

A Five-Paragraph Essay Model

The Prompt

Heroes are a valuable part of our world and everyone's daily life. Identify qualities or traits heroes possess and provide examples of these qualities.

Explain why these qualities are important.

Qualities of an Extraordinarily Ordinary Hero

The introduction begins with an attention-getting sentence and moves from general statements about the topic to the specific. Finally, it ends with a three-point thesis statement that states the main idea of the essay and briefly outlines the topics of the body paragraphs.

Abraham Lincoln and Spider-Man are not the only heroes in the world. Heroes can be ordinary people like you and me. They can be as young as a child or as old as a senior citizen. However, as different as they might be, ordinary **heroes** like my Grandma Jean **possess universal qualities**, such as **courage, determination, and compassion**.

Courage, which is undoubtedly a trait that most heroes possess, motivates people to make positive changes in the world. In a society that believed a woman's place was in the home, my grandmother's inner strength and courage allowed her to break the mold. During the 1930s she worked on Wall Street as the art editor for *Good Housekeeping* magazine, and later in her life she became the country's first Cattlewoman of the Year. Even though she was frequently the only woman in a room filled with hundreds of men, Grandma Jean still had the courage to gracefully stride up to the podium to speak about the new genetic techniques that she designed to help ordinary cattlemen improve the quality of their herds. **In short**, her inner strength and **courage** allowed her to serve as an advocate for women's rights.

The topic sentence of the body paragraph relates back to the first point of the thesis. It describes a heroic quality and explains its importance. The writer then uses three specific details and examples to illustrate the heroic quality of courage. The clincher sentence begins with a transition word and summarizes the main idea.

The writer uses a transition word, "another," to introduce the second quality a hero possesses. The topic sentence relates back to the second point of the thesis. Again, three detail sentences illustrate the heroic quality. A concluding sentence summarizes the main idea.

Another admirable quality that heroes possess is **determination**, which enables many people to overcome challenges and difficult situations. Determined to help my invalid, wheelchair-bound grandfather live a normal life, my grandmother invented a creative way for him to roam the cattle pastures. Grandma Jean actually bought and renovated a Checker taxicab! Every afternoon she maneuvered my grandfather's lift and drove him from one field to another in his comfortable, king-size automobile. Without my grandmother's **determination** and creativity, my grandfather would have been trapped inside the house in his wheelchair unable to view his beloved land and livestock.

