1-10]
The hero and the 'ordinary world' are introduced.

Catalyst [12]
Something happens that sets the story in motion.

Debate [12-25]
The hero is hesitant to take action.

Break Into Two [25]
The hero takes up the challenge.

B Story [30]
The subplot kicks in, introducing a character who helps the hero in their transformation.

Fun and Games [30-55]
The hero in the throes of their challenge or journey.

Midpoint [55]
The stakes are raised.

Bad Guys Close In [55-75]
Things start going downhill for the hero.

All is Lost [75]
Things go from bad to worse. The hero hits rock bottom.

Dark Night of the Soul [75-85]:
Faced with defeat, the hero must reckon with their loss an how they got there.

Break Into Three [85]
The hero realizes a truth that's been evading them all this time.

Finale [85-110]
Putting their new awareness into action, the hero conquers the bad guys.

Final Image [110]
A snapshot that mirrors or contrasts the opening image.