



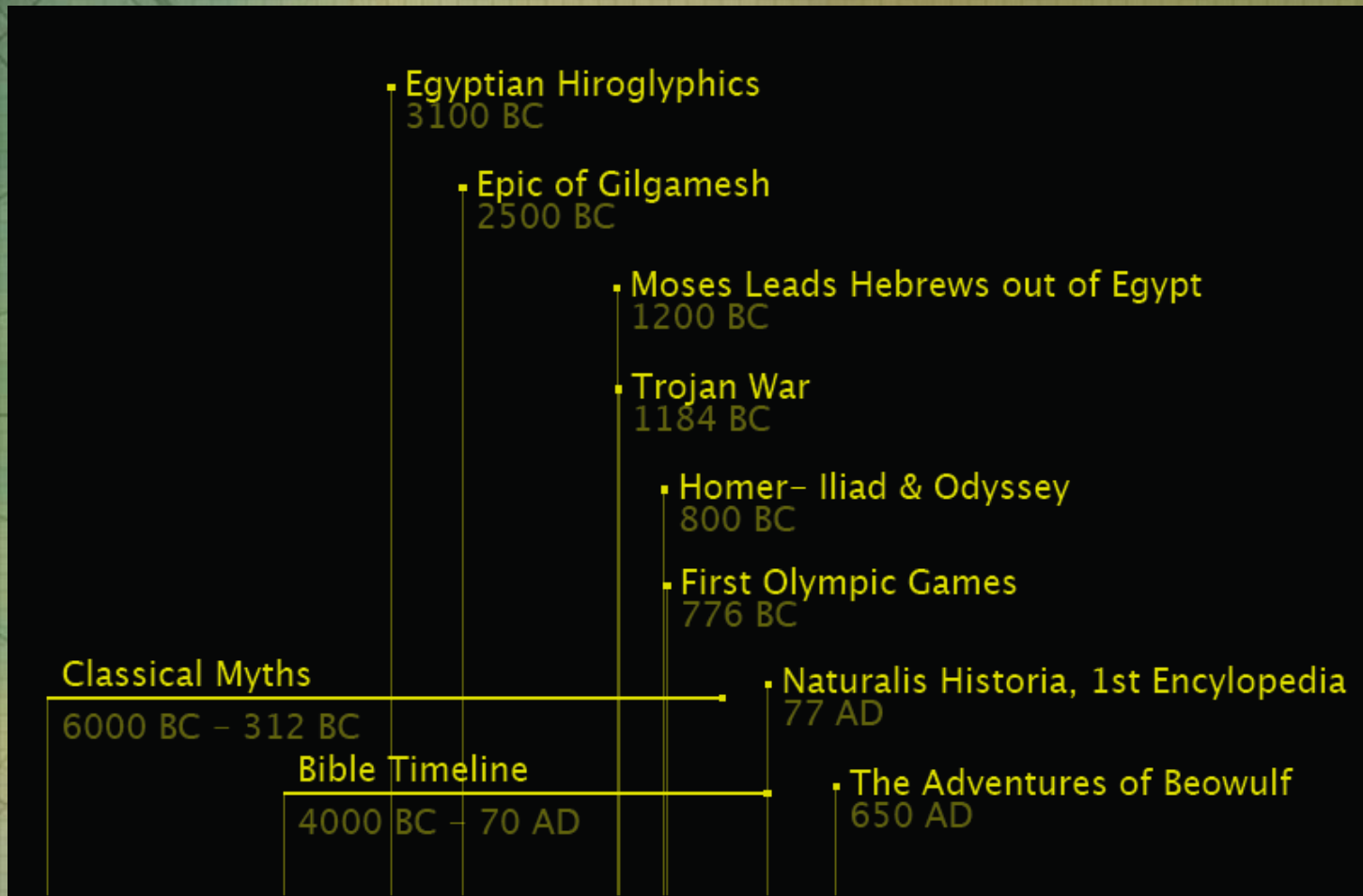
EPIC POETRY

ENGLISH II

What is Epic Poetry?

