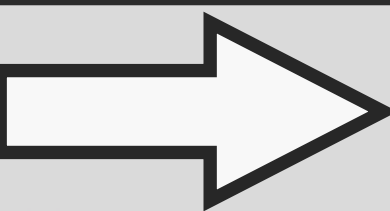


The Hero's Journey

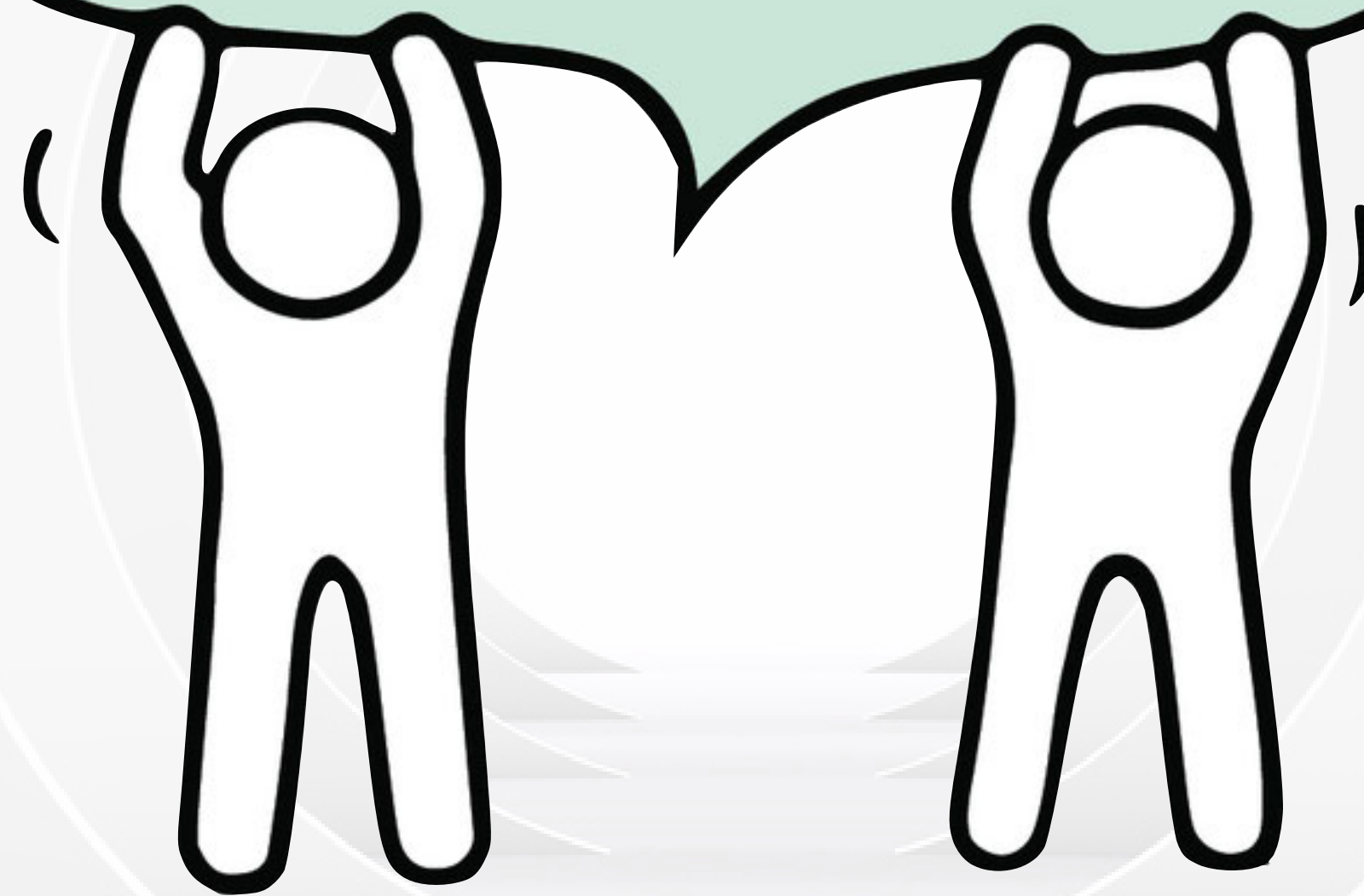


Learning Objective:

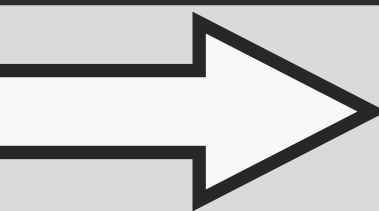
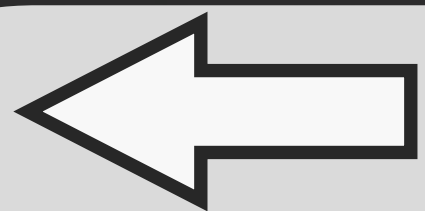
To understand the story structure of the hero's journey and explore how authors have used this structure in familiar stories.



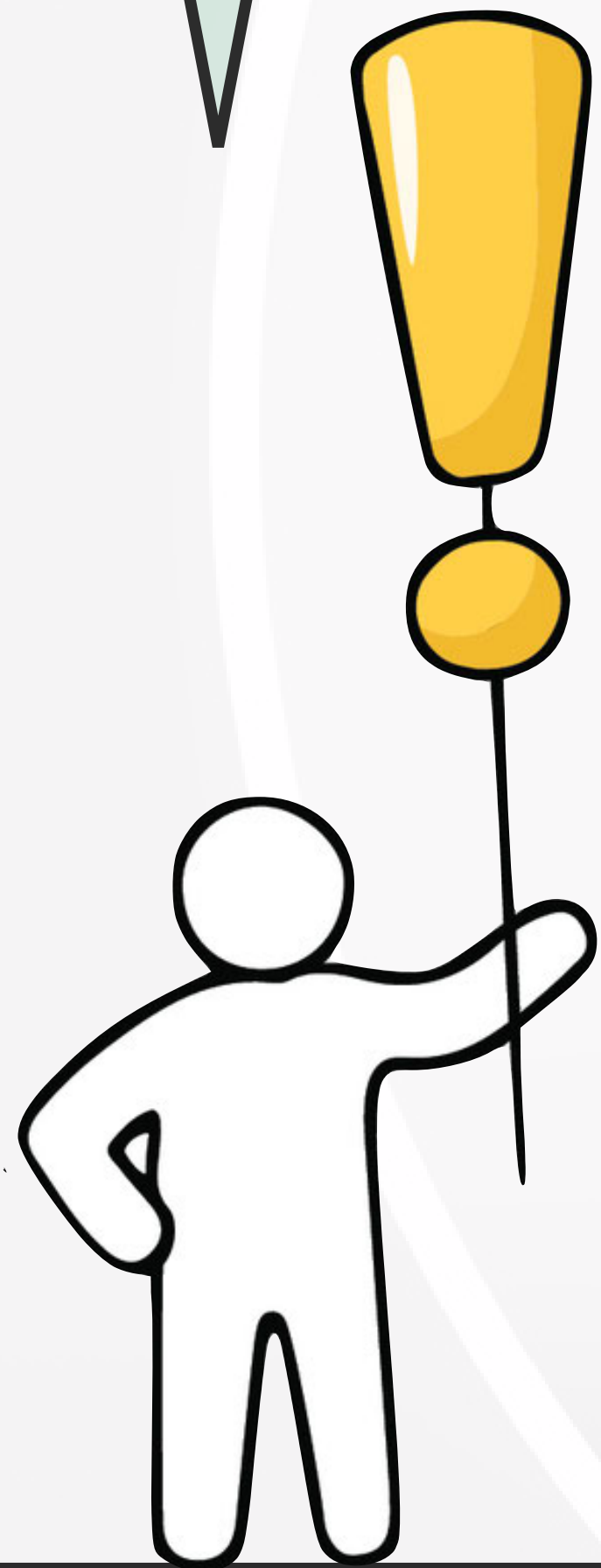
How many heroes can
you think of from stories
you have read or seen?



You have three minutes to think of as many as you can!



What if I was to tell you that every story you have ever read is just another version of the same story?

