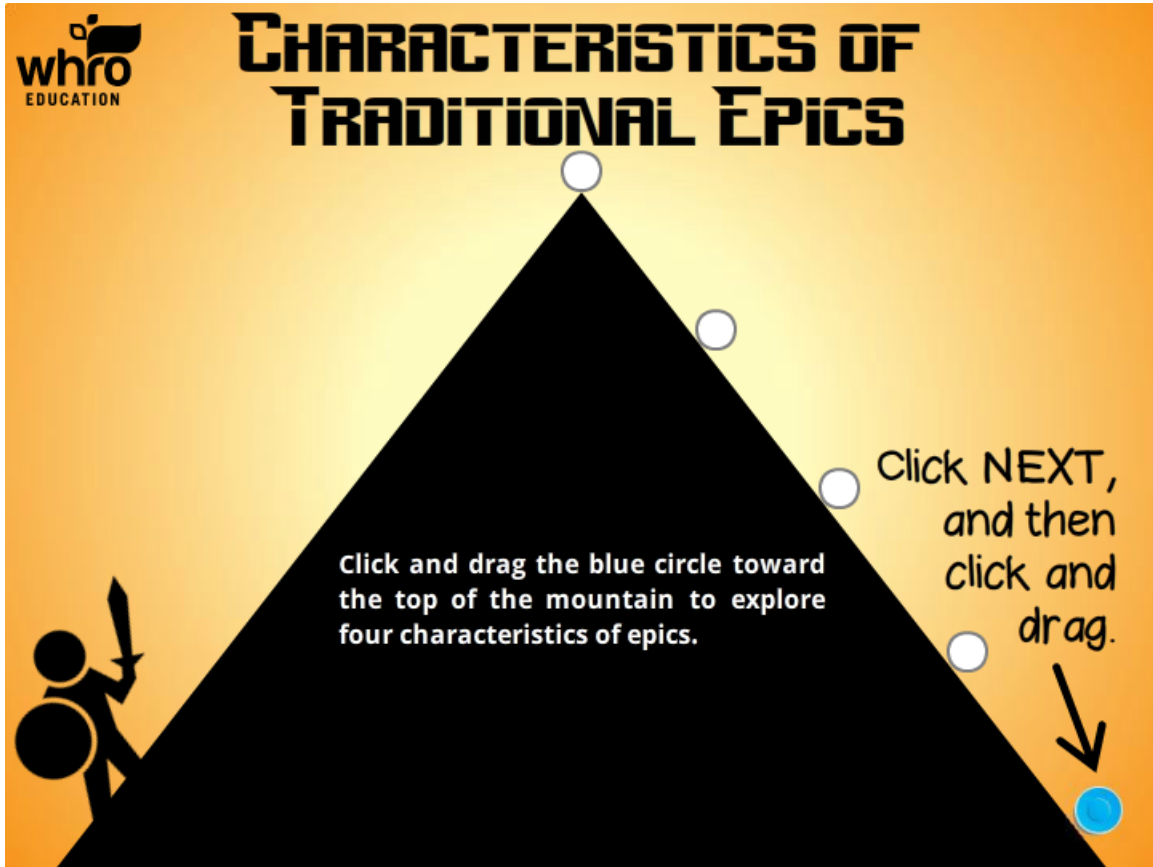


Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice
Topic 2 Content: Characteristics of Traditional Epics

Introduction



Click and drag the blue circle toward the top of the mountain to explore four characteristics of epics.

Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice
Topic 2 Content: Characteristics of Traditional Epics

