

Twin Hero Myths in Literature of the Americas

In Partnership with the **Denver Public Schools**
and the **Metropolitan State College of Denver**



El Alma de la Raza Project



Twin Hero Myths in Literature in the Americas

By Gabriel Garcia, Ph.D.

Grades 9-12

Implementation Time
for Unit of Study: 8 weeks

Goals 2000 - Partnerships for
Educating Colorado Students
El Alma de la Raza Curriculum
and Teacher Training Project

Loyola A. Martinez, Project Director

Introduction

Noted anthropologist Paul Radin has stated, and world-renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell has concurred, that the basic myth of the Americas, prior to Columbus, is the story of the Twin Heroes. In the Americas, that story goes back at least 2,300 years and appears to have continued to this day.

The roots of the Twin Hero myth have a strong pre-Columbian flavor that has largely been forgotten. With the emergence of Chicano/Latino literature, these stories, which almost disappeared from the consciousness of the peoples of the Americas, are beginning to resurface and be recognized for the social benefit they bring.

The Twin Heroes appear in many forms and in many stories. The twins bring agricultural arts to the Mayans in *The Popol Vuh*; they conquer monstrous animals which the Navaho dread in *Where the Two Came to Their Father*; in the form of Deganwidah and Hiawatha, they devise a social contract for the League of the Iroquois which some say our own government is patterned after. In more recent times, the latent power of the Twin Heroes emerges again when James Fenimore Cooper's Hawkeye and Chingachgook, in *The Last of the Mohicans*, establish new social behaviors, bilingual and bicultural, in the New World. In Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck Finn and the runaway slave, Jim, help America strive for cultural clarity and moral direction.

In modern times, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, Tonto and the Lone Ranger, and the Cisco Kid and his sidekick fight for social justice. Today, the Twin Heroes appear as crime fighters: Batman and Robin, Superman and his alter ego, Clark Kent, and Wonder Woman and her alter ego, Diane Prince. It is no surprise even to see the force of the Twin Heroes extend into the future in the form of Luke Skywalker and his robot cohorts as they strive for a balanced relationship between man and machine. No matter the dilemma for mankind, the twin heroes are sure to appear in one form or another.

This unit will examine the Twin Hero myth through the following four lessons:

1. What Makes a Hero?
2. *The Popol Vuh*
3. *Where the Two Came to Their Father*
4. Twin Hero Myths in Modern American Literature

Standards Addressed by this Unit

Reading and Writing

- Standard 1 Students read and understand a variety of materials.
- Standard 2 Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Standard 3 Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- Standard 4 Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
- Standard 5 Students read to locate, select, evaluate, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.
- Standard 6 Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.

History

- Standard 6 Students know that religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history.

Lesson 1: What Makes a Hero?

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.	<p>Students will identify and list Hero qualities and traits.</p> <p>Students will become familiar with the three phases of the Hero's Journey.</p>

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Introduce the concept of the Hero:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Heroic actions b. Heroic traits <p>Introduce the concept of the Hero's Journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Departure b. The Initiation c. The Return 	<p>Students will participate in class discussion: what makes a hero a Hero?</p> <p>Students will compile a written list of hero qualities/traits at board and at their desks.</p> <p>Students will view Joseph Campbell's videotape, <i>The Hero's Journey</i>.</p> <p>Optional: Students will complete Matching Quiz No. 1.</p> <p>Students will participate in post-quiz discussion of correct answers.</p>	<p>Joseph Campbell, <i>The World of Joseph Campbell, Program 1: The Hero's Journey</i>, 60 min., Mythology Limited, 1987, videocassette.</p> <p>Student notebook.</p> <p>Pre-written list of hero qualities/traits for board work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. possessing super-human strength b. intelligent c. engaged in fight for justice d. able to defeat the enemy e. bringing good to the people

How will students apply what they are learning?

Performance Task	Scoring Rubric
<p>Instructional Information Involve students in class discussion on heroic traits and qualities. Ask students to list at least 5 heroic traits/qualities in their notebooks.</p> <p>Benchmark Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.</p> <p>Task Describe at least four heroic traits/qualities in paragraph form.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Student is able to describe four heroic traits/qualities in paragraph form.3. Student is able to describe three heroic traits/qualities in paragraph form.2. Student is able to describe two heroic traits/qualities in paragraph form.1. Student is able to describe one heroic traits/qualities in paragraph form.