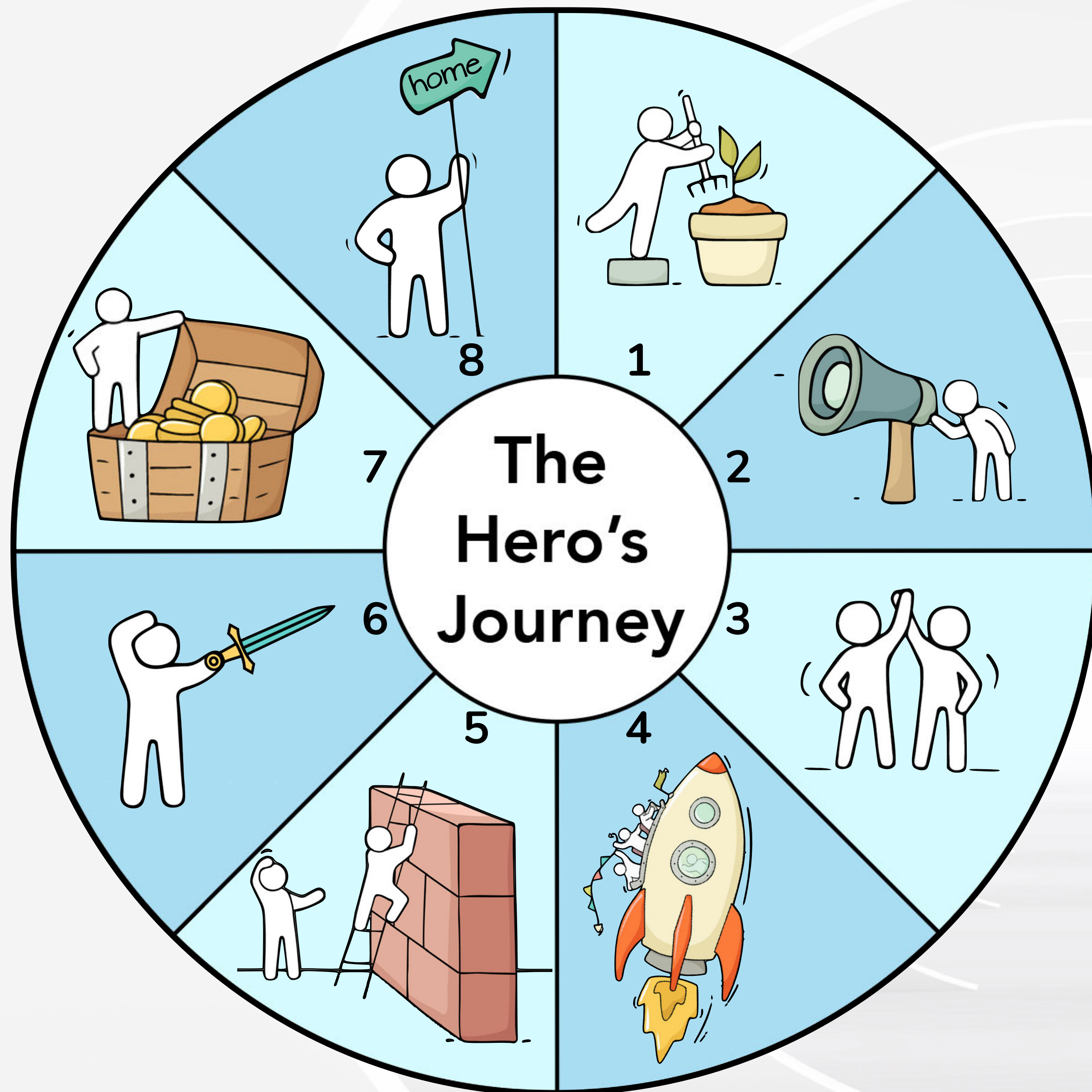


This is **Joseph Campbell**. He wrote a book called '**The Hero with a Thousand Faces**' suggesting that every story in the world is just another version of the same story, told over and over again. Campbell identified that every story follows the same basic structure. This structure is known as '**the hero's journey**'.



Campbell's original outline of the hero's journey involved eighteen different steps that could be applied to most stories. We are going to look at a simplified version today that has eight different steps.



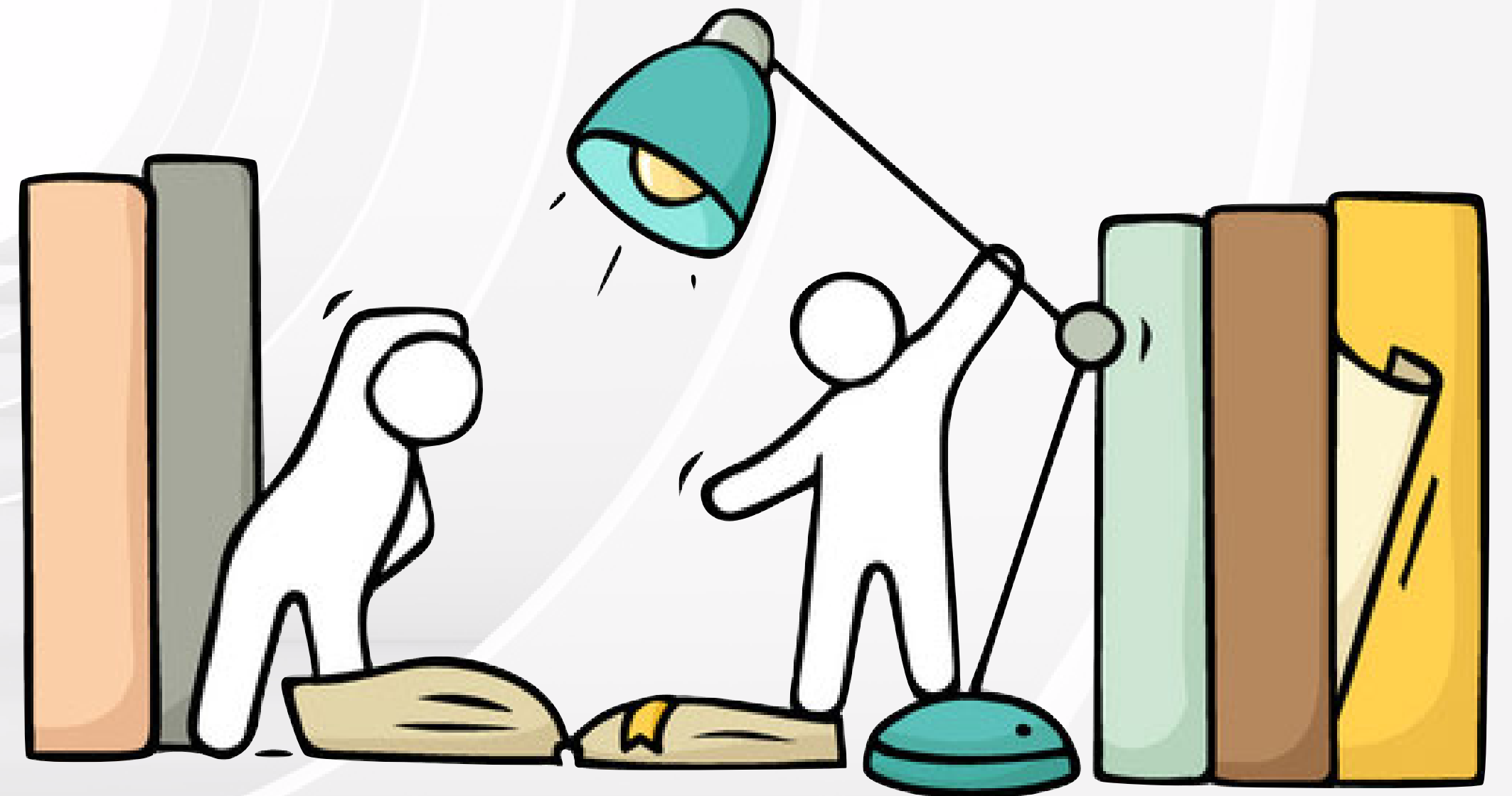


1. The ordinary world
2. The call to adventure
3. Meeting the mentor
4. Crossing the threshold
5. Tests, allies and enemies
6. The ordeal
7. The reward
8. The return home

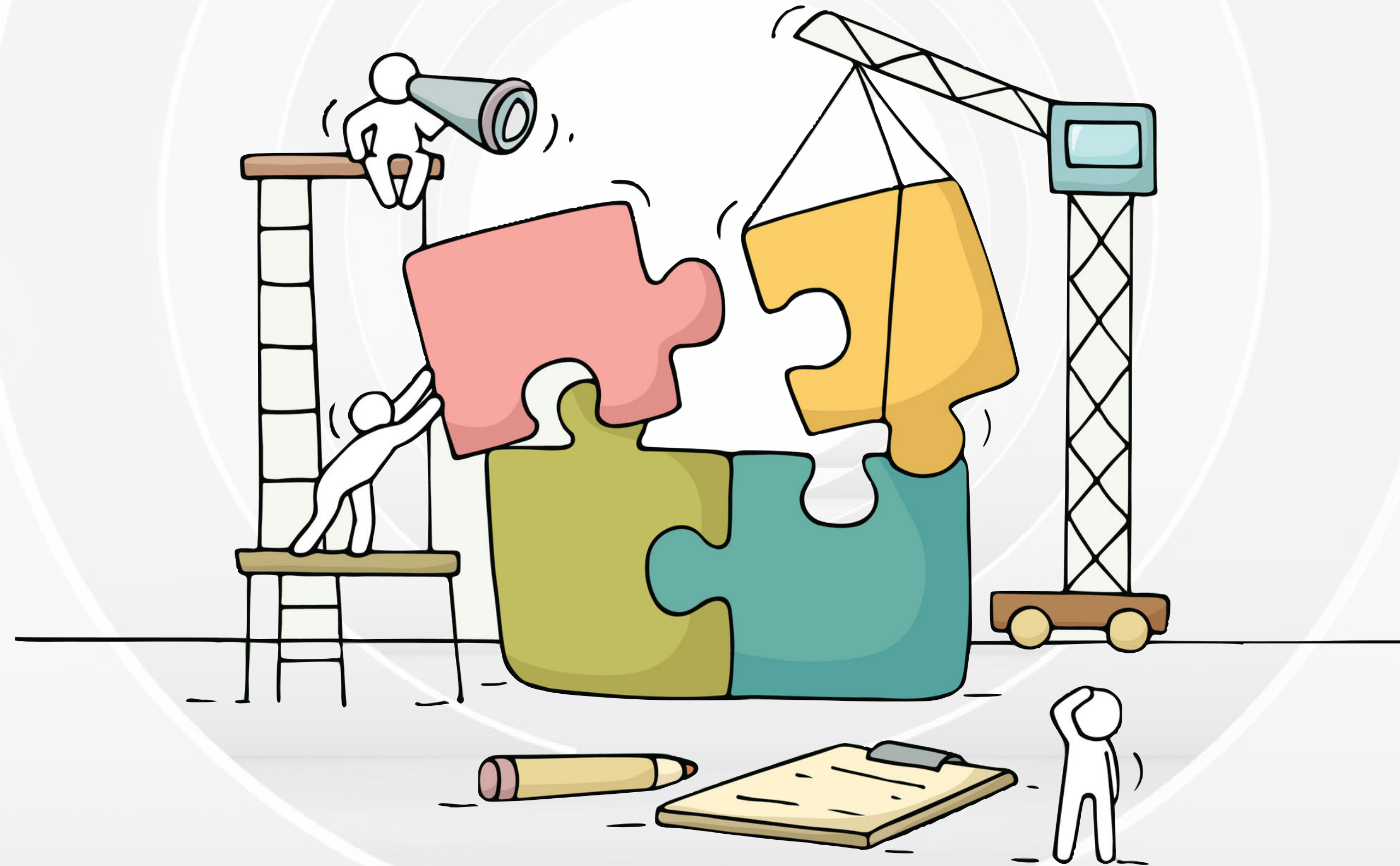
What might each of these steps mean?