- long narrative poem
- great and serious subject,
- elevated style
- centered on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race.

Origins of the Epic



Characteristics of Epic

- **Usually contains several books or volumes**
- **Many started from “oral tradition” or spoken poems that were memorized and recited ceremonially**

Characteristics of Epic cont.

Original text often has rhyme/poetic devices

- Often in *rhyming couplets* (aa, bb, cc)
- Alliteration
- Digressions (into other stories/myths)
- Epithets – descriptive word or phrase to accompany or replace a person's name “Brave Odysseus” or “wine-dark sea”
- Repetition or reoccurring lines/phrases

Characteristics of Epic cont.

Contains a hero with specific characteristics

❖ **Known as an Epic Hero**

The Setting is vast in scope

❖ **Sometimes both in time and space**



Characteristics of Epic cont.

Starts “*in media res*” or “in the middle”

- ❖ Story begins in the middle and flashes back so that the reader can understand the current situation

Narrator invokes a Muse

- ❖ One of the 9 daughters of Zeus that give divine inspiration

Characteristics of Epic cont.

An epic also contains:

- Battles**
- Romance**
- A great journey**
- Lists/Catalogs**
 - people, items, genealogies, etc.**
- Supernatural influence/intervention**
 - Called “machinery”**
- A descent into the underworld/Rebirth**
- Epic Simile (or extended simile)**
- Extended formal speeches**

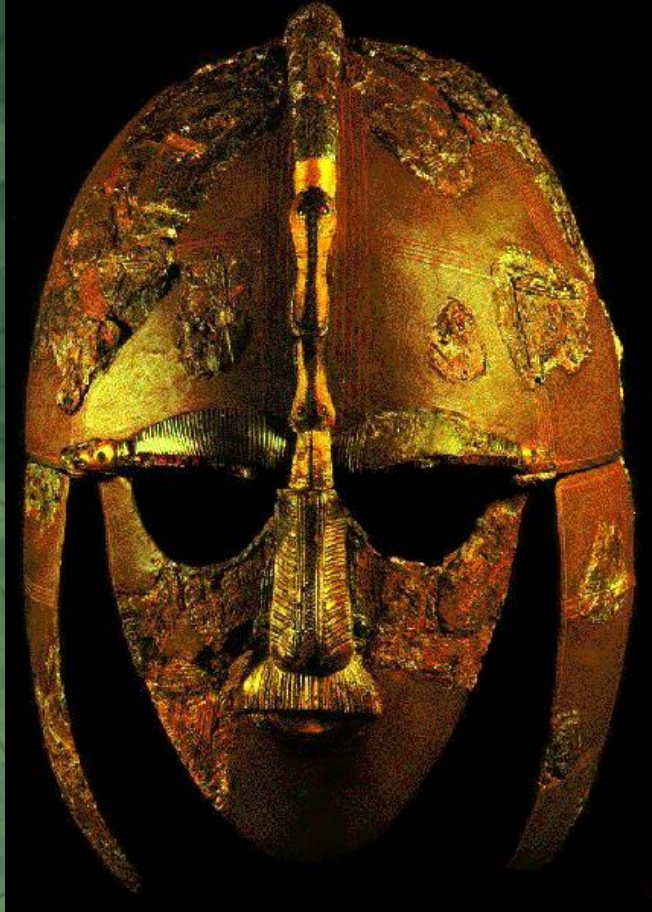
The Epic Hero

The hero is a figure of great national or even cosmic importance, usually the ideal man of his *culture*. He often has superhuman or divine traits.

He has an imposing physical stature and is greater in all ways than the common man.