Lesson 2: *The Popol Vuh*

What will students be learning?		What will be done to help students learn this?		
Benchmark	Specifics	Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Students will write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.</p> <p>Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.</p> <p>Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.</p> <p>Students know that religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history.</p>	<p>Students will become familiar with Mayan civilization and culture, especially:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> location and duration of Mayan empire the ball game the importance of corn <p>Students will become familiar with the story of <i>The Popul Vuh</i> and with its history, including how it came to be translated, <i>The Popul Vuh</i> as creation story, and art work depicting <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p>	<p>Provide a survey of Mayan history and culture through library research and videotapes.</p> <p>Present a brief lecture on <i>The Popul Vuh</i> and show video version of the story.</p> <p>Lead class discussion on the plot, characters, and meaning of <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p>	<p>Students will make a 3-5 minute oral presentation to the class on any aspect of Mayan history, culture, religion, etc., based on library research.</p> <p>Students will complete Matching Quiz No. 2 based on videotapes about Mayan history.</p> <p>Students will view the video, <i>The Popul Vuh</i> and write a one-page summary of the story.</p> <p>Students will participate in a class discussion on the plot, characters, and meaning of <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p>	<p>Library resources: reference and history books, National Geographic and other periodicals, Internet sites, Electric Library.</p> <p>Lecture notes. See Appendix C.</p> <p>Videotapes: <i>Odyssey: Maya Lords of the Jungle</i>, 58 min., PBS Video, 1988.</p> <p><i>Legacy, Program 5. Central America: Burden of Time</i>, 58 min., Ambrose Video, 1991.</p>

Lesson 2 (cont.)

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Ask students to write a short essay on the Hero's Journey reflected in <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p> <p>Read several essays aloud in class to recognize student work and review content of lesson.</p>	<p>Students will write a short essay on the Hero's Journey reflected in <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p>	<p><i>The Popul Vuh</i>, 60 min., University of California, Media Extension Center, 1989.</p> <p><i>Popol Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings</i>, by Dennis Tedlock. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985.</p>

How will students apply what they are learning?

Performance Task	Scoring Rubric
<p>Instructional Information Students have written a one-page summary of <i>The Popul Vuh</i> and participated in a class discussion on the plot, characters, and meaning of <i>The Popul Vuh</i>, based on a viewing of the videotape version of the story.</p> <p>Benchmark Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.</p> <p>Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.</p> <p>Task Write a short five paragraph essay on the Hero's Journey as reflected in <i>The Popul Vuh</i>. Essay should include an introduction and conclusion and paragraphs on Departure, Initiation, and Return, as they occur in <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Essay is in correct format, as assigned by teacher.b. Grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling is mostly error-free.c. Content shows clear understanding of the topic.d. Writing is striking in word choices and phrasing.3. Essay contains three of four above-detailed elements.2. Essay contains two of four above-detailed elements.1. Essay contains one of four above-detailed elements.

Lesson 3: *Where the Two Came to Their Father*

What will students be learning?		What will be done to help students learn this?		
Benchmark	Specifics	Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Students will read and understand a variety of materials.</p> <p>Students will write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.</p> <p>Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.</p> <p>Students know that religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history.</p>	<p>Students will be able to identify the three phases of the Hero's Journey as reflected in the Navaho myth <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i>.</p> <p>Students will be able to recognize that this Navaho myth is a ceremonial which reflects Navaho history and is intended as a healing ritual.</p> <p>Students will become aware of the connection of the twin hero myth in Central and North America.</p>	<p>Present background information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Geographical location of myth Navaho sand-painting: history and purpose Background of story to the point this myth begins. <p>Assign the reading of the story, <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i>.</p> <p>Lead a discussion of the story, covering the three phases of the Hero's Journey, and assign the writing of an essay on the story.</p>	<p>Students will read the story, <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i>.</p> <p>Students will write a one-page summary of the story.</p> <p>Students will participate in a class discussion of the story.</p>	<p><i>Historical Atlas of World Mythology, Vol. 2: The Way of the Seeded Earth; Part 2: Mythologies of the Primitive Planters, The Northern Americas</i>, by Joseph Campbell. Harper & Row, New York, 1989.</p> <p><i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i>, a Navaho war ceremonial, given by Jeff King; text and paintings recorded by Maud Oakes; commentary by Joseph Campbell. New York, Pantheon Books, 1943.</p>

Lesson 3 (cont.)