The basic idea behind the hero's journey story structure is that there is a hero who has a problem they need to solve. They are called on an adventure and face a lot of difficulties, before overcoming a great challenge. They can then return to their normal lives but as a new version of themselves and with their original problem solved.

Let's take a look at these steps in relation to some familiar stories...



Let's see if you can match a description to each of the titles of the steps!



1. Ordinary world

The story starts in the hero's ordinary world. Here we find out about their normal, everyday lives. This section is important because it helps the reader to identify with the hero as being 'normal'. Usually, it will show that something is wrong with the hero's ordinary world, or that they have a problem that needs to be solved.



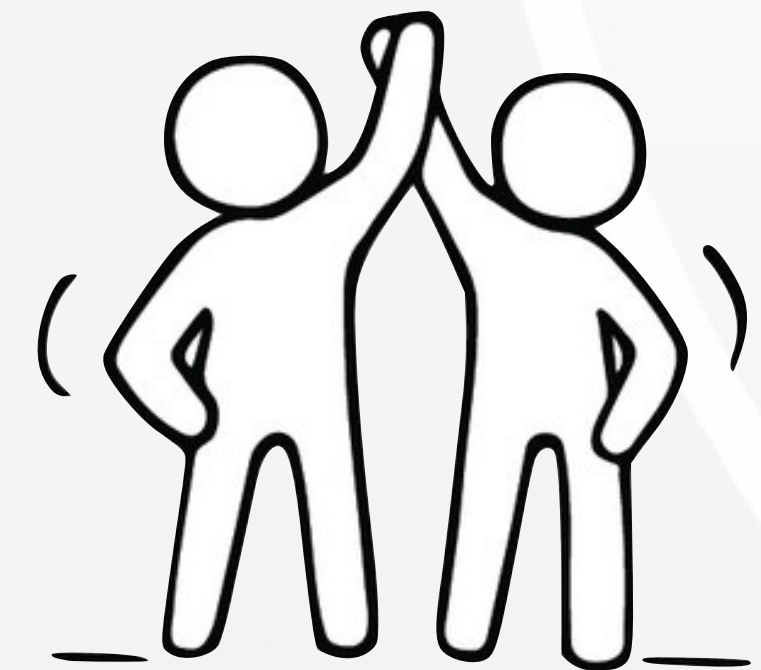
2. Call to adventure

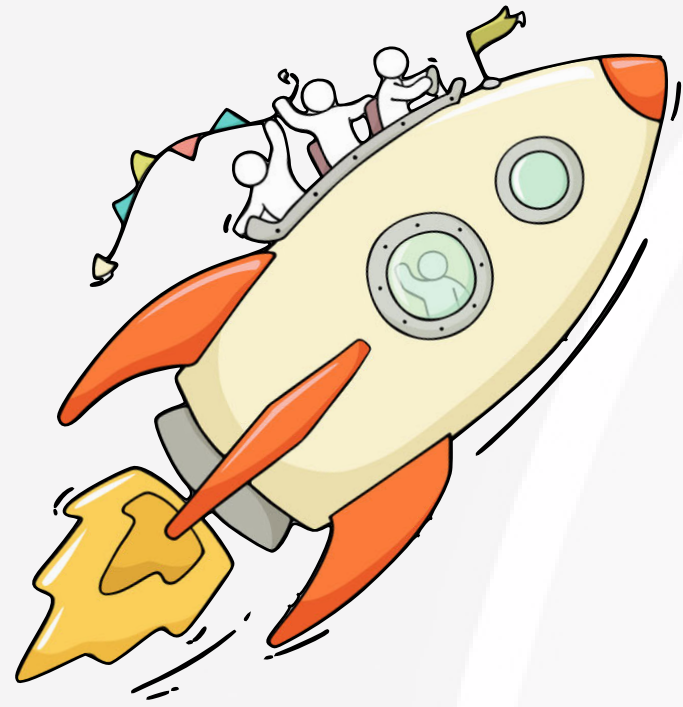
It is here that the hero enters their special world for the first time. This can be a whole different place, or their ordinary world but with a new adventure to embark on. They fully accept the call and head off on their adventure.



3. Meeting the mentor

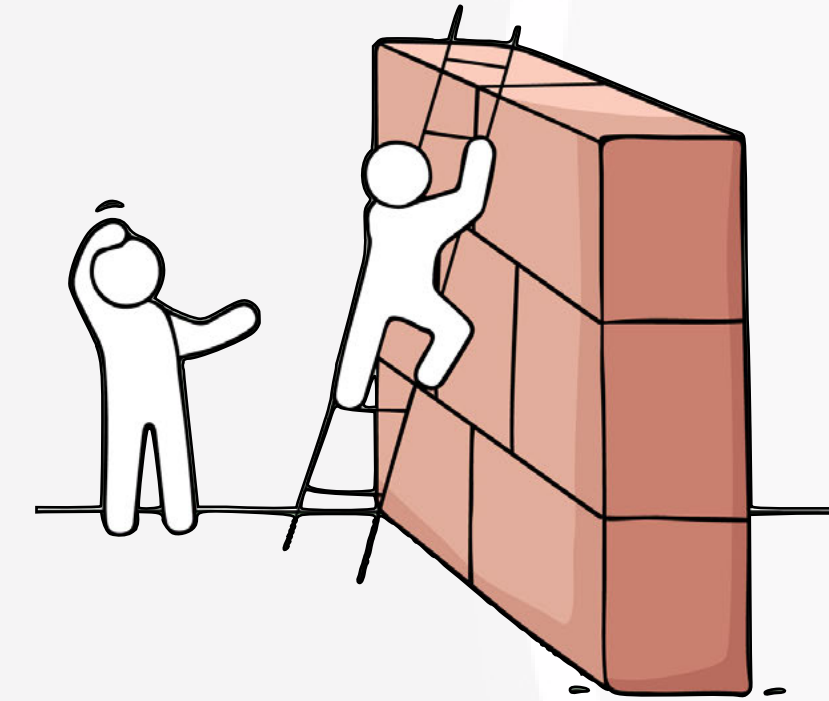
The mentor is like a personal trainer for the hero. The mentor helps the hero in some way so that they get the confidence they need to accept the call to adventure, or help them overcome the obstacles getting in their way.





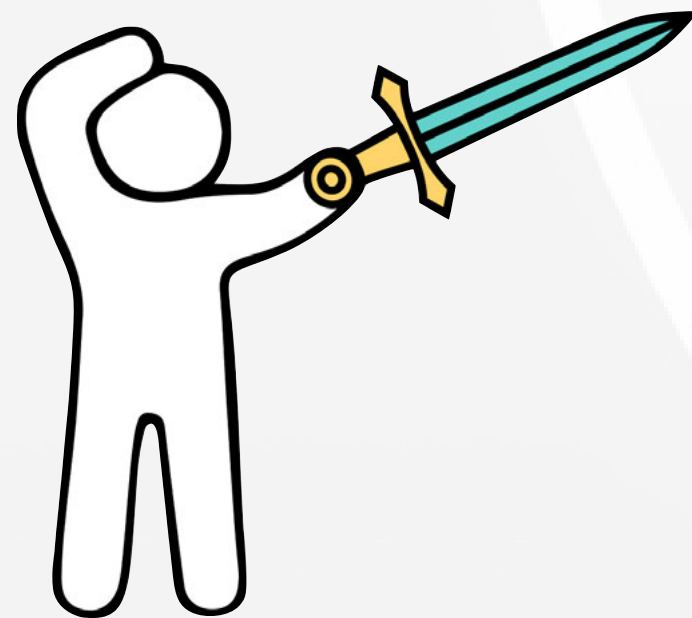
4. Crossing the threshold

It is here that the hero enters their special world for the first time. They fully accept the call and head off on their adventure.



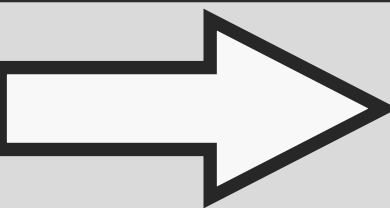
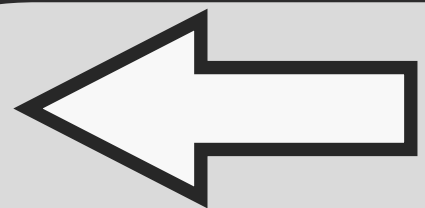
5. Tests, allies and enemies

This section is all about the hero becoming familiar with their new world. They might identify new enemies, make new friends or find objects that help them. They usually get themselves into some sticky situations along the way.



