Dream Big: The Inspiring Young Heroes of the Barron Prize profiles a diverse group of passionate young people who are making the world a better place. Highlights of this 45-minute, award-winning documentary:

- **What is a hero?** Barron Prize young heroes offer their definitions of a hero, interspersed with quotes by leaders such as Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and Nelson Mandela. Author T.A. Barron talks about the inspirational power of real-life heroes.

- **Jane Goodall: Heroes Matter** Jane Goodall talks about her dreams and inspirations as a young girl, and encourages young people to change the world.

- **T.A. Barron: Young Heroes** T.A. Barron speaks about the importance of heroes, and the origins of the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, which celebrates young people making a difference.

- **Seven Young Heroes** Meet seven heroic young people, all winners of the Barron Prize, who are solving a wide range of environmental and community problems.

- **Heroes vs. Celebrities** Barron Prize winners talk about the critical difference between heroes and celebrities.

- **Credits**

**More about...**

- **The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes** The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes honors outstanding young leaders who have made a significant positive difference to people and our planet. Their leadership and courage make them true heroes — and inspirations to us all. To learn more about the award, visit www.barronprize.org

- **T.A. Barron** T.A. Barron is the award-winning and New York Times bestselling creator of the twelve-book Merlin saga, which has sold millions of copies worldwide and has been translated into more than twenty languages. Always a believer in the heroism of every child and in the magnificence of nature, T. A. Barron has founded the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, which honors outstanding young people of all descriptions. He travels the country — and the globe — speaking with children, educators and writers about our stories, our aspirations, and our world. He lives in Colorado with his wife and five children, who are his favorite hiking partners and first readers. Visit his website at www.tabarron.com

**“This inspires young people to change the world.”** — Jane Goodall

**Matthew: Playgrounds for All** Matthew, age 15, of Connecticut, led a community-wide effort to construct a wheelchair-accessible playground in his hometown.

**Ellie: Online Language** Ellie, age 18, of Los Angeles, founded www.RepeatAfterUs.com, a web site that helps people learn English as a second language.

**Shawn: Urban Garden** Shawn, age 19, of New York City, created Garden Angels, a non-profit group that transforms abandoned city lots into community gardens.

**Gina: Pavement from Plastic** Gina, age 18, of British Columbia, invented a new type of road-paving material made largely from recycled plastic bottles.

**Barbara: Don’t be Crude** Barbara, age 19, of Texas, created the Don’t Be Crude motor oil recycling program in her rural town, a project that has expanded to seven counties.

**Ashley: African Girls** Ashley, age 20, of Colorado, founded AfricaAid, a non-profit organization committed to helping African girls receive an education.

**Michaella: Special Rodeo** Michaella, age 17, of Colorado, created a rodeo for children with physical and developmental disabilities.

**What is a hero?**

1. Ask students to read several of the young heroes profiles in The Hero’s Trail. Provide younger students with nonfiction picture book biographies about heroes (borrowed from your library). Have students work in pairs to identify why these people can be considered heroes, citing specific evidence from the texts.

2. Facilitate a class discussion in which students compare and contrast the actions and motivations of the different heroes in their reading. Chart their ideas on a list titled “Heroes are people who...”

3. Have students work in teams to define the word “hero.” Ask them to revisit The Hero’s Trail and picture book biographies to see how these authors define “hero,” drawing on inference when necessary. Older students could also reference:
   - The Hero with a Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell (prologue)
   - A Call to Heroism by Peter Gibbon
   - The Giraffe Heroes Project (www.giraffe.org)
   - Various dictionaries
   - Definitions offered by Barron Prize young heroes at the start of the film Dream Big

4. Challenge students to come to consensus in writing a class definition of the word “hero.” Remind them to cite the heroes texts for support as they argue for or against the inclusion of certain words and ideas.

**Classroom-Tested Strategies for Implementing the ELA Common Core Standards**

- **Age level:** Grades 3 to 10
- **Subject areas:** Language Arts, Social Studies
- **Standards:** Activities align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

**This guide contains stand-alone activities for exploring the concept of heroes with your students. The activities are made even deeper by the heroic examples and ideas in my nonfiction book, The Hero’s Trail.**

I hope you and your students will enjoy making use of these strategies, designed specifically to help you meet Common Core Standards!”

— T.A. Barron

**This documentary film – plus additional materials about heroes — is available at www.tabarron.com**
Ask each student to choose one historical hero to research, designing a "Wanted!" poster for their hero including creating interview questions and answers that might have students compare the fictional heroes in their favorite writing a journal entry from their hero's point of view.