The Epic Hero

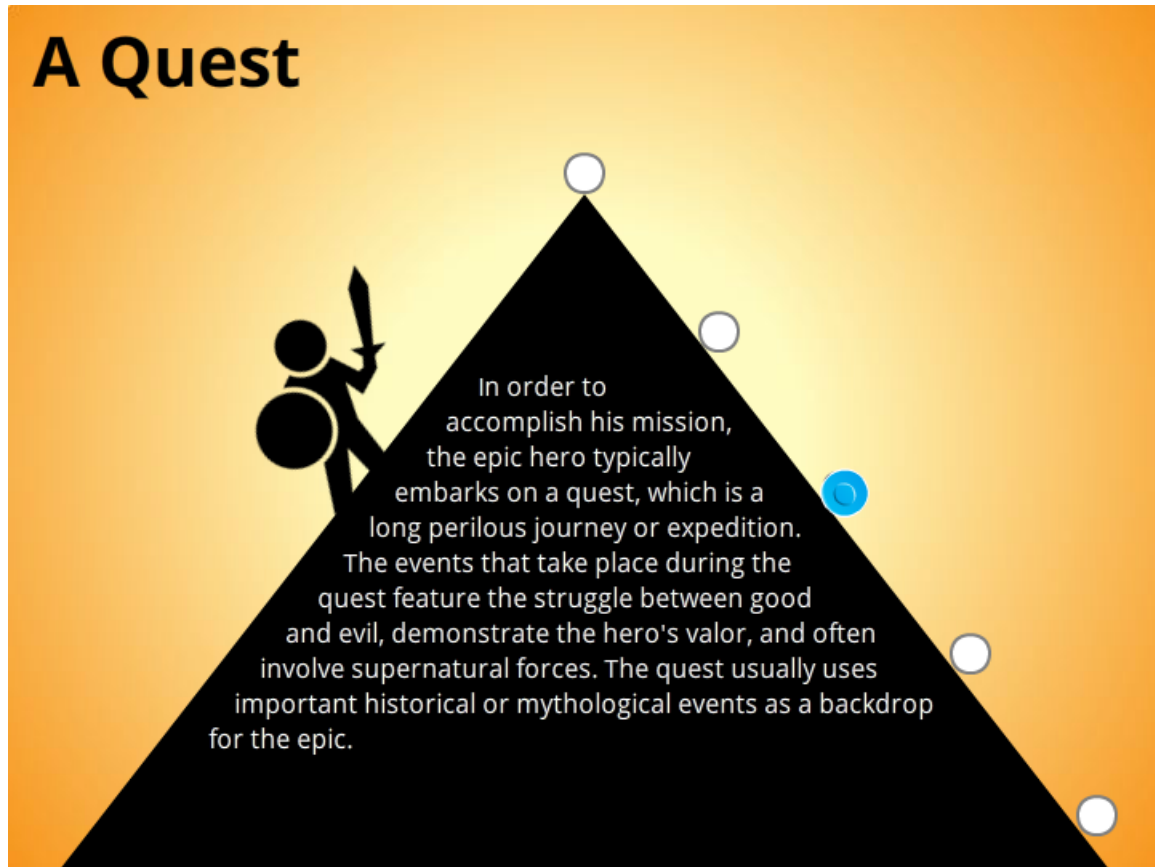
The Epic Hero

The central character of an epic is known as the epic hero, a larger-than-life figure who is usually of noble or supernatural birth and often has superhuman strength. The epic hero relies on his extraordinary physical strength, courage, and skills to conquer evil. Most importantly, his character traits represent the values of the culture from which the epic story emerged. Thus, he is often a paragon, or ideal example, of who a virtuous and good person should be.