6. The ordeal

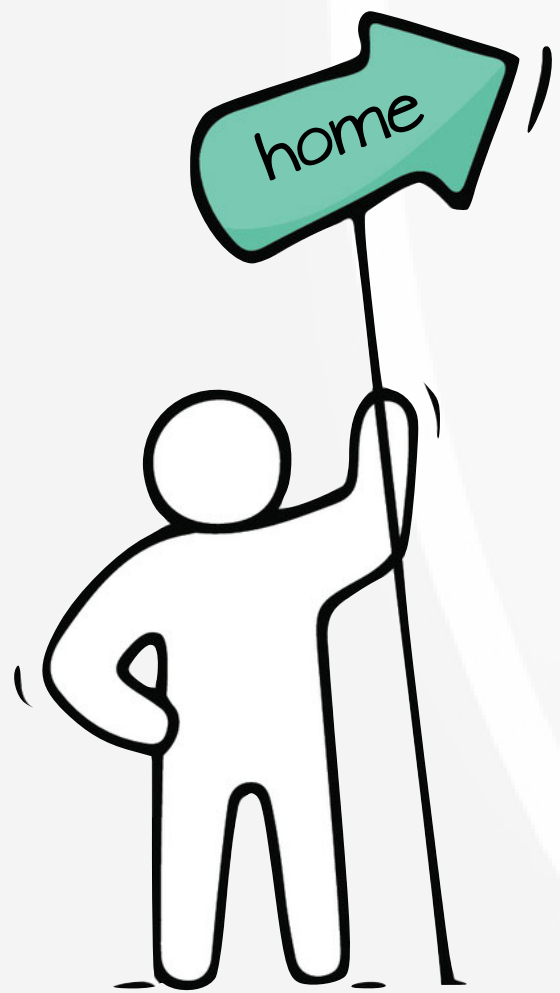
This is the climax of the story when the hero faces their biggest challenge yet. They have to overcome odds that seem impossible at first, but they are ultimately successful. They win the day.





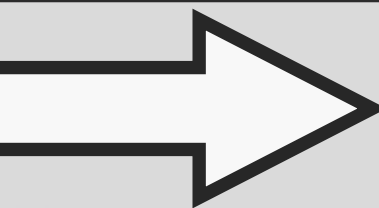
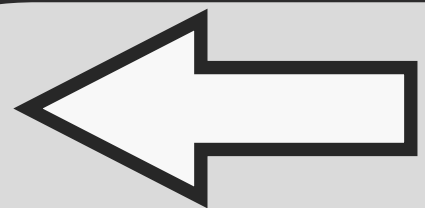
7. The reward

After defeating the enemy or completing their biggest challenge, the hero is given a reward. This could be the thing they have been looking for, an object or even a piece of knowledge, a secret or a special insight into something. Either way, it transforms the hero into a new person.



8. The return home

The hero has now finished their adventure and can return to their ordinary life. This might involve going back to their original home, or finding themselves in a new ordinary world. Wherever they physically end up, their life has been changed for the better in some way and their original problem is now solved. 'They lived happily ever after...'

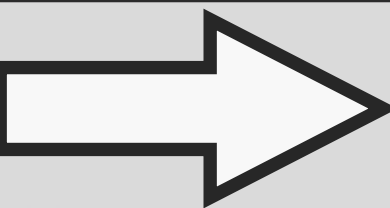
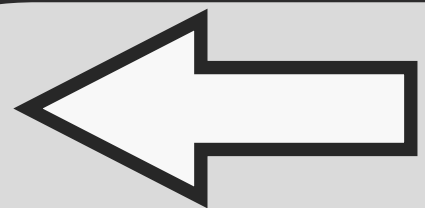


Let's have a look at each of these steps in the context of some familiar stories. Click on the one you want to read...



Finding Nemo

**Harry Potter and the
Philosopher's Stone**



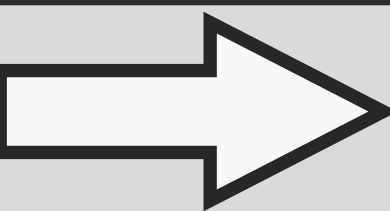
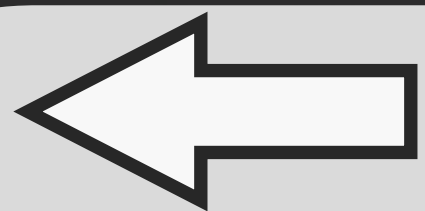


1. Ordinary world

The story starts in the hero's ordinary world. Here we find out about their normal, everyday lives. This section is important because it helps the reader to identify with the hero as being 'normal'. Usually, it will show that something is wrong with the hero's ordinary world.

Finding Nemo

Marlin lives with his son, Nemo, in a sea anemone. He is very nervous of the ocean after the death of his wife and is very over-protective of Nemo, who has a shortened fin.



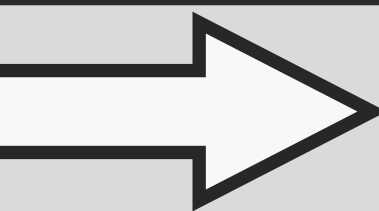
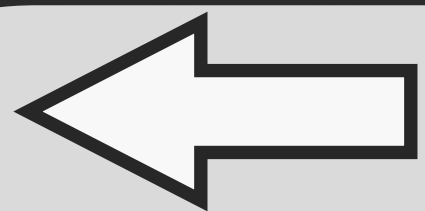
2. Call to adventure

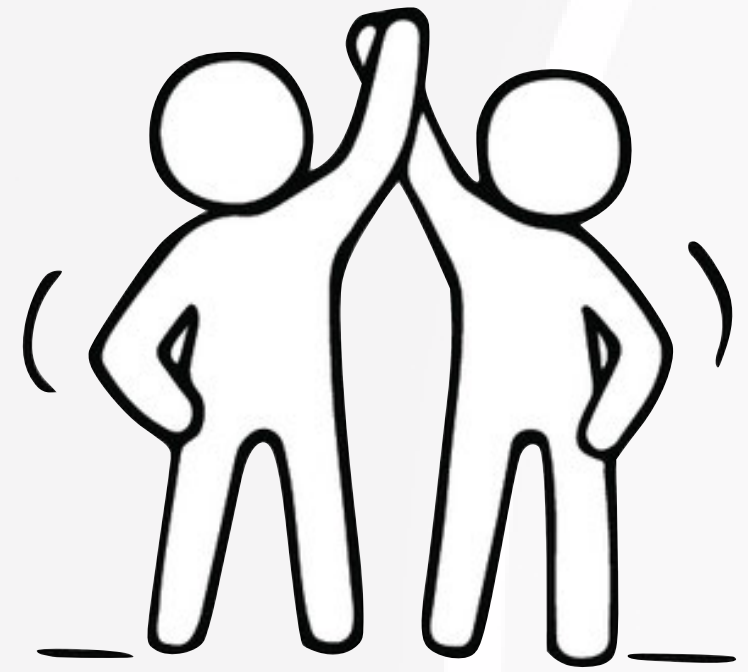
It is here that the hero enters their special world for the first time. This can be a whole different place, or their ordinary world but with a new adventure to embark on. They fully accept the call and head off on their adventure.



Finding Nemo:

When Nemo gets caught in a fishing net, Marlin must leave home and go on a journey through the ocean to find him. He doesn't want to go but knows he has to.



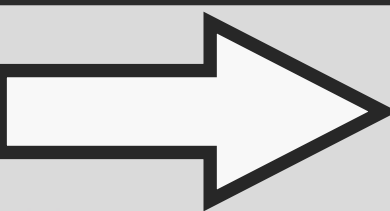
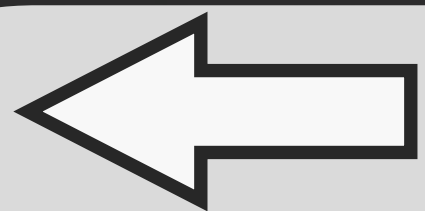


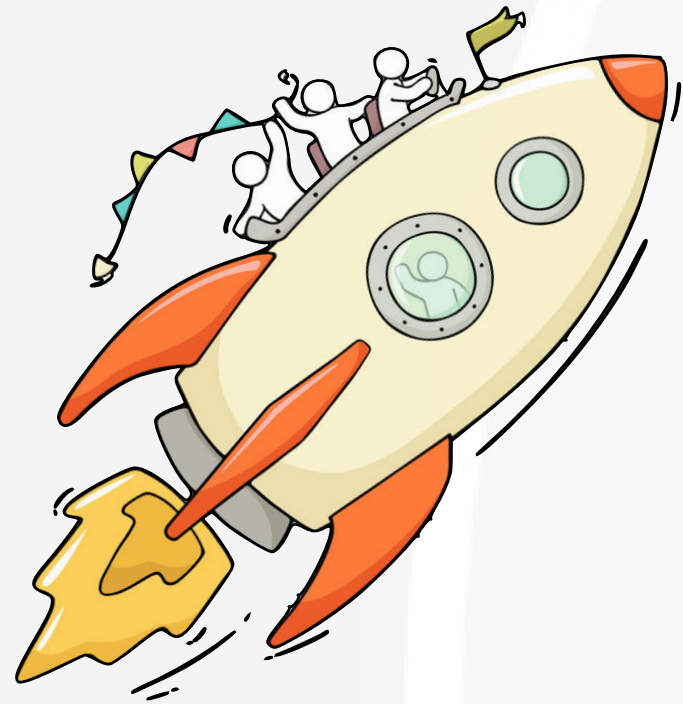
3. Meeting the mentor

A mentor is like a personal trainer for the hero. The mentor helps the hero in some way so that they get the confidence they need to accept the call to adventure, or help them overcome the obstacles getting in their way.

Finding Nemo:

Marlin meets Dory who helps give him the courage to look for Nemo. She can also read human words so helps Marlin read a clue about where Nemo is.



