

The second episode of the Right2Education podcast! Listen to the audio [here](#), and read the transcription below! Enjoy!

Hello everyone and welcome to the second episode of the Right2Education podcast! I am very happy that you have returned for the second episode of this podcast! I hope that you are doing well, and everything is good for you! In the previous episode, we talked about language and some of the theory behind learning a language. I gave some advice about the best way to learn a language - can you remember this advice? The most important piece of advice was to find things in the language that you are trying to learn which you find interesting - interesting things to read, to watch, to listen to. When you find these things, don't worry too much about the grammar, but focus on understanding the message which is communicated. If you try to understand something new every day, you will progress really very quickly. And the best way to stay motivated is to find things which interest you, to find things which you want to understand. And hopefully this podcast can be one of those things!

In this episode I will be talking about something that I find very interesting and am passionate about - and I hope that you will find it interesting too! I will be talking about how to make a good story. Why is this a topic that I am passionate about, why is this a topic that I find interesting? I have always loved to read, and I have always loved books and the stories that they create. When I was younger, I always found it amazing to think about how authors can imagine a whole new story - and sometimes even a whole new world! And it was always the same with films as well. I would often watch a movie and think, "wow - how is it possible to create such a fascinating story?!" How do writers create these stories?!" I was always so fascinated by the way in which a story is created that I tried really hard to create stories of my own, and I started to write my own stories. And how did I find my ideas for these stories? At first, I thought that I was being very creative and very original, I thought that I was writing whole new big stories. But, when I took a closer look at them, I realised that the stories I was writing were very similar to the stories that I loved! The structure was almost the same, and it was only really the details that had changed! And when I thought about it a bit more, I even saw that all the stories that I loved were almost the same! They all had the same structure! I saw that all the stories that I loved shared one very important thing, they all had one very important thing in common. They all told the story of a hero! They all had one main character. Even though the details of the hero changed between each story, and even though the actions of the hero were different in each story, the central structure of the hero's life was always almost the same! There was Harry Potter (from the 'Harry Potter' series), and Matilda (from the book, 'Matilda'), and James (from the book 'James and the Giant Peach'), and Luke Skywalker (from 'Star Wars'), and Katniss (from the 'Hunger Games') ... and so many more! And even though every story was different, the structure always seemed to be the same, the adventure always seemed to be the same. It might seem crazy! It might seem as if there are no similarities, as if all the stories are very different - but I want to try and show you how they are all really the same. And then, you can know the magic secret for writing a good story! That's what I want to talk to you about today: how to tell the story of a hero.

Do you ever read a story and have a feeling of 'd  j   vu'? 'D  j   vu' - what is that? 'D  j   vu' is a French term that is also often used in English. It is a feeling where you think you have already seen something, where you feel as though you have seen something before - but you're not really sure. Have you ever had that feeling before when reading a story? That could be because a lot of stories use a very similar structure, they use a structure that resembles a lot of other stories. You might think that this maybe makes writers seem lazy, that it makes it seem as if authors prefer to copy the stories of other authors instead of creating their own. That would definitely be easier, and that would definitely take less work! And it would also be less risky! It is safer to write a story that is similar to a story that has already had a lot of success, than to write a totally new story that no-one has seen before - because maybe they won't like the new story, maybe they won't like it at all! But, even if a writer uses a very similar structure to another story, they can still be super creative, they can still be very original. And they still need to work very hard, and often they take a lot of risks! Even if they use a very similar structure to stories that have already had a lot of success, that doesn't mean that it is an easy job to be a writer, that doesn't mean that they are lazy! Not at all! They are simply using an ingredient that works incredibly well for creating excellent stories, they are simply using a very effective method to create a structure that allows them to tell their amazing story! And what is that magic ingredient? The journey of the hero!