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
	<p>Students will write an essay on the three phases of the Hero's Journey as experienced by Child Born of Water and Monster Slayer.</p>	<p><i>Navaho Symbols of Healing</i>, by Donald Sandner, M.D. Rochester, VT, Healing Arts Press, 1979, 1991.</p>
<p>Lead a discussion in which students compare/contrast the twin hero myths depicted in <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i> and <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p>	<p>Students will participate in a class discussion comparing and contrasting the twin hero myths of <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i> and <i>The Popul Vuh</i>.</p>	
<p>Ask the students to relate elements of the myth to their own lives, especially in regard to experiencing the ceremonial as a healing ritual.</p>	<p>Students will discuss the value of experiencing the ceremonial, i.e., finding courage to overcome one's fears.</p>	

How will students apply what they are learning?

Performance Task	Scoring Rubric
<p>Instructional Information Students have participated in a class discussion and written a one-page summary of <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i>, covering the plot elements of the story.</p> <p>Benchmark Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.</p> <p>Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.</p> <p>Task Write an essay on the Hero's Journey experienced by Child Born of Water and Monster Slayer as reflected in <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i>.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Essay is in correct format, as assigned by teacher.b. Grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling is mostly error-free.c. Content shows clear understanding of the topic.d. Writing is striking in word choices and phrasing.3. Essay contains three of four above-detailed elements.2. Essay contains two of four above-detailed elements.1. Essay contains one of four above-detailed elements.

Lesson 4: The Twin Heroes in Modern American Literature

What will students be learning?		What will be done to help students learn this?		
Benchmark	Specifics	Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Students will read and understand a variety of materials.</p> <p>Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.</p> <p>Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.</p> <p>Students will read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.</p> <p>Students will know that religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history.</p>	<p>Students will become familiar with modern day heroes found in comic book literature.</p> <p>Students will recognize that the modern twin hero myth continues to reflect society's history as well as cultural values and concerns.</p> <p>Students will recognize the three phases of the Hero's Journey in contemporary hero stories.</p>	<p>Introduce concept of alter ego as an example of twin heroes in different form through class lecture, including Quetzalcoatl and his nahul, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Zorro and Juan Diego, and Danny and the pachuco in Zoot Suit.</p> <p>Summarize elements of the Hero's Journey as already presented and discussed in class prior to assigning students to select a comic book story with those elements.</p>	<p>Students will research in library one of the twin hero or hero-with-alter-ego stories presented by teacher or one chosen by student.</p> <p>Students will make a 3-5 minute oral presentation on the story they have researched.</p> <p>Students will select, read, and present to class a modern comic-book example of twin heroes or a hero-with-alter-ego, using the elements of the Hero's Journey already discussed as a guide.</p>	<p><i>The World Encyclopedia of Comics</i>, edited by Maurice Horn. New York: Chelsea House, 1983.</p> <p><i>Pre-Columbian Literature of Mexico</i>, by Miguel Leon-Portillo. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1969.</p> <p>Electric Library</p> <p>Classroom set of comic books including Batman and Robin, Wonder Woman and Diana Prince, and Superman and Clark Kent.</p>

How will students apply what they are learning?

Performance Task	Scoring Rubric
<p>Instructional Information In previous lessons, students have participated in a class discussion in which Hero traits and phases of the Hero's Journey have been identified, and have identified elements of the Twin Hero myth in two stories, the <i>Popol Vuh</i> and <i>Where the Two Came to Their Father</i>. In this lesson, they have researched and selected an example of the twin hero myth in modern comic-book form.</p> <p>Benchmark Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.</p> <p>Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.</p> <p>Task Make a 3-5 minute oral presentation, using notecards, which includes a clear and cohesive recounting of the story, identification of Hero traits, identification of the Twin Heroes or Hero-with-alter-ego, and reference to at least one phase of the Hero's Journey, as defined earlier by the class.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Presentation is 3-5 minutes long; information is presented clearly and cohesively, with a sense of understanding; information has been written on notecards; questions from the class are answered well.3. Presentation contains three of four above-detailed elements.2. Presentation contains two of four above-detailed elements.1. Presentation contains one of four above-detailed elements.

Appendix A

Matching Quiz 1: The Hero's Journey

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Directions: Match Column 2 with Column 1. Do not match exact terms.

Column 1

1. ____ Departure
2. ____ Ben
3. ____ Luke Skywalker
4. ____ Return
5. ____ Hero quality
6. ____ Intuitive Intelligence
7. ____ Meeting Monsters
8. ____ Initiation
9. ____ Joseph Campbell
10. ____ Beginning the Hero's Journey

Column 2

- A. Facing danger or new experiences
- B. Superhuman strength
- C. Hero answers the call to action
- D. Hero quality
- E. The Guide, the Mentor
- F. Entering Initiation
- G. The departure
- H. Star Wars Hero
- I. The people receive life-giving gifts
- J. Mythologist

Answer Key

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. D |
| 2. E | 7. F |
| 3. H | 8. A |
| 4. I | 9. J |
| 5. B | 10. G |

Appendix B

Matching Quiz 2: Mayans

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Directions: Match Column 2 with Column 1.

