Beowulf and the Hero's Journey:
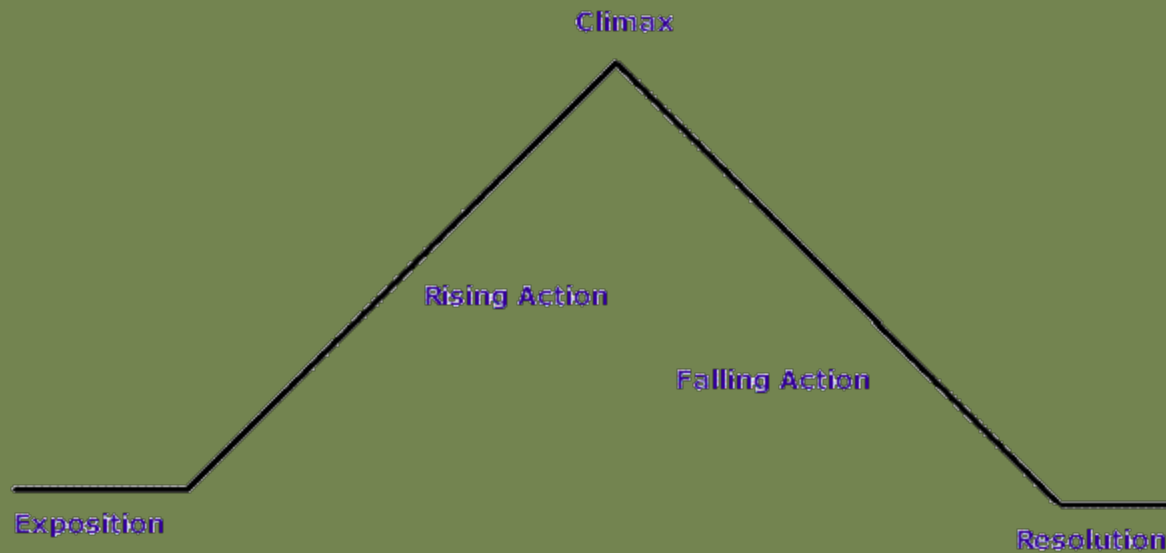
Or Everyone's Story

Turn to a partner and do a quick plot diagram for a favorite Disney movie.

Climax

Rising Action

Falling Action

Exposition

Resolution

After making the plot diagram, complete the following sentences:
1. The mission/goal/quest is to…
2. The hero is the son/daughter of…
3. But he/she was raised…(if this applies)
4. The start of the adventure was…
5. His/her helpful guide is…
6. He/she performs daring deeds when…
7. He/she returns home when…
8. In the end he/she…

Let's share a couple. What similarities or patterns do you notice?

Most Disney movies follow the hero's journey archetype. Archetype means original pattern. In the arts (literature, film, visual arts, etc.) there are character traits, themes, and plot structures that are repeated.

Joseph Campbell writes *Hero With a Thousand Faces* in 1949

George Lucas based his famous Star Wars Trilogy on Campbell's book

At its most basic, the hero's journey has 3 parts:

1)The departure: Where the hero must leave home and prove himself/herself in a new place.
2)Initiation: The hero suffers to learn something new.
3)The return: The hero comes back home and uses his/her newly acquired knowledge.

The Separation/Departure:
The "call to adventure" invites the hero into the journey.

The "threshold" is the divide between the known (home, comfort) and the unknown (danger, challenges).

The conflict occurs after the hero crosses the threshold.

Initiation:
Outward (physical change), inward (psychological change), or both

The intensity of a hero's challenges increase
The final challenge is called the abyss-he or she must face this alone

After surviving the abyss, the hero's transformation is complete

Atonement: to be at peace with oneself

Return:

- Once tasks are completed, the hero returns home
- This can be a literal return or a symbolic return
- Heroes can also experience a return in death

Why do you think so many stories follow this format? And have followed this format for as long as humans and societies have existed?

Is there really only one good story to tell? Why or why not?