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A Quest



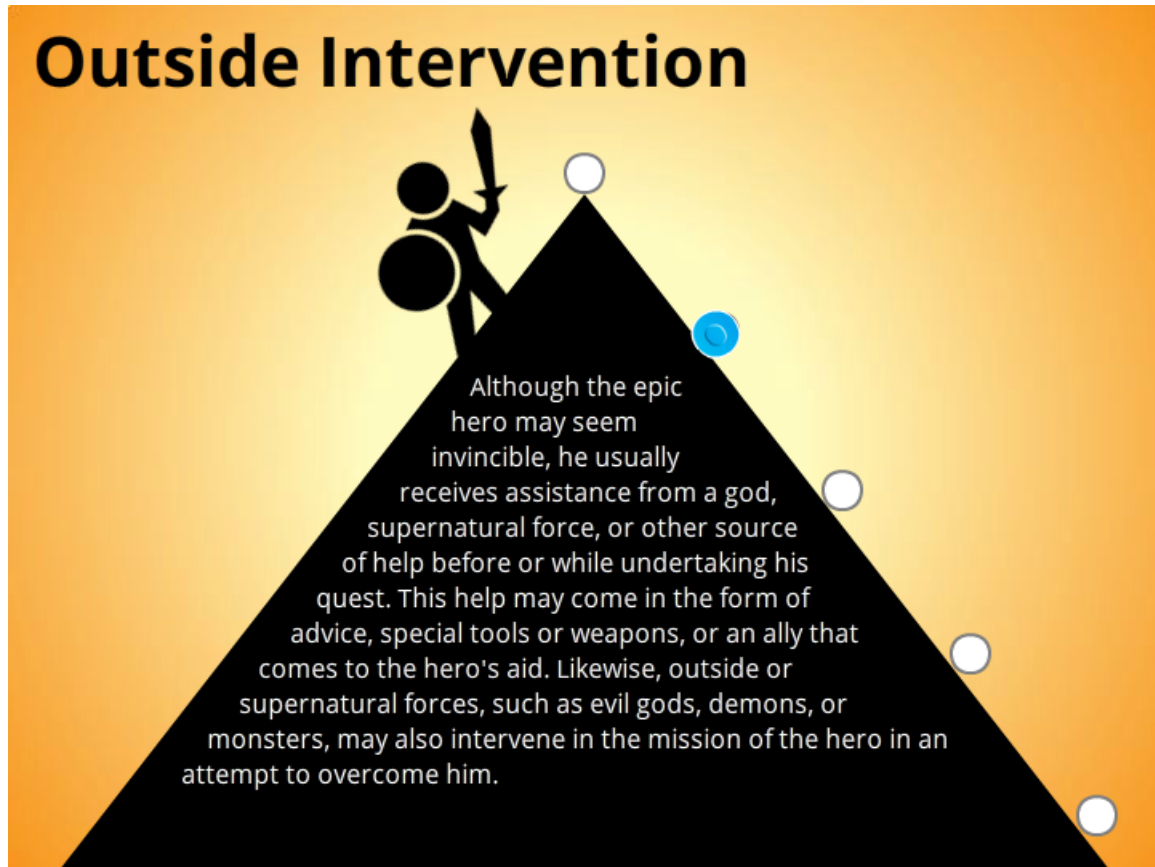
A Quest

In order to accomplish his mission, the epic hero typically embarks on a quest, which is a long perilous journey or expedition. The events that take place during the quest feature the struggle between good and evil, demonstrate the hero's valor, and often involve supernatural forces. The quest usually uses important historical or mythological events as a backdrop for the epic.

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Outside Intervention



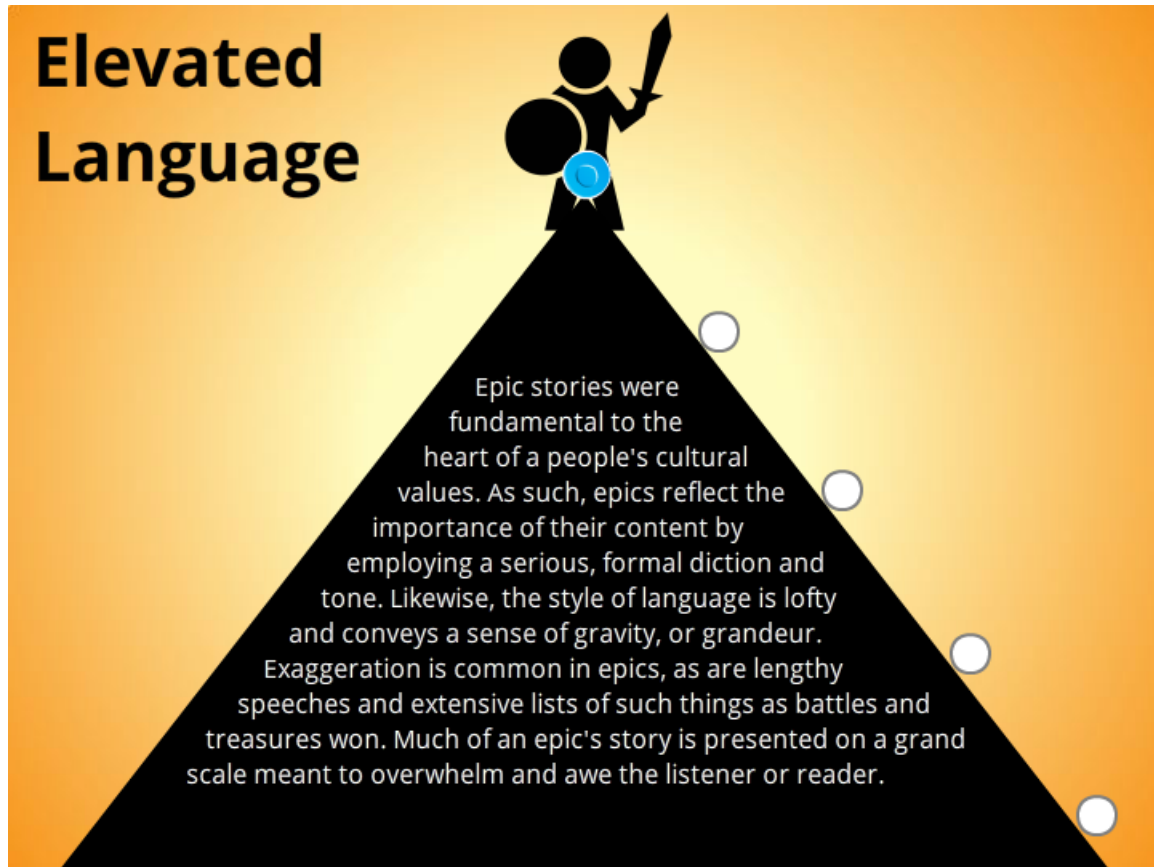
Outside Intervention

Although the epic hero may seem invincible, he usually receives assistance from a god, supernatural force, or other source of help before or while undertaking his quest. This help may come in the form of advice, special tools or weapons, or an ally that comes to the hero's aid. Likewise, outside or supernatural forces, such as evil gods, demons, or monsters, may also intervene in the mission of the hero in an attempt to overcome him.

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Elevated Language



Elevated Language

Epic stories were fundamental to the heart of a people's cultural values. As such, epics reflect the importance of their content by employing a serious, formal diction and tone. Likewise, the style of language is lofty and conveys a sense of gravity, or grandeur. Exaggeration is common in epics, as are lengthy speeches and extensive lists of such things as battles and treasures won. Much of an epic's story is presented on a grand scale meant to overwhelm and awe the listener or reader.

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