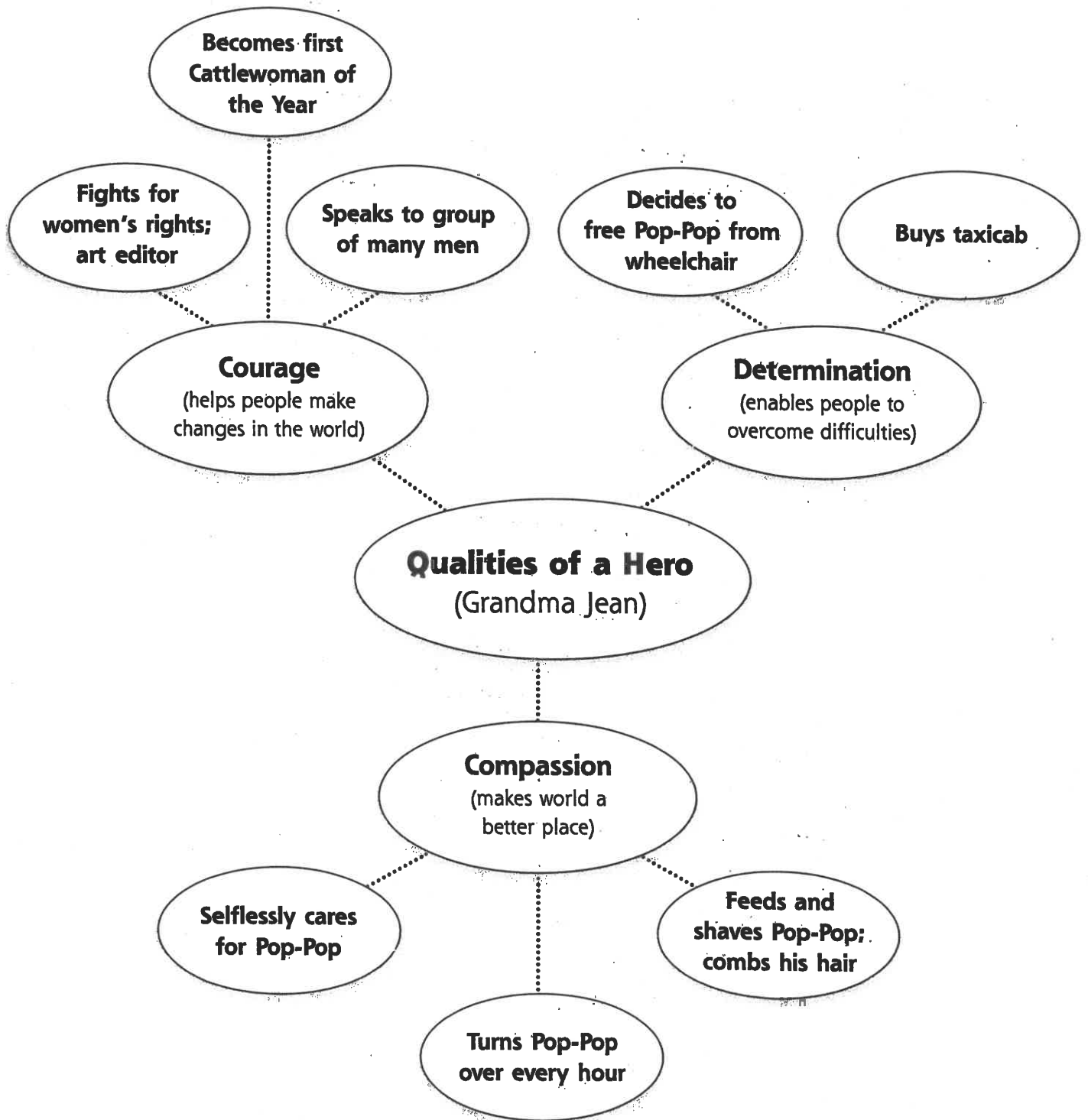
Although courage and determination are heroic traits, perhaps the most important quality is **compassion**. Without a doubt, caring about others and helping those in need make the world a more humane place to live. For 15 years my grandmother tirelessly and selflessly cared for my grandfather. Because he literally had no muscles, Grandma Jean awoke every hour on the hour each night to turn my grandfather on his side or back so that he would not get bedsores. When Pop-Pop's hands and arms no longer worked, my grandmother fed him, shaved him, and combed his hair. Even in the face of her own devastating battle with cancer, my grandmother continued to show deep **compassion** by comforting and reaching out to my grandfather, other cancer patients, and her own family.

Heroes like my grandmother are not as extraordinary as Abraham Lincoln or Spider-Man. However, their **courage, determination, and compassion** inspire others to make changes, overcome obstacles, and reach out to those in need. Heroes are our beacons, our guides, the people who individually and collectively promote peace, justice, love, and understanding. Because of them, our world is a better, richer place to live.

The conclusion includes a detail from the introduction to wrap up the essay. It restates or echoes the thesis statement, summarizes the main points, and ends with a powerful statement.

The topic sentence of the third paragraph relates to the third point of the thesis and connects back to body paragraphs one and two. It also has three detail sentences and a clincher. Also, the writer organizes the information in the body from least important to most important.

Model Web for Qualities of a Hero



Five Approaches to Attention-Getting Introductions

To grab the reader's attention in the introduction of the five-paragraph essay, try some of the following techniques:

1 Start with an analogy.

Pounding. Forever pounding upon the anvil is the hammer. The clash of steel and iron as they meet on the cold, rusty anvil permeates the air and echoes through it. All the while, the sturdy, resilient anvil provides the support needed to withstand the blows of the hammer. It is forever the broad base to be bashed and smashed to make the iron stronger and to give the hammer strength in return. In *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens the lower class of nineteenth-century England is the anvil; the upper class is the hammer. Through his portrait of the social classes, Dickens illustrates that social rank causes people to act foolishly, misjudge character, and lose themselves in order to conform to society's expectations. —Cassidy Quilty

2 Ask a question.

How many times have you been told to remove your lazy derriere from the computer and exercise instead? The truth is computers are a huge part of everybody's life. From business offices to your own living room, computers are everywhere. In contemporary society, people must be computer literate to survive. Used to type documents, access the Internet, and communicate, the computer has become a necessity in today's new world. —Stephanie Povirk

