

The BRAINWAVES Club

Term 1 2021: The Tolkiens - Years 5 and 6

Venue: Alphington Grammar School

All Hail the Hero Quest: Myths, Monsters and Mystery!

What is a 'hero'? That's the question writers have been asking themselves from the very beginnings of literature, and the answers they've given us in their stories have been spectacular, scintillating, inspiring – and surprising! Is real heroism to do with the paths you take? The choices you make? The goals you set? The person you are... or are about to become?!

Discover the nature of heroic characters and their amazing tales and journeys that changed fiction forever: our own hero quest will cross continents and the boundaries of fantasy, charge back into history, and leap forward to contemporary fiction. Every step of the way we'll be poring over pages, relishing writing challenges, and venturing forth to share our ideas, opinions and stories in creative camaraderie! Pens at the ready, as this unique literary adventure inspires fierce, fascinating, funny and fulfilling writings of our own...

Requirements: Come armed with a copy of the text for each week and a well-stocked pencil case!

Meeting 1: In the Beginning: Mapping *The Odyssey*...

Pst! Have you heard there's a secret writing formula that holds together all hero stories, from the great classics to the latest blockbuster movies...? It's called a "monomyth", and today we'll be deciphering it to use for ourselves! The foundations of all fiction (and all heroes) began with Homer's famous and epic adventure *The Odyssey*, and that's exactly where we'll begin our quest for the key to this mysterious story-telling skill. So blow the dust of this famous fable, map out some plot points, and let our journey to create a hero commence!

Requirements: Read a synopsis of Homer's *The Odyssey*: who is Odysseus and where did he go?

Meeting 2: New Worlds and Far Horizons: In Pursuit of *The Hobbit*!

If we're in the Tolkiens Brainwaves Club, we should know about that great author and his amazing concept of *mythopoeia*, right? You see, if you're wanting to create a hero, you're going to need a world for that character to discover, conquer or perhaps even escape... Getting lost in your own creation is what every writer longs for and with dragon caves, wild countryside, ancient cities or bustling villages, you'll soon be building up your very own literary landscape to travel through today!

Requirements: Visit (or revisit) J.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*: how does he immerse you in his world?

Meeting 3: Down the Rabbit Hole: Why *Coraline* Dares...

Shakespeare claimed, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them..." Do you agree? What qualities does a hero need to succeed? Can anyone do it? Are you born a hero, made a hero or do you choose to be one? *Coraline* is the daughter of a long lineage of amazing literary heroes descending into adventure, and we'll be asking the heroic character (whose portrait you create today) one powerful question: why do you dare to accept the challenge and take on this quest?

Requirements: Read Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*: who does she remind you of?

Meeting Four: Am I The Hero of My Own Story? Self-discovery with *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield*!

Finding your identity is often an essential part of a hero's quest: sometimes it even turns out to be the treasure you were seeking all along! In real life, we're all questing to be ourselves, and famous authors like Brontë and Dickens even drew on their own life experiences to inform their fiction and their characters. Is this a good idea? Are *you* your own hero? In writing fiction, are *you* actually discovering yourself as well?!

Requirements: Read the first five chapters of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* if you like heroines and the first five of Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* if you like heroes (Abridged versions are fine, and jump any tricky words: read for the action, not the details!)

About the Presenter

Kim teaches English literature and creative writing to university and high school students, and drama and theatre skills to both adults and kids all over Melbourne. She has run book clubs and cabarets, performed Shakespeare and written sonnets, dabbled in Dickens and is best buddies with the Brontës, and while she loves a ripping good yarn, she is still convinced *everything* we get to read and write in our lives is always a thrilling new adventure!