Of those teens who did name a well-known hero, more who are heroic examples?

demonstrates heroic qualities he or she feels are important. Students can "introduce" their heroes by:

1. Have students continue to use and cite the heroes texts above in considering the question, "What character qualities does it take to be a hero?" Chart their ideas to create a classroom list of Heroic Character Qualities.

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• Have students continue to use and cite the heroes texts above in considering the question, "What character qualities does it take to be a hero?" Chart their ideas to create a classroom list of Heroic Character Qualities.

• Compare the classroom list to the five heroic character qualities that T. A. Barron uses in The Hero's Trail for categorizing heroes—courage, perseverance, generosity, compassion, and hope. Do students agree or disagree with his choice to focus on these five qualities? Have them write a letter to T. A. Barron explaining and defending their position.

3. Ask students to read and consider the quotations at the start of each chapter of The Hero’s Trail, along with the quotations sprinkled throughout the chapters. Which heroic qualities are represented in these quotations? Which ones do students think are missing? Who are the heroes who wrote or said these quotes and why did they?

4. Ask students to read and consider the quotations at the start of each chapter of The Hero’s Trail, along with the quotations sprinkled throughout the chapters. Which heroic qualities are represented in these quotations? Which ones do students think are missing? Who are the heroes who wrote or said these quotes and why did they?

5. Challenge students to write their own quotations—personal "heroic words to live by." Have them edit them for clarity and conciseness and then publish them in creative ways to be displayed around the classroom.

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Common Core Standards: Rl, 3, 6; W, 1, 3, 4, 5; SL, 1

Hero vs. Celebrity

1. Ask students to free write for ten minutes using the prompt, "What is the difference between a hero and a celebrity?" If needed, provide them with additional prompts such as: "Which one does something more lasting?", "Which one is more about fame?", "Which one is more about qualities of character?"

2. Ask half the class to work together to list people they would call heroes. Ask the other half to list celebrities. Compare lists. Do any names appear on both lists? If so, what qualities do those people have that allow them to be both a hero and a celebrity?

3. Have students read what T. A. Barron has to say about hero vs. celebrity in his introduction to The Hero’s Trail. Ask them to work in pairs to create Venn diagrams that show similarities and differences between heroes and celebrities.

4. Have students draw upon the activities above to write an argument supporting why they consider someone they admire to be a hero, a celebrity, or both.

Common Core Standards: Rl, 2, 4; W, 1, 3, 4; SL, 1, 4

Literary Heroes

1. Discuss with students the theme of the hero’s quest as a recurring motif in much of literature. Point out the young heroes and their journeys in some of T. A. Barron’s fictional books:

• the boy who wishes alone and becomes a wizard in The Lost Years of Merlin–young Annis, who finds her true identity in The Girl
• Kate, who saves the people she loves with the help of a great redwood tree in The Ancient One

Ask students to share other examples of fictional heroes and their quests.

2. Provide students with a wide selection of fictional texts—well-known novels and young adult literature, picture book fairy tales, even comics. Have them work in small groups to identify the hero in each text, citing specific heroic actions, heroic qualities, and evidence of a quest. Ask students to compare and contrast how different books handle the hero’s journey theme.

3. Have pairs of students list the texts’ fictional heroes and categorize them in some way. Remind them of the five kinds of heroes cited in The Hero’s Trail: heroes of courage, perseverance, generosity, compassion, and hope. Ask students to present and defend their categorizations.

4. Have students compare the fictional heroes in their favorite books and movies to the real young heroes in The Hero’s Trail. Have them cite evidence from the texts of similarities and differences.

Common Core Standards: Rl, 2, 4; W, 1, 3, 4; SL, 1, 4

Writing prompt: Some say that heroes are not made, but are born. In other words, you can’t set out in life to become a hero; instead, there’s something in you from birth that makes you heroic. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Support your argument with at least one heroic example from a fictional or nonfiction text.

2. Have students visit the “Meet the Winners” page of the Barron Prize website (www.barronprize.org) to read profiles of young people making a heroic difference to the world. Discuss why these young people can be considered heroes and which heroic character qualities they demonstrate.

3. Ask students to further research their favorite Barron Prize young hero’s cause or project, and identify other heroes, past or present, involved in similar work. Ask students to make multimedia presentations of their findings.