3 Use a quotation.

"To err is human, to forgive is divine." Alexander Pope's words are relevant in contemporary society and in *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. In both worlds, the collective society forgets that all humans make mistakes and deserve forgiveness. Dickens echoes this theme by openly mocking society for its inability to forgive Magwitch for his crimes and to allow him once again to live a new life. Throughout the course of the novel Pip, the protagonist, learns about man's inhumanity to man. He discovers that many innocent people are punished unfairly, that many horrible people are considered to be respectable, and that jails do not denote the inner worth of a person. —Cole Pierce

4 Begin with an enticing sensory description of the setting.

Freshly cut grass. Blooming tulips. Warming temperatures. Springtime had arrived. Our lunchtime chatter remained the same, brimming with gossip of boys, classes, and get-togethers. But on that fateful morning, our lunch table buzzed with the excitement of the upcoming softball season. —Cassie Leighton

5 Create an interesting simile.

Growth without experience is like a bridge without support. In *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, the protagonist Pip struggles to bridge the gap between the lower and upper classes as he strives to attain higher social status. Dickens illustrates that true growth can only happen in stages. Thus, as Pip's expectations shatter, he discovers his internal weaknesses, removes his blinders, and becomes a true gentleman. —Mark Rossborough

It's All in the Transition

Keep this list of transitional words and phrases handy as you write.

To Show Similarity

also, in the same way, like, likewise, similarly

To Contrast

although, but, however, in spite of, on the one hand ... on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, otherwise, still, yet

To Show Sequence/Order

first, second, third, next, then, finally

To Show Time

after, afterward, as soon as, at last, before, currently, during, earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, soon, subsequently, then, today, tomorrow

To Present an Example

for example, for instance, specifically, to illustrate

To Show Emphasis

again, even, for this reason, indeed, in fact, of course, to repeat, truly, with this in mind

To Show Place/Position

above, across, adjacent, below, beyond, down, here, in front, in back, nearby, outside, there, throughout

To Show Cause and Effect

accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus

To Present Additional Support or Information

additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then

To Present a Conclusion or Summary

as a result, finally, in a word, in brief, in conclusion, in the end, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, in summary

Essay Style and Format

Underline the names of:

Books: Tuck Everlasting
Plays: The Lion King
Newspapers: Boston Globe
Television Shows: The Brothers Garcia
Movies: Shrek
Magazines: Scholastic News
Ballets and Operas: The Nutcracker
Paintings: Mona Lisa
Ships and Planes: Queen Mary

Use quotation marks with the names of:

Short Stories: "The Red Pony"
Chapter Titles: "The Industrial Age Begins"
Essays and Articles: "Berry Good Pie"
Poems: "Chicken Soup With Rice"
Episodes of Television Programs: "Lizzie Goes to New York"
Songs: "The Wheels on the Bus"
Lectures: "Three Easy Steps for Growing Roses"

Typing Rules

Double space an essay.
Use a one-inch margin on each side.
Don't use "fun" fonts in an essay.
Use a clear and readable font, such as Courier or Times New Roman, in 12 point.

The Title of an Essay

Underline the title of your essay.
Capitalize the first letter in the first and last words.
Capitalize all the important words in between.
Don't capitalize short articles and prepositions such as *a, the, in, for*.
The title should grab your reader's attention.
It should also fit the overall tone of your essay.

Names

The first reference to a person should use his or her full name.
After that, refer to the person by his or her last name.
Do not use titles such as Mr. and Mrs.
Follow this style:
William Shakespeare would be pleased that his plays are still being performed today. In fact, if Shakespeare were still alive, he'd probably still be tinkering with *Romeo and Juliet*.

A Bodybuilding Exercise

You can use this chart to help you write the body of your essay. Each paragraph in the body should have its own topic sentence and details that support it.

Paragraph 1 of Body:

Main Idea:

Detail:

Detail:

Detail:

Paragraph 2 of Body:

Main Idea:

Detail:

Detail:

Detail:

Paragraph 3 of Body:

Main Idea:

Detail:

Detail:

Detail:

Organizing Your Ideas

Topic: _____

I. Introduction/Thesis: _____

II. Main Point to Discuss: _____

A. _____

B. _____

III. Main Point to Discuss: _____

A. _____

B. _____

IV. Main Point to Discuss: _____

A. _____

B. _____

V. Conclusion: _____