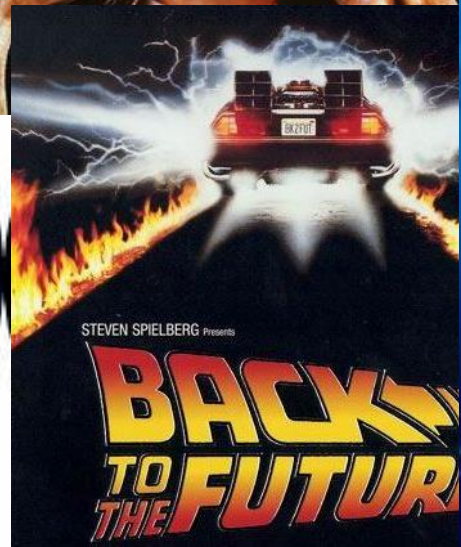
The Hero's Journey



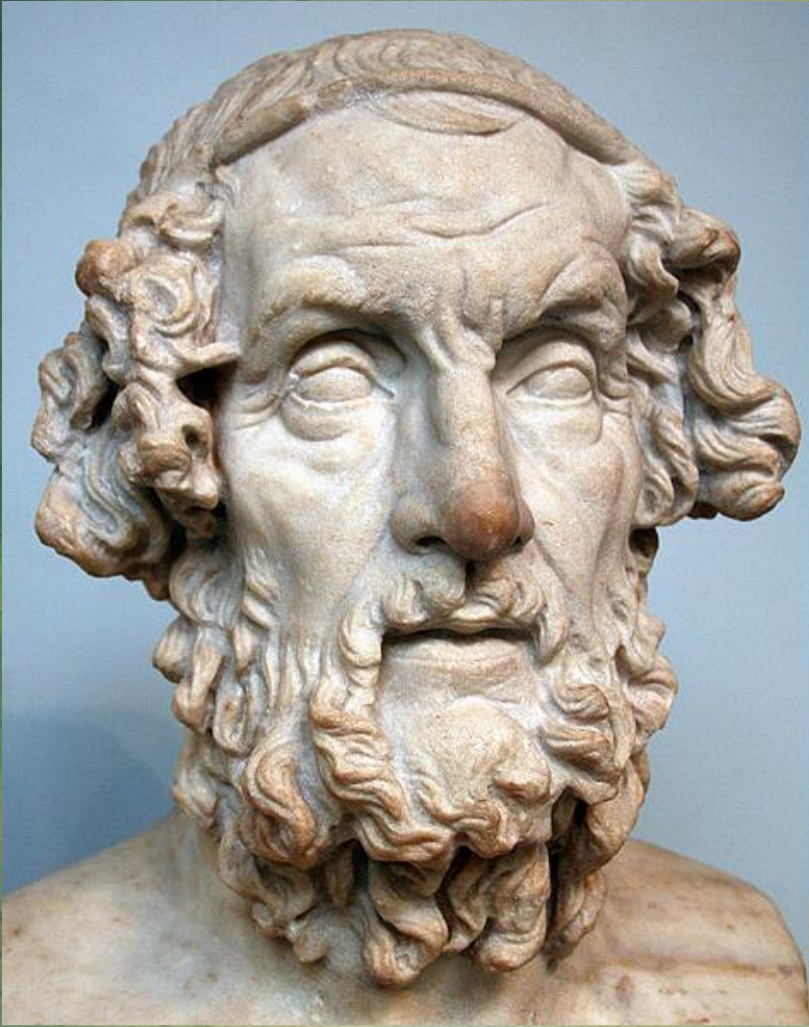
According to Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, there are three major stages to the Hero's Journey:

- **Separation**
- **Initiation**
- **Return**

Modern Examples of Hero's Journey



Homer



- Stories originated from a series of poets who each orally composes an entirely different version of the story
- Homer is traditionally a blind author of *The Iliad* & *The Odyssey*
- A wandering bard, holder of myths and history

Epic Poetry Teams

- I. Heading #1
 - A. Subheading #1
 1. Supporting detail #1
 2. Supporting Detail #2
 - B. Subheading #2
- II. Heading #2

If you have an A, you must have a B.

If you have a 1, you must have a 2.

- Each team will consist of _____ people.
- Your first task is to read p106-121 in the textbook and create a formal outline of the information.