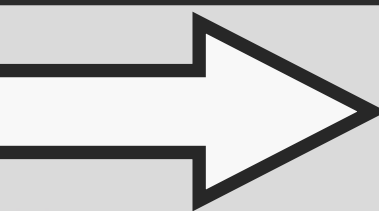
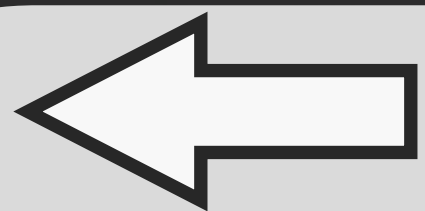


4. Crossing the threshold

It is here that the hero enters their special world for the first time. They fully accept the call and head off on their adventure.

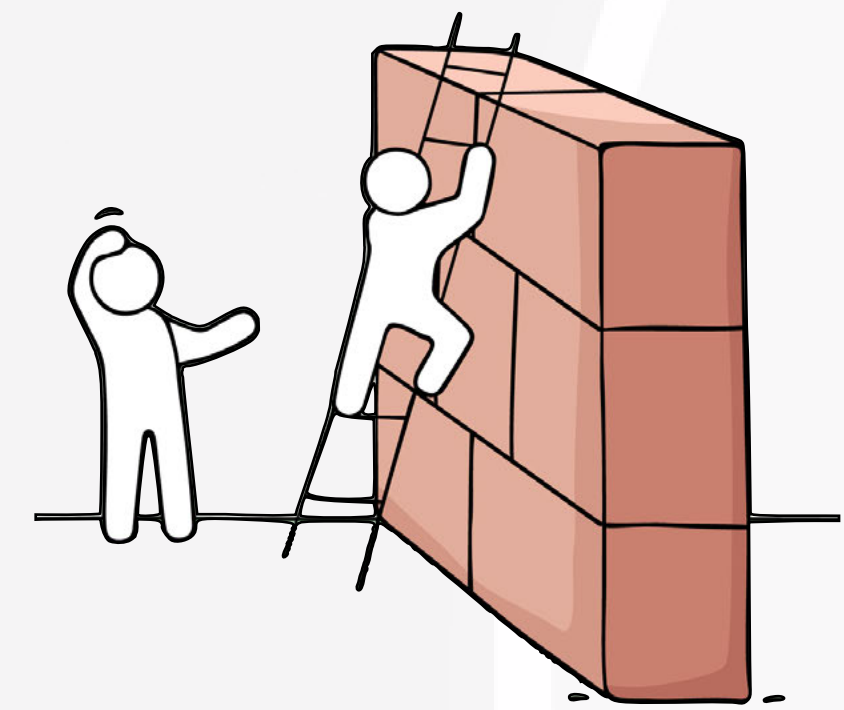
Finding Nemo:

Marlin and Dory set off in the open sea to go and look for Nemo.



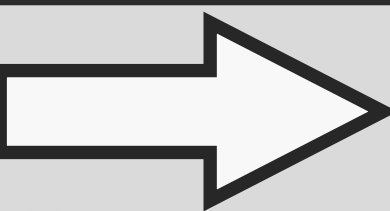
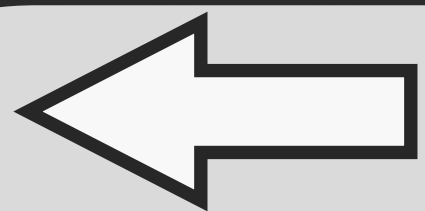
5. Tests, allies and enemies

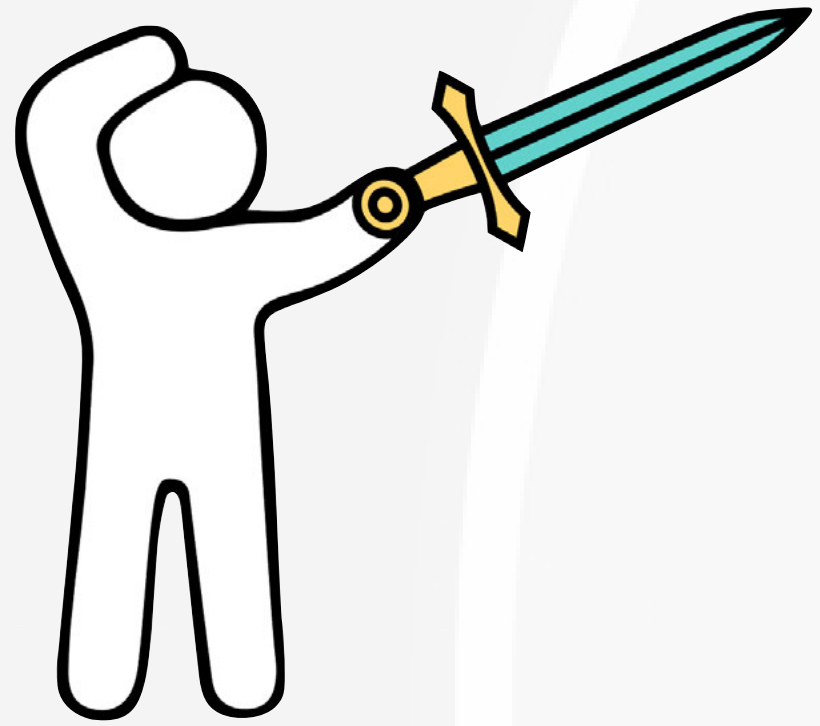
This section is all about the hero becoming familiar with their new world. They might identify new enemies, make new friends or find objects that help them, and usually get themselves into some sticky situations.



Finding Nemo:

Marlin and Dory face a series of dangers that they must overcome together, like getting away from the sharks and getting eaten by a whale. Marlin has to learn to trust Dory even though he finds it difficult.



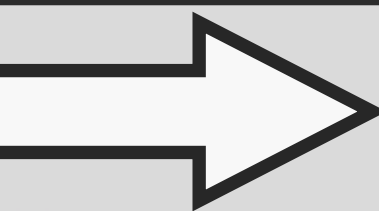
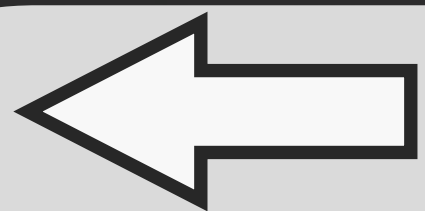


6. The ordeal

This is the climax of the story when the hero faces their biggest challenge to date. They have to overcome odds that seem impossible at first, but they are ultimately successful.

Finding Nemo:

Just when it looks like Nemo will never be returned to the ocean, he manages to escape his fish tank. He finds Marlin (thanks to Dory) but then Dory gets caught in a net. Marlin has to trust Nemo as Nemo races to save Dory. Nemo gets hurt and Marlin thinks he is dead.



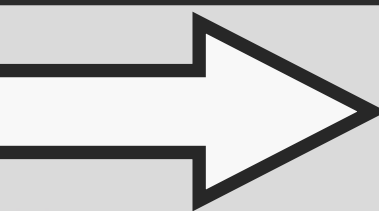
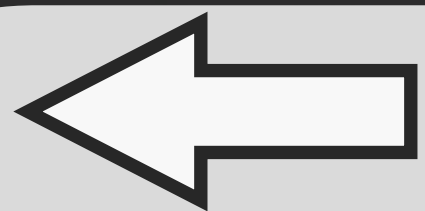
7. The reward

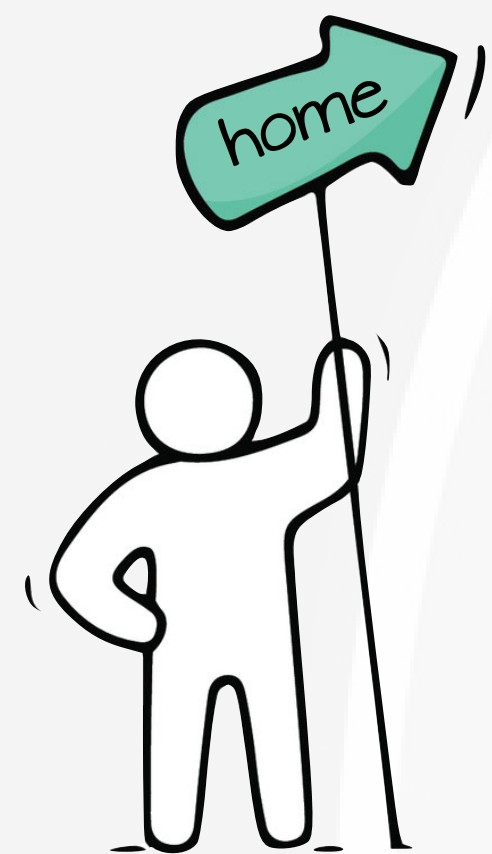
After defeating the enemy or facing their biggest challenge, the hero is given a reward. This could be the thing they have been looking for, an object or even a piece of knowledge, a secret or a special insight into something. Either way, it transforms the hero into a new person.



Finding Nemo:

Nemo regains consciousness and Marlin has his son back.



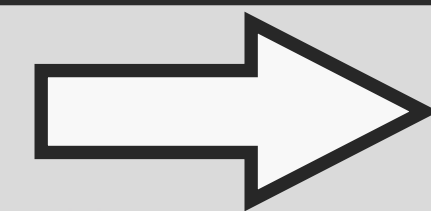
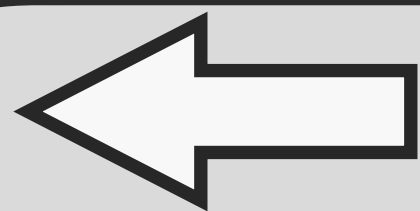


8. The return home

After defeating the enemy or facing their biggest challenge, the hero is given a reward. This could be the thing they have been looking for, an object or even a piece of knowledge, a secret or a special insight into something. Either way, it transforms the hero into a new person.

