**STUDENT OBJECTIVES**

Students will

* Collaboratively generate a description of the term *heroism* and characteristics of a hero
* Read for the purpose of examining how the person described in their selection reflects the description and characteristics
* Take notes related to their purpose for reading
* Use their notes to construct a focused summary
* Present their information clearly to classmates
* Listen effectively to hero reports to identify additional criteria to define heroism as well as additional characteristics of a hero
* Share interpretations after listening to a teacher read-aloud of the poem, *Heroes We Never Name*
* Construct a journal entry that describes a hero they know and give support for their opinion

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**Session 1**

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| 1. | Compare dictionary definitions of hero and idol with students and clarify the distinctions. Explain that anyone can become a hero when they act courageously and nobly. Define words for students using Webster's dictionary:  **Hero** - a person of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his or her brave deeds and noble qualities.  **Idol** - any person or thing regarded with blind admiration, adoration, or devotion. |
| 2. | Tell students they are going to do a "think, pair, and share." They will first think of their own answer to the question posed, then they'll be given a minute to share their thinking with a partner (pair), and finally, students will be called on to share the ideas they and their partner had with the whole class. |
| 3. | Ask students to think about the following questions for one minute:  What is heroism?  What qualities or characteristics do heroes have? |
| 4. | Have students pair up and share their ideas with a partner for one minute. |
| 5. | Partners report ideas to the whole class, giving the reasons for their thinking. |
| 6. | Lists these ideas on chart paper, transparency, or white board using the following format:   Heroism is....    http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson171/hero.gif |
| 7. | Go to [Heroism In Action: Introduction](http://library.thinkquest.org/C001515/) and read aloud the site description on the page. Discuss what the author says about heroism. Click on the link "click here to view this site." As a class, listen to the opening video clip. Ask students what characteristics named here match ones they've identified. Ask if this video presents new ones that should be added. Explain that this list is tentative and can be expanded or revised as they read about and discuss people who have done heroic deeds. |
| 8. | Have students identify a modern-day person who has such characteristics, giving examples to support their opinion. |
| 9. | Make a list of these identified "heroes around us." |
| 10. | Have students respond to the following statement in their journals:  My behavior reflected a characteristic associated with a hero when.... |

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**Session 2**

**Before reading**

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| 1. | Review the definition of a hero and the characteristics of a hero that the class generated in the previous lesson. |
| 2. | Explain to students that they will be selecting and reading about a particular hero today. They will determine how this person's deed(s) demonstrated heroism and how his or her behavior reflected characteristics of a hero. |
| 3. | Direct students to the following websites:  [My Hero](http://www.myhero.com/). Provides an extensive list of hero biographies. Click on the directory link for a complete list of categories, or try some of the ideas below:  [My Hero: Heroes in the News](http://www.myhero.com/newhometest/apnews/index.asp)  [My Hero: Mothers Day](http://myhero.com/mothers_day/index.asp)  [My Hero: Writer Heroes](http://www.myhero.com/myhero/hero.asp?hero=lauraIngallsWilder)  [Heroism In Action](http://library.thinkquest.org/C001515/design/index.html). Click on "Heroism," then "Heroes of the 20th Century" to access a list of heroes and biographies.  [TIME: Heroes and Icons](http://www.time.com/time/time100/heroes/). Twenty heroes from the last century. |
| 4. | Have students select one hero to read about. Make sure that each student has a different hero to report on. |

**During reading**

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| 5. | Instruct students to read about their hero and take notes using the [Heroes Around Us Note-taking Form](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson171/note.pdf).  Notes should address as many of the following as possible:   * Date and place of birth * Family (parents, spouse, children, etc.) * A chronological account of hero's life * Hardships or struggles overcome * Major accomplishments * Evidence of heroism * Hero characteristics this person possesses * Special events occurring in the world during this person's life * Date and place of death or up-to-date information on current status |
| 6. | Circulate among the students as they read and record notes to provide assistance as needed. |

**After reading**

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| 7. | Have students pair up and practice reporting on their hero using the notes they took. The focus will be on the information in the topical areas for note taking and, especially, how the person's life and deeds reflect heroism and hero-like characteristics. |
| 8. | Instruct the students to summarize their notes into a report on the [Heroes Around Us Summary Form](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson171/summary.pdf). Later, these summaries will be edited, word-processed, and collated into a class book of heroes. |

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**Session 3**

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| 1. | Students will report on their hero to the class using the summary they composed. As classmates listen, they should consider whether additional descriptors could be added to the "Heroism is...." list or additional characteristics could be added to the Characteristics of a Hero web. |
| 2. | Invite students' comments on additional descriptors and/or characteristics to be added. Add those for which there is consensus. |
| 3. | Introduce the poem, *Heroes We Never Name* by M. Lucille Ford (using the tranparency). Explain that the poem talks about people who have not always been recognized, but their heroic deeds have made us a nation. Be ready to explain who these heroes are.Read the poem aloud and invite discussion in response to the question posed, as well as other reactions. |
| 4. | Give each student a copy of the poem. Ask students to write a response to the following in their journal.  Identify a hero you know and describe why this person is an "everyday" hero. What lesson does his/her life teach us? |
| 5. | Have students share journal entries with the rest of the class as time permits. |

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**EXTENSIONS**

* Have students use the [Essay Map](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/essaymap/) to outline and extend their summaries. Students should then revise and edit their hero reports, which are then compiled into a class book for the school library.
* Students follow up with additional reading about heroes (fact or fiction). Examples include:

*Out of War: True Stories of the Children's Movement for Peace in Columbia.* S. Cameron. (2001).  
  
*A Special Fate: Chiune Sugihara, Hero of the Holocaust.* A. Gold. Scholastic.  
  
*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.* C.S. Lewis. Macmillan. Additional books in Narnia series.  
  
*The Hero and the Crown.* R. McKinley. Greenwillow Books. Newberry Medal Book.  
  
*Harry Potter* series. J.K. Rowling.  
  
*The Hobbit.* J.R.R. Tolkin. Ballantine Books, Inc.  
  
*The Homecoming.* C. Voigt. Fawcett.

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**STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS**

Assess students' ability to:

* Collectively brainstorm meaningful definitions for heroism and characteristics of a hero from their own experiences and expand on these following engagement with the electronic media used.
* Read with comprehension as reflected in successful completion of the note-taking sheet and their ability to report to a partner.
* Write a complete, well-constructed hero report to minimally meet level 3. (Use the [rubric](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson171/rubrics.pdf) for written report.)
* Write journal entries that clearly address the question/topic posed. These are judged as overall— exemplary, acceptable, or unacceptable.
* Present their hero to the class in a manner that holds the audience's attention and provides a complete summary of the information. (Use the [rubric](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson171/rubrics.pdf) for presentation.)

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