purposethe hobbit
K-W-H-L STRATEGY: INSTRUCTIONS

This strategy is adapted from Ogle’s (1992) KWL strategy. The strategy creates an instructional framework for students to list (i) what they know, (2) what they want to find out, (3) how they plan to find new information, and (4) what they have learned or still want to learn.

Rational
Heroism, and what defines it, is one of the major themes of The Hobbit. The K-W-H-L strategy will help students to activate prior knowledge about being a hero and will require them to record their questions to help them vocalize their inquiry. It also allows students to learn that there are many sources where information can be found.

Directions
STEP ONE: INTRODUCE THE STRATEGY
First, hand out a K-W-H-L worksheet to each student and instruct them to brainstorm on the idea of heroes. Instruct them to write their ideas in the first section, “What I Know.” While they are working, place a K-W-H-L chart on an overhead or enlarged on a piece of butcher paper where all of the students can see it. When the students have finished their individual brainstorming, explain that before we study a topic or read a book, it is important to find out what we know about a topic, so that we can focus our reading. You may want to encourage a variety of ideas by asking thought-promoting questions such as:

- What are some characteristics of a hero?
- Who are some famous heroes?
- How are heroes identified (how they dress, what they do)?
- How are heroes treated?

STEP TWO: LIST WHAT IS KNOWN
Ask the students to share the results of their brainstorming. Record the student responses on the class chart, even incorrect assumptions or misconceptions about the idea of heroes. If students challenge one another’s ideas, tell students that they will come back to this chart after reading to confirm facts.
STEP THREE: LIST WHAT THEY WANT TO LEARN
Begin by asking “What do you want to know more about?” or “What questions do you hope are answered by the text?” List all the responses that are given on your chart and tell the students to write the questions they find interesting on their individual charts. Give students a few minutes to generate additional questions that they want to research.

STEP FIVE: DISCUSS HOW TO FIND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
As a class, list possible sources where answers to the questions that were generated could be found. Write these ideas in the “How” section of the overhead and instruct the students to copy the ideas onto their individual charts as well. Guide students to sources other than just the primary text or the encyclopedia.

STEP SIX: FIND ANSWERS
Ask the students to form groups of three or four. Instruct them to choose one question as a group on which they want to do more research. Give them some class time to work on the research (this may be a good time to schedule time in the school’s library or computer lab). Assign the students to organize a presentation of their research for the class that includes some form of visuals. They may choose to do a PowerPoint presentation, make a poster, act out a heroic scene, or dress in costume as they speak, or whatever other ideas you or they can come up with. Encourage them to note on their charts any new things they want to learn or questions that come up during their research.

STEP SEVEN: RECORD WHAT THEY LEARNED
After all of the presentations have been given, record as a class what they learned about being a hero on the class chart. Remind them that learning does not end after finishing a project. Leave the class chart up in the classroom and encourage students to add ideas to any of the sections as they read the novel and learn new things about heroism.

**Assessment**
The K-W-H-L strategy allows the teacher to assess what students already know about heroism. At the conclusion of the K-W-H-L activity, a teacher can assess what was learned and what may still need to be taught in order to help students understand the theme as it is portrayed in *The Hobbit*. 
(EXAMPLE) KWHL WORKSHEET – What is a Hero?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Know</th>
<th>What I Want to Know</th>
<th>What I Learned</th>
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| ● There are all kinds of heroes:  
- superheroes, like Superman and Wolverine  
- knights  
- Greek heroes, like Hercules  
- historical heroes, like Martin Luther King, Jr., Princess Diana, Gandhi, and Columbus  
- personal heroes, like sports figures, celebrities, community leaders, and parents  
● Heroes are often seen as strong, smart, capable, trustworthy, courageous and handsome or pretty  
● Heroes are often portrayed in movies and books with special powers, weapons, or training. | ● What are some heroes in other cultures? Do they portray them the same way we do?  
● When did superheroes like the ones in comic books first become popular?  
● To be a hero, do you have to be fearless and know how to fight?  
● How were people we consider heroes now treated when they were alive? Did they know they were other people’s heroes? Did this affect the way they acted?  
● Why do heroes always have to go on quests?  
● Who is the true hero at the end of The Hobbit? | ● Many heroes do not start out courageous and capable; they often have to find their courage by going through difficult situations.  
● Historical heroes often lead difficult lives. That is why we see them as heroes: they do great things that are really difficult and that we wouldn’t want to do ourselves.  
● All cultures have heroes, but not everyone values the same characteristics in their heroes, so they are portrayed differently. |

How I Can Find Out

1. Read biographies of famous heroes from history  
   - Online: www.biography.com  
   - Print: ie. Requiem: Diana, Princess of Wales 1961-1997 - Memories and Tributes
2. Ask a friend from another culture - do an interview.
3. Find critical analyses of The Hobbit, or Greek myths.  
   - www.davidslife.com/funstuff/tolkien/analysis.htm
4. Find stories about heroes for children  
   - The Steadfast Tin Soldier by Hans Christian Andersen  
   - Jumanji by Chris Van Allsburg
5. Watch a few movies and compare the portrayals of heroes  
   - A Knights Tale - Columbia Pictures (2001)  
   - Hercules - Walt Disney Pictures (1997)
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