Finding Nemo:

Marlin and Nemo go back home with Dory. Marlin now allows Nemo to do all the things his friends can do because he knows Nemo is capable of looking after himself. He is now much less anxious and worried.



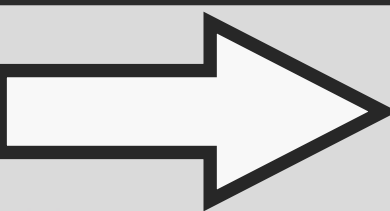
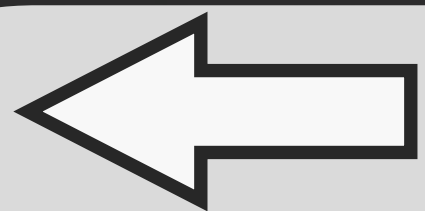


1. Ordinary world

The story starts in the hero's ordinary world. Here we find out about their normal, everyday lives. This section is important because it helps the reader to identify with the hero as being 'normal'. Usually, it will show that something is wrong with the hero's ordinary world.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Harry lives with his aunt, uncle and cousin in 4 Privet Drive because his parents are both dead. He has to live in the cupboard under the stairs because his aunt, uncle and cousin are cruel to him.



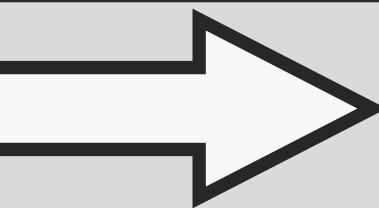
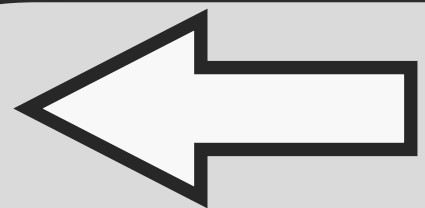
2. Call to adventure

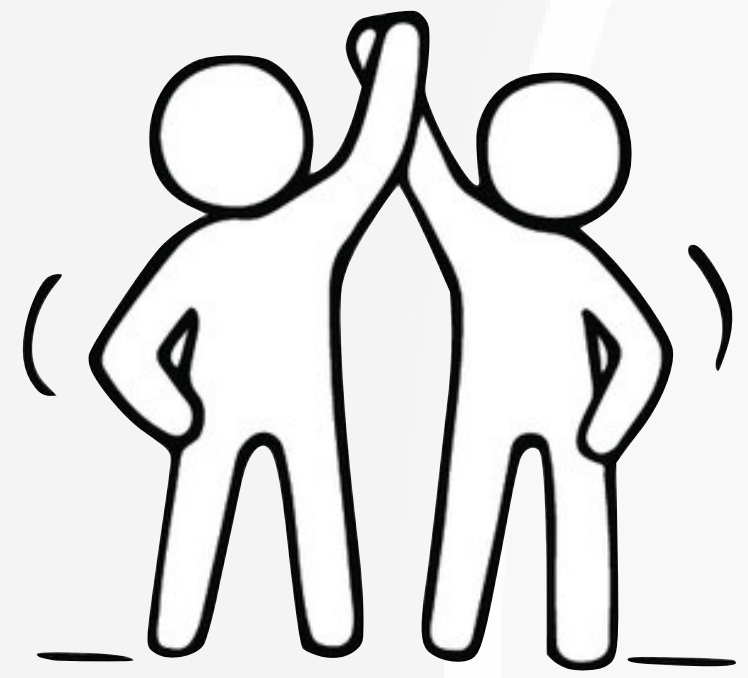
It is here that the hero enters their special world for the first time. This can be a whole different place, or their ordinary world but with a new adventure to embark on. They fully accept the call and head off on their adventure.



Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone:

Harry learns that he is a wizard and is invited to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He doesn't believe he is a wizard at first.



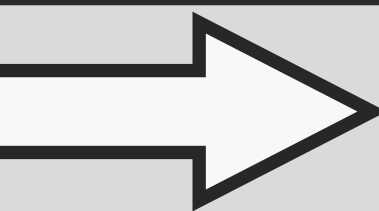
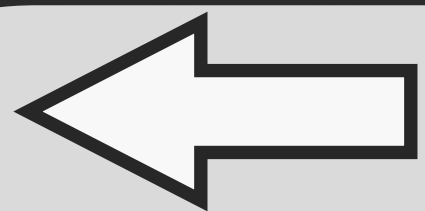


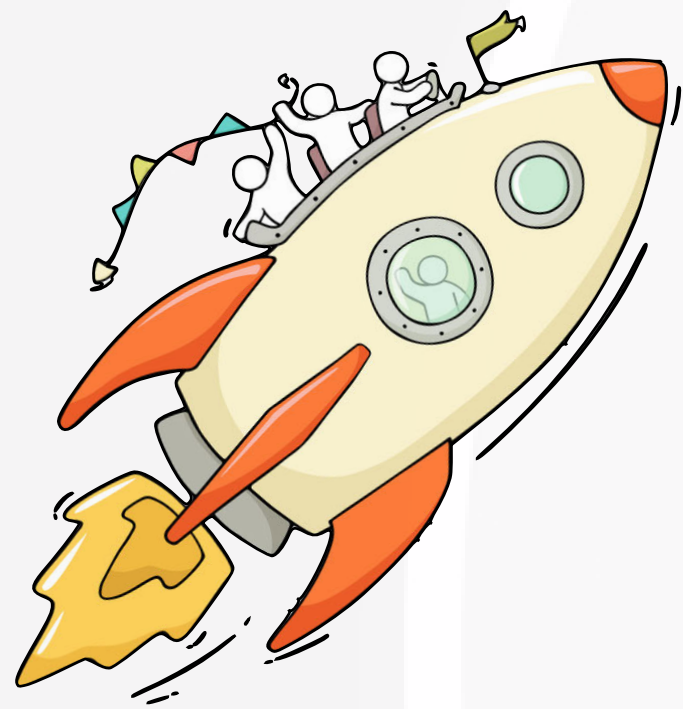
3. Meeting the mentor

A mentor is like a personal trainer for the hero. The mentor helps the hero in some way so that they get the confidence they need to accept the call to adventure, or help them overcome the obstacles getting in their way.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone:

Hagrid takes Harry to Diagon Alley where he gets all the things he needs for going to Hogwarts, including his magic wand.



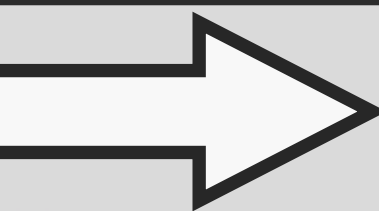
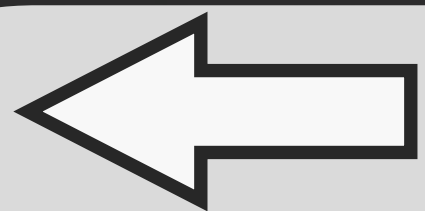


4. Crossing the threshold

It is here that the hero enters their special world for the first time. They fully accept the call and head off on their adventure.

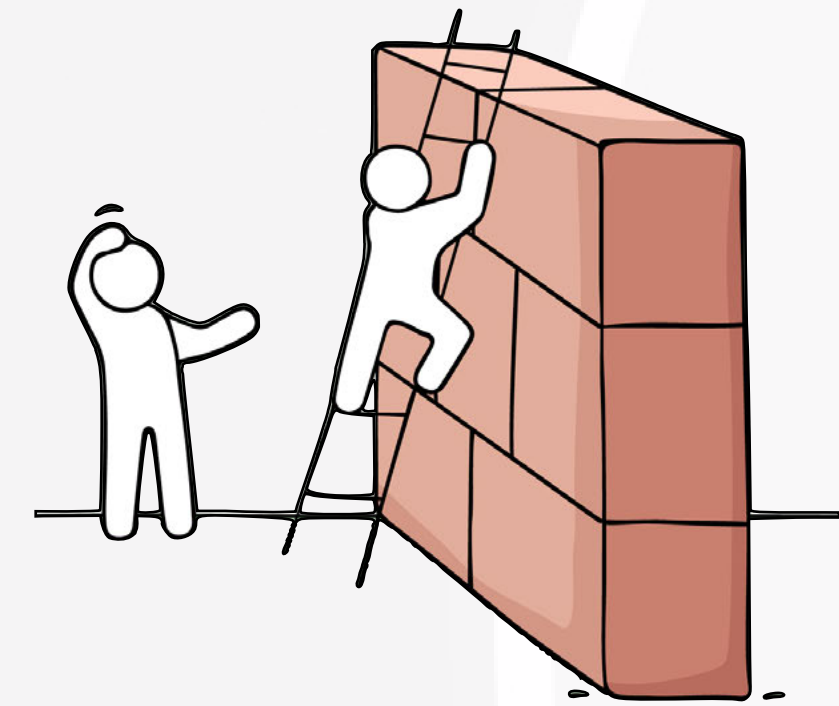
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone:

Harry arrives at Hogwarts and learns of his parents' death at the hands of Lord Voldemort.