Common Core Standards: Rl, 1, 2; W, 1, 2; SL, 1, 4, 5

Choosing to Act Heroically

1. Refer students to these words in T. A. Barron’s The Hero’s Trail:

“Sometimes it takes courage just to walk down the trail of life. Yes—just to keep walking, to keep trying, to keep going even when we stumble or twist an ankle or get lost. Yet each step we take—each choice we make—even make a difference. And sometimes, that difference can be truly heroic.” [page 2]

Then ask students to read Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken” and consider the lines, “Two roads diverged in a wood and I— / I took the less traveled by. / And that has made all the difference.” Compare what these two authors are saying about making courageous choices and the difference that can make.

2. Ask students to compare how T. A. Barron’s nonfiction text and Frost’s poem explore similar themes in very different genres. Have them look for other examples of different texts and genres that explore the same or similar themes.

3. Have students create picture books or comic strips for younger students that depict ways we can choose to act heroically—in the decisions we make, the activities we choose, in our interactions with others, and in choosing to help other people or the planet.

Common Core Standards: Rl, 1, 2, 9; Rl, 2, 9; W, 3; SL, 1

how can we act heroically?

Everyone can be a Hero

1. Have each student create a fictional hero that demonstrates heroic qualities he or she feels are important. Students can “introduce” their heroes by:

• creating interview questions and answers that might be used by a news reporter and their hero.
• designing a “Wanted!” poster for their hero including a description of their hero’s qualities and actions.
• writing a journal entry from their hero’s point of view.

Common Core Standards: Rl, 1, 2, 3, 9; W, 3; SL, 1

2. Ask students to each think of a real-life hero (past or present) who inspires them. Have them write about their hero and publish their work in one of the following ways:

• Write a letter of recommendation for your hero.
• Write a speech to introduce your hero at an awards banquet.
• Create a digital presentation that outlines your hero’s attributes and character qualities.

Common Core Standards: W, 3, 4, 5; SL, 5
Ask each student to choose one historical hero to research.

Write a letter of recommendation for your hero.

Have each student create a fictional hero that

designing a “Wanted!” poster for their hero including

creating interview questions and answers that might

writing a journal entry from their hero’s point of view.

Jot on notecards for students the names of historical heroes from The Hero’s Trail (use the index to help) as well as from the other historical texts used earlier in defining a hero. Distribute one or more cards to each student and have them use the texts to quickly research when and where their hero lived and what he or she did that could be considered heroic. Have students jot down their findings and share with the class.

Ask students to use the historical heroes notecards to create a timeline, placing the cards along a whiteboard tray or wall in chronological order. Discuss the historical impact of these heroes, the movements in history they were a part of, and the connections among them.

Challenge students to work together to place the historical heroes notecards along a continuum, from least heroic to most heroic.

Ask students to defend the cards’ placement in different spots. Discuss the difference between the chronological timeline (objective) and the continuum (subjective).

Ask each student to choose one historical hero to research in depth and to share their findings via a multimedia presentation. Challenge students to find connections and make comparisons among the heroes presented (e.g., Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi).

Ask students free write for ten minutes using the prompt, “What is the difference between a hero and a celebrity?” If needed, provide them with additional prompts such as: “Which one does something more lasting?” “Which one is more about fame?” “Which one is more about qualities of character?”

Ask half the class to work together to list people they would call heroes. Ask the other half to list celebrities. Compare lists. Do any names appear on both lists? If so, what qualities do those people have that allow them to be both a hero and a celebrity?

Ask students to read what T. A. Barron has to say about hero vs. celebrity in his introduction to The Hero’s Trail. Ask them to work in pairs to create Venn diagrams that show similarities and differences between heroes and celebrities.

Ask students to draw upon the activities above to write an argument supporting why they consider someone they admire to be a hero, a celebrity, or both.

Ask students to find examples of fictional heroes, distinguish between heroes and celebrities, and explain why they believe in the heroism of their fictional heroes.

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Jane Goodall talks about her dreams and inspirations as a young girl, and encourages young people to change the world.

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### Credits

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### Definition of a Hero

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   - Definitions offered by Barron Prize young heroes at the start of the film *Dream Big.*
4. Challenge students to come to consensus in writing a class definition of the word “hero.” Remind them to cite the heroes texts for support as they argue for or against the inclusion of certain words and ideas.

**Common Core Standards:** RI 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9; SL 1, 2, 4

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**“This inspires young people to change the world.”**

— Jane Goodall