This theory of the journey of the hero was developed by an American professor called Joseph Campbell. Joseph Campbell was very interested in mythology and in myths. Myths are very, very ancient stories which have slowly been passed down through different civilizations, that have been told from generation to generation. Sometimes, they are called legends. These stories are so old, that no-one even really knows who wrote them! No-one knows who created the first myth, who told them for the first time! Joseph Campbell was interested in the different myths that are found in the different parts of the world. He studied the stories that are told in different societies, the different myths that are told in different parts of the world, and he tried to find a common point between them all, he tried to identify what they shared. And through this research, he identified a structure that was the same for the myths that come from all different civilizations. He looked at myths that came from the Romans, from the Greeks, from the Aztecs and from the Mayans, and he found that all the myths had a similar structure, a similar order, for telling their story. They all used a similar method to tell the journey of their hero.

Are you curious to find out about the different stages of the hero's journey? Do you want to know the different tests that a hero must go through? Let me explain them to you!

The first stage of the hero's journey is not really a test, but just the initial situation, the beginning of the story. The initial situation sets the hero in an ordinary world. It may not seem like such an ordinary world to us - for instance, it might be set in another country, or maybe even on a different planet - but, for the character, the world surrounding them is ordinary, and they are living a regular and ordinary life. At this point, they are not yet a hero. They are really very regular. Maybe they are even an outsider, a bit lonely, not very popular. Maybe they seem like a bit of a loser. For example, think about Harry Potter. Before we find out that Harry is a wizard, he seems like a very regular and ordinary boy, and he lives a dull life that seems quite sad and not

very exciting. He does not have any friends, he is not popular, and he does not seem to be doing anything that is really very special. When we meet the character at this point, we probably do not think that they seem much like a hero at all!

But then comes the second stage of the story. In some way, the character is called to become a hero, they are called to have an adventure, to leave on an adventure. This call can take many different forms. It might be an actual telephone call, or maybe it will be a letter, or sometimes it will be someone who comes to see the character and asks them to come on adventure with them.

When the call for adventure arrives, the hero usually refuses to leave on the adventure. This is the third stage of the story. There are lots of different excuses that the hero might use to refuse to leave on the adventure. They might say that they are too busy with work, or that they cannot leave their home because there is too much that they have to look after, they can not leave because there is too much that they have to take care of. And these might be real reasons, but sometimes the character is just looking for an excuse not to go on the adventure. It might be that really the hero is scared of the adventure. Or maybe they do not think that they are the right person for the adventure. Maybe they think that they should not have received the call. But whatever the reason is, the hero will usually first say "No". They will say, "No, I'm sorry. I don't go on an adventure, I don't want to be a hero, I don't want to have an adventure."

But, finally, a mentor arrives and meets the hero. This is the fourth stage of the story. A mentor is someone with more experience than the hero might have, and who gives them advice on how they can live their life better, gives them advice on what they should do with their life. The mentor discusses with the hero, and they explain why the hero should accept the adventure, they will explain that the hero really has to accept the adventure, the hero has to leave on the adventure.

Once the hero has left their ordinary world, we are at the fifth stage of the story. The hero accepts the adventure. And they enter into an extraordinary world, they enter a world that is very different from the world where they were living. And this is the point at which they have truly begun their adventure.

In this new world, things are difficult for the hero. They face tests, challenges, and they meet enemies. Maybe they have to help people, or fight something evil, or save someone from danger. They are given a lot of opportunities to prove their courage, to show that they are not an ordinary person. To show that they are a hero. This is the sixth stage of the story.

The seventh stage of the story is the final test for the hero. It is usually the climax of the story, the most exciting point with the most action and the most suspense. At this point, the hero has to face the most difficult challenge yet, the hero has to confront something even more dangerous than before. Maybe they are fighting the biggest, most powerful enemy. Or maybe, they have to find something that is very well hidden very, very quickly. This test is really very difficult for the hero, the hardest thing they have to do.

The test is often so hard that the hero will even come very close to death! This is the eighth stage of the story: when the hero comes close to death while completing the final test. Usually, when we are reading the story, we know that the hero has to survive, we know that the hero has to win. But they are so close to failure, that we do not know how they can succeed, and we still feel a lot of suspense, and we still get very nervous and very scared.