What can we learn about ourselves and life from myths or stories?
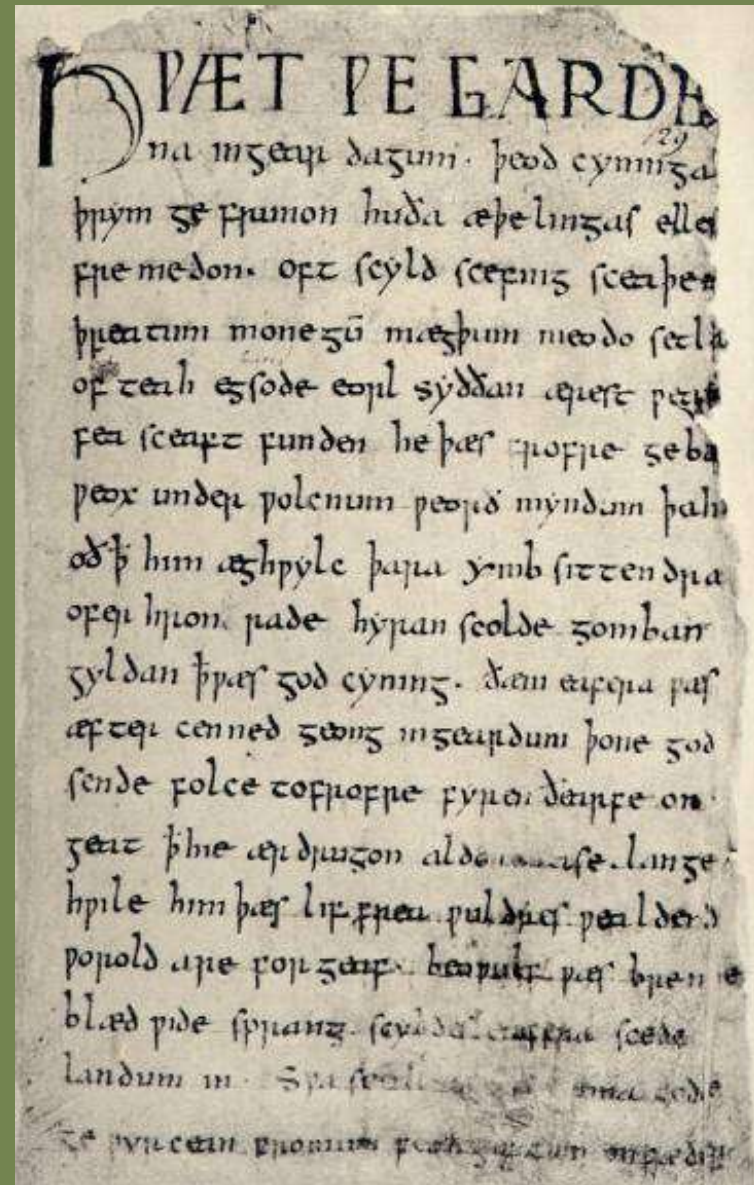
Take a 2 minute stretch break!

Beowulf

Epic poem- a long narrative poem that tells a hero's story.

Combination of narrative and drama

Oral tale, with musical accompaniment

Then recorded 7-10th C

Poem was written in Old English or Anglo-Saxon.

Each line uses alliteration and 4 stressed syllables.

It is the oldest epic poem written in English still in existence.

Some historical truth, mostly fiction.

We don't know who wrote *Beowulf*.

Anglo-Saxons:
They were attacked and conquered for centuries.

Romans introduced Christianity and A-S's converted to Christianity in late 6th CE

Story takes place in 6th CE

Anglo-Saxons came from continental Europe and settled in Britain

The A-S's lived in tribes; their upper class was comprised of warriors

Eventually, they had kings

Anglo-Saxon Values

❖ Importance of family and relationships

❖ A good story

❖ Wealth, power, and heroism

❖ Feared loneliness and isolation

❖ Followed a heroic code that demanded strength, courage, and loyalty from its society

❖ Kings were expected to be social, hospitable, and generous

Beowulf Connections

❖ Blended newly introduced Christian values and traditional Pagan values (that's the heroic code part)

❖ Grendel and Grendel's mother, characters from Beowulf, are descendants of Cain

❖ God is responsible for good and bad things that happened