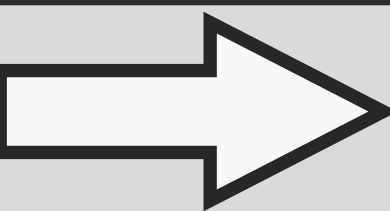
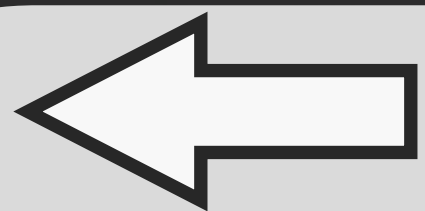
5. Tests, allies and enemies

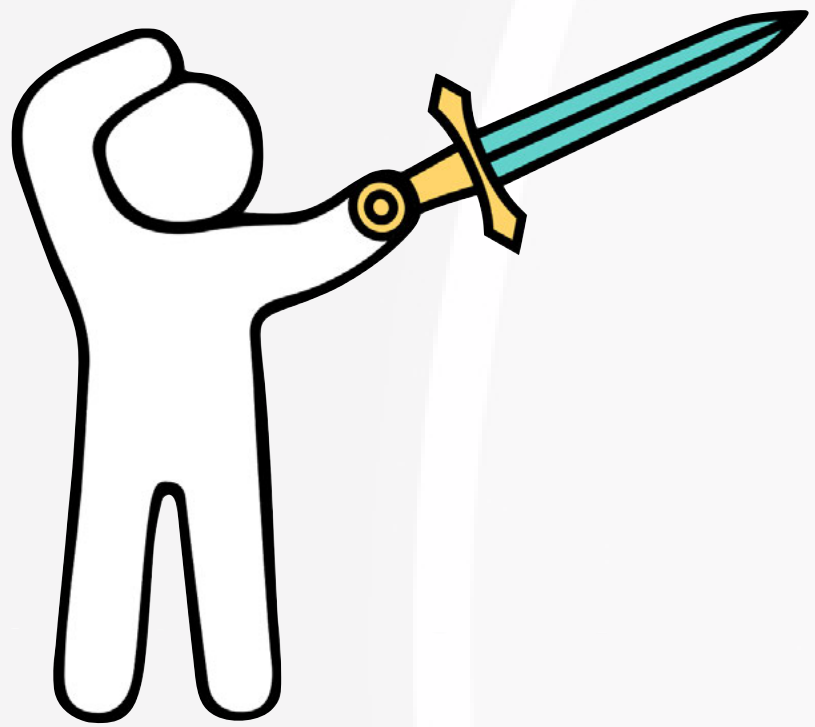
This section is all about the hero becoming familiar with their new world. They might identify new enemies, make new friends or find objects that help them, and usually get themselves into some sticky situations.



Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone:

Harry meets Ron and Hermione and adjusts to life at Hogwarts. They get into a few scrapes, like getting caught in the bathroom with an angry troll. They work together to solve all these problems.



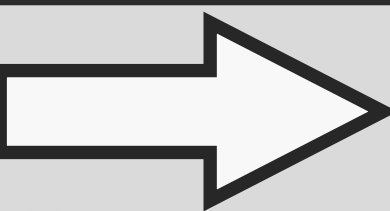
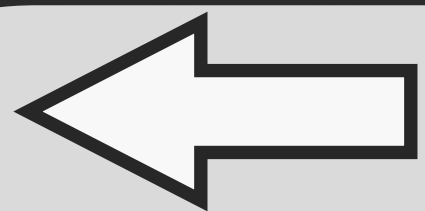


6. The ordeal

This is the climax of the story when the hero faces their biggest challenge to date. They have to overcome odds that seem impossible at first, but they are ultimately successful.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone:

Harry, Ron and Hermione must endure dangerous tasks (like getting past a three-headed dog and playing a deadly chess game) before Harry alone faces up against Lord Voldemort and Professor Quirrel, finally making the Philosopher's Stone safe.



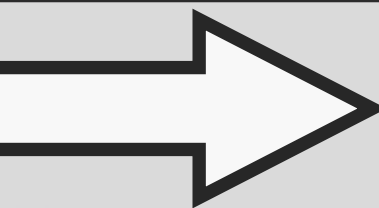
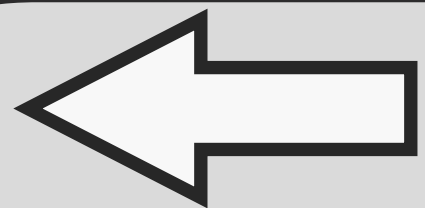
7. The reward

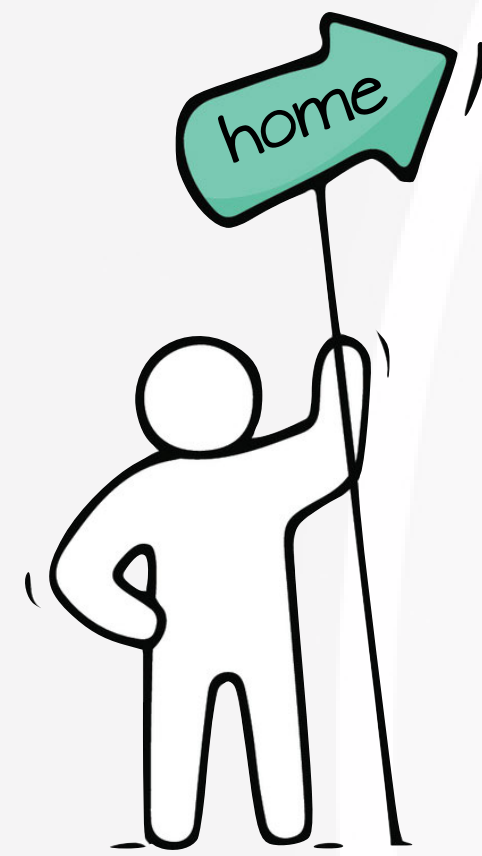
After defeating the enemy or facing their biggest challenge, the hero is given a reward. This could be the thing they have been looking for, an object or even a piece of knowledge, a secret or a special insight into something. Either way, it transforms the hero into a new person.



Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone:

The Philosopher's Stone is safe and Voldemort has been defeated (for now). Harry also learns that his mother is looking out for him and that he is thought of very highly by a lot of people at Hogwarts, including Dumbledore.



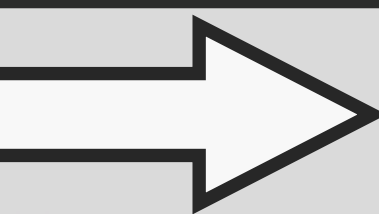
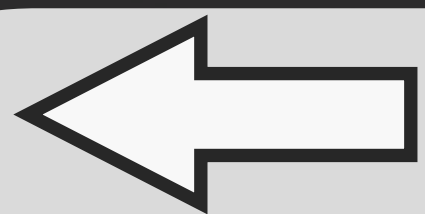


8. The return home

After defeating the enemy or facing their biggest challenge, the hero is given a reward. This could be the thing they have been looking for, an object or even a piece of knowledge, a secret or a special insight into something. Either way, it transforms the hero into a new person.

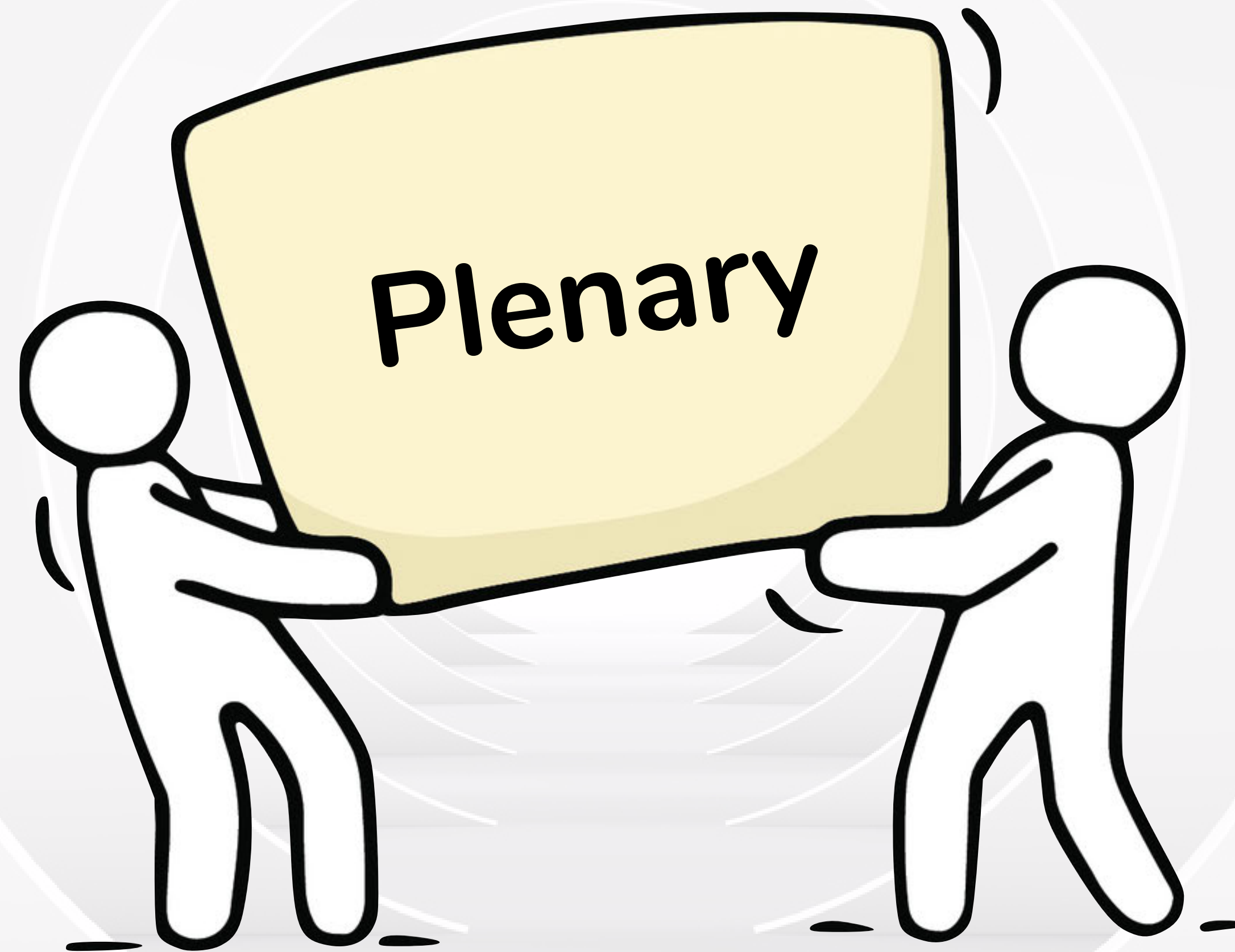
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone:

Harry returns to 4 Privet Drive at the end of term but now he knows that he is cared about and that he can look forward to returning to Hogwarts (and his friends) in the autumn.