But, fortunately, in the ninth stage, the hero succeeds in the final test! They win their struggle, and they prove that they are truly a hero!

After the victory, after they win, the hero returns to their original world, they return home. After their long adventure away from home, finally, after all their challenges, the hero returns home.

But, although the hero has returned home safely, some things have changed. The hero is different from the person who left - they are now a hero! They have shown themselves to be extraordinary! They are no longer the same as everyone else!

So, the structure forms something like a circle. There is the point of departure, when the hero leaves their ordinary world. Then, after a lot of different tests and challenges, the hero returns to the same world, to their point of departure. But, because of their adventure, they have changed.

And that's the whole structure! When you know this structure, you can analyse many, many famous stories, many classic books and films, and you will discover the structure beneath all the details. You can even try it now! Think of a story with a central hero - maybe one of the ones I mentioned at the start, like 'Harry Potter' or 'Star Wars', or something different like 'The Lord of the Rings', or 'The Matrix', or even a Disney cartoon. What happens to the hero in the story? What is the journey that they go on? Whatever the story is that you choose to think about, the chances are really very high that the hero passes through each of these stages!

Why is this structure so effective, why is the structure so successful in so many different stories? Maybe it is because the reader can identify with the hero. At the start of the story, we are shown how the hero is a person just like everyone else, we see that they are someone like us. And so it is easy to identify with the hero, it is easy to imagine ourselves in their place - in English, we might even say that we can imagine ourselves 'in their shoes', we can imagine that we are that person. So, when something happens to the hero, we find the story very exciting because we can identify with the hero, and we can imagine the same thing happening to us, we are under the impression that everything that happens to the hero can happen to us. So, when we read these stories, we can understand how we can overcome our fear, how we can learn to take risks and succeed in our challenges - we can have confidence to go on our own adventures! These will probably be very different adventures to the heroes' adventures, but we can still be given the confidence to fight our fears and become heroes ourselves!

But the structure is also very effective because it is really very clear and very simple. The structure is very basic and easy to understand, and it does not make us ask lots of difficult

questions, it does not make us struggle to work out what exactly is going on. It makes a story that is easy to follow, and we can remain engaged without becoming really confused. And, because the structure is very simple, because it is very plain and basic, it can be adapted in a lot of different ways, it can go through a lot of changes. The same simple structure can be used to tell a lot of different stories through changing the details of each of the stages.

We can change the details of the character, we can change the details of the world that they live in, the details of the tests they have to go through, the reason they have to complete the tests, the ways in which they change throughout the journey - we can really change almost all of the details and create whole new stories without changing the structure at all! And this means that the same structure can be used to tell lots of different stories without us getting bored of it. The same structure can be used over and over and over again, and, if the details are changed enough, we can still find it super exciting! It is the same structure used for superhero movies, and it is the same structure that we find in the ancient Roman myths. It has been used for thousands of years! And still it pleases readers! Still we find it amusing, we find it entertaining! If the details are changed enough, the structure is effective enough to create the most fascinating story, to create an amazing and exciting story! It really is one magic ingredient for writing stories!

Well, that's the end of this episode of the Right2Education podcast. And, now you know the secret for creating the perfect story of a hero! Maybe, now that you know the structure, you will find it in all kinds of places that you didn't see it before - maybe you will see it in all sorts of films that you watch, and books that you read. Or maybe you will think back over stories you've come across in the past, and you'll find the same structure there. Maybe you will even try to use it yourself and create your very own story - that would be really very exciting!

I hope you enjoyed today's episode, the second episode of the Right2Education podcast. Thank you very much for listening. If you have any suggestions for topics you'd think would be great for future episodes, or if you have any requests for topics you'd really like to hear more about, please feel free to send me a message - I'd love to hear from you! And, in the meantime, stay safe, take care, and I'll see you next time!