Column 1

1. ____ Pacal
2. ____ Xibala
3. ____ Chinampas
4. ____ Popol Vuh
5. ____ Stelae
6. ____ Twin Heroes
7. ____ Slash and Burn
8. ____ Water Lily
9. ____ Codices
10. ____ 52-Year Cycle
11. ____ Tikal
12. ____ Olmecs
13. ____ Baptism
14. ____ Quetzalcoatl
15. ____ Classic Maya

Column 2

- A. Creation story
- B. Became Sun and Moon
- C. Symbol of royalty and power
- D. Books of folding sheets
- E. Major city
- F. Mayan century
- G. Mayan ruler
- H. Underworld, or Hell
- J. From ages 3-12
- K. Raised field farming
- L. Kukulcan
- M. A.D. 300-900
- N. Stone monuments
- O. Mayan agriculture method
- P. Ruled before the Mayans

Appendix B

Answer Key Matching Quiz 2: Mayans

Column 1

1. **G** Pacal
2. **H** Xibala
3. **K** Chinampas
4. **A** Popol Vuh
5. **N** Stelae
6. **B** Twin Heroes
7. **Q** Slash and Burn
8. **C** Water Lily
9. **D** Codices
10. **F** 52-Year Cycle
11. **E** Tikal
12. **P** Olmecs
13. **J** Baptism
14. **L** Quetzalcoatl
15. **M** Classic Maya

Column 2

- A. Creation story
- B. Became Sun and Moon
- C. Symbol of royalty and power
- D. Books of folding sheets
- E. Major city
- F. Mayan century
- G. Mayan ruler
- H. Underworld, or Hell
- J. From ages 3-12
- K. Raised field farming
- L. Kukulcan
- M. A.D. 300–900
- N. Stone monuments
- O. Mayan agriculture method
- P. Ruled before the Mayans

Appendix C

Lecture Notes: The Mayans

1. Agriculture

- A. Foundation of Civilization
- B. Foods: Maize, beans, squashes, chili, cotton
- C. Cacao: used for money, chocolate drink

2. Homes

- A. Kitchen garden surrounded by 2-3 homes
- B. Grew vegetables and fruits
- C. Dogs: barkless, castrated, fattened, etc.
- D. Turkeys, stingless bees, fishing by drugging

3. Life Cycle

- A. Head compressed for two days
- B. Baptismal rites: elder house, chac cord, age 3-12, incense, tobacco, holy water
- C. Communal houses for boys, young men: war arts
- D. No marriage if same paternal name
- E. Adultery = death; polygamy okay if moneyed
- F. Appearance: filed teeth, jade; young men used black paint; tattooing and scarification for men and women
- G. Dead buried under house
- H. Each Mayan had two names: maternal and paternal

4. Political Rulers

- A. Elite hereditary class: passed adult catechism
- B. Capital ruler; appointed minor town ruler; local town councils of old, rich men, led by commoner

5. War

- A. Constant
- B. Unannounced guerilla raids
- C. Lesser captives—slaves; nobles—heart sacrificed

6. Calendar

- A. 260 day count: 20 months with 13 days each
- B. Long count: began in 3114 B.C., to A.D. 2012

Bibliography

Books

Campbell, Joseph. *Historical Atlas of World Mythology; Vol. II, the Way of the Seeded Earth; Part 2: Mythologies of the Primitive Planters: The Northern Americas*. New York: Harper and Row, 1989.

Horn, Maurice, ed. *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*. New York: Chelsea House, 1983.

King, Jeff. *Where the Two Came to Their Father, a Navaho War Ceremonial given by Jeff King*. Text and paintings by Maud Oakes, commentary by Joseph Campbell. New York: Pantheon Books, 1943.

Leon-Portillo, Miguel. *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1969.

Sandner, Donald, M.D. *Navaho Symbols of Healing*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1979, 1991.

Tedlock, Dennis, trans. *Popol Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985.

Videocassettes

Campbell, Joseph. *The World of Joseph Campbell; Program 1: the Hero's Journey*. Mythology Limited, 1987. 60 minutes.

Legacy; Program 5: Central America: Burden of Time, Ambrose Video, 1991. 58 minutes.

Odyssey: Maya Lords of the Jungle. PBS Video, 1988. 58 minutes.

The Popol Vuh. University of California, Media Extension Center, 1989. 60 minutes.