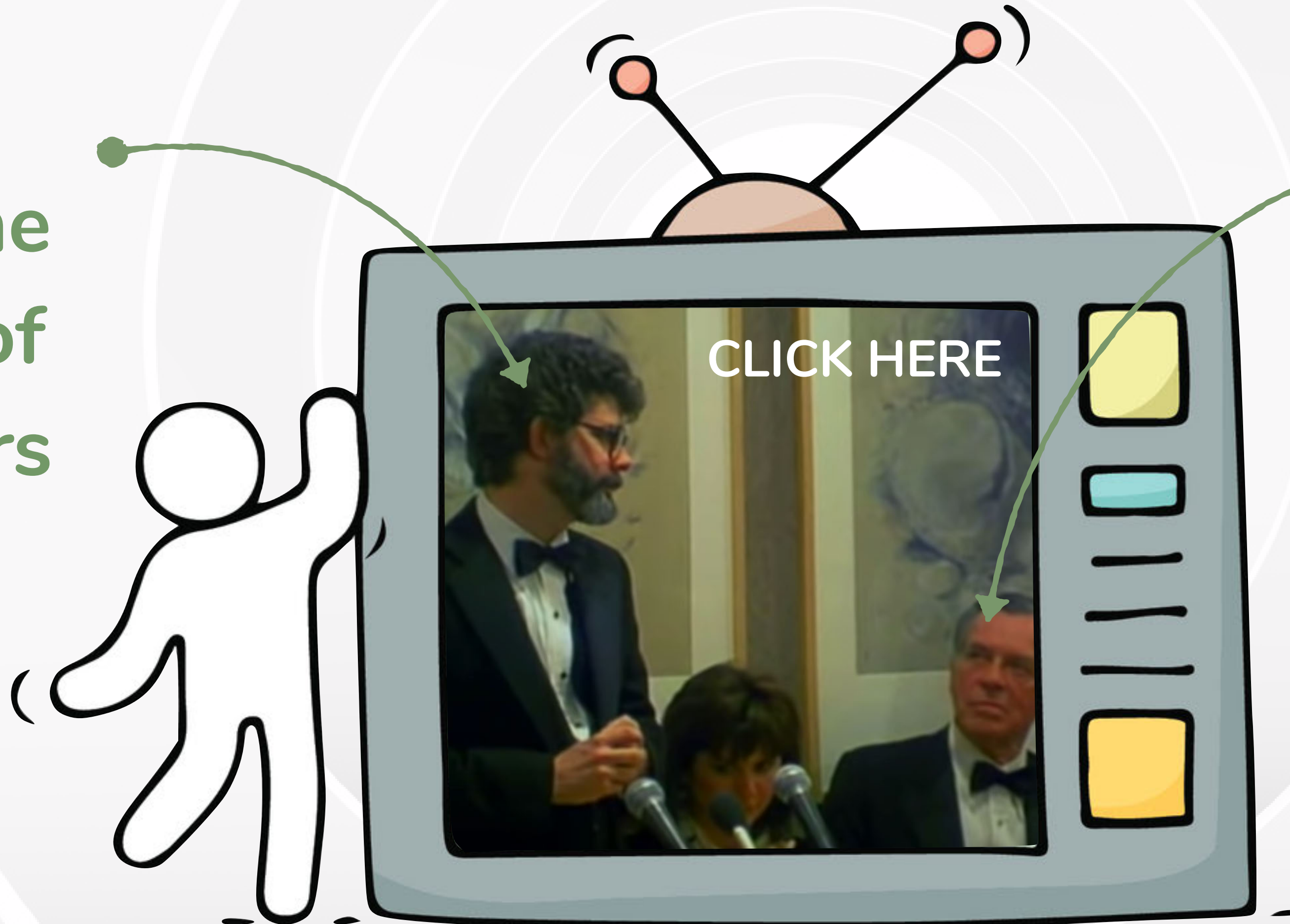
Can you think of any other stories that follow the structure of the hero's journey?



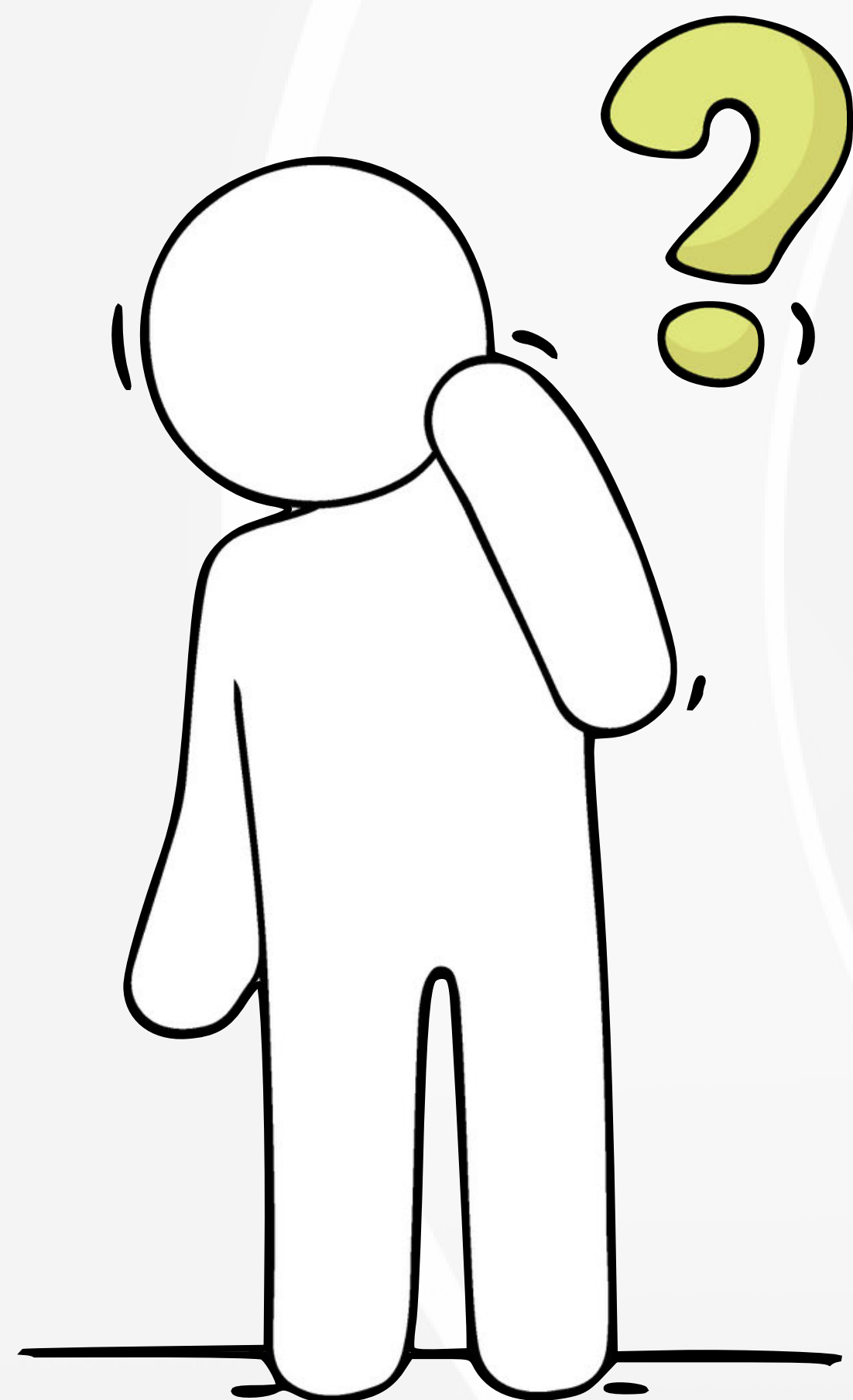


Lots of authors use the hero's journey structure when they are planning their stories. This video shows George Lucas talking at a banquet honouring Joseph Campbell.

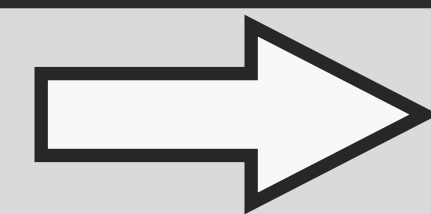
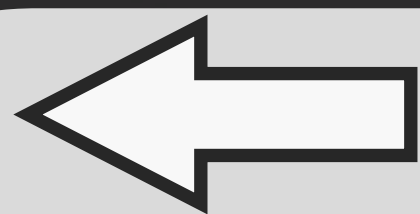
George Lucas, the creator of Star Wars



Joseph Campbell, the author of 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces'



In the video, George Lucas jokes that he might still be writing Star Wars today if he hadn't read 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces'. Why do you think he said this? What did he mean?



Writing a story is hard work. It can take authors years to plan, draft, write and edit a book. However, following a structure like the hero's journey means that you can easily create a plan for a story that you know will work. It will have tension in all the right points, it will build to an exciting climax and it will have the satisfactory resolution to the story that audiences have come to expect.

Over the next few lessons, you're going to be using the hero's journey to plan and write your own stories!

