



Create Your Own Hero

By Erin Armstrong
Visiting Writer-in-Residence

Grade Level: 3rd - 5th

Time Frame: 1 hour

Learning Objectives:

- To introduce Chinese Legends
- To introduce the idea of character creation, specifically the creation of a hero/heroine
- To introduce the idea of description for the development of character
- To introduce the idea of a character in such a way that students have a better understand of how to form stories through character development

Prior Skills: None required

Sequence of Activities:

I. Read *Li Chi Slays The Serpent*

Discuss what it means to be a hero/heroine, relate it to this story in particular. What makes Li Chi heroic? Have students think about what she has done and come up with a list of things she does and how that makes her a heroine.

- She volunteers to be one of the daughters consumed by the dragon; however, every man has failed in their fight to kill the serpent.
- Sacrifices her life to save her family
- She is smart. She asks for a sharp sword and a snake-hunting dog, and she takes rice balls with her.
- She bravely waits for the snake, but outsmarts the snake
- She fights off the snake.
- She saves the kingdom.

II. Write down characteristics of Li Chi:

- Brave
- Strong
- Smart
- Sacrificial
- Remembered
- Unknown
- Courageous
- Unexpected

III. Collaborative Activity: Class Hero

Come up with a class heroine or hero using the prompts below:

Where are they from?

How big is their family?

What do they look like?

What beast is causing problems in their village?

What is the beast's name?

Where does the beast live?

What does the beast look like?

Has anyone tried to kill this beast/monster before?

What do they bring with them to fight off monsters or beasts?

How do they fight off the beasts?

How will the hero or heroine be rewarded if they kill the beast? Do they need to kill the beast?

After you've finished the collaborative activity, have students create their own heroes/heroines.

- If there is time, have students take their heroes/heroines and free write for several minutes. Allow them to do whatever they want with their heroes/heroines. They can go anywhere, do anything, see anything they want to etc. (The idea behind this activity is to get them to start the act of storytelling without any restraint.) Here are some prompts if they need them:
 1. If your hero/heroine could go anywhere, where would they go?
 2. What would they take with them?
 3. Who would they see?
 4. What kinds of magical things would happen?

5. What kinds of magical things might they have with them?
6. What kinds of danger might they come across?
7. How do they get rid of the danger?
8. How does your hero/heroine return to where they are from? Are they greeted happily?

III. Share with the class

- If there is time, have students come up with a second hero, or have them illustrate their first hero.

Required Resources:

“Li Chi Slays The Serpent”

from *Favorite Folktales From Around the World*, Edited by Jane Yolen

Available online:

http://lair2000.net/Chinese_Poetry/stories/Li_Chi_Slays_The_Serpent.html

Excerpt:

In Fukien, in the ancient state of Yueh, stands the Yung mountain range, whose peaks sometimes reach a height of many miles. To the northwest there is a cleft in the mountains once inhabited by a giant serpent seventy or eighty feet long and wider than the span of ten hands. It kept the local people in a state of a constant terror...