



## Elements of Epic Poetry

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ask students to fill the right side of the chart with the corresponding information from an example of a story that follows the Epic Hero Cycle.

<p><b>The main character is a hero, who is often possessed of supernatural abilities or qualities.</b></p>	<p>Rama, the hero of the <i>Ramayana</i>, is thought to be an avatar (incarnation) of the Hindu god, Vishnu. See under “The Boyhood of Rama,” where the text begins “Leaning of Ravana’s actions...”</p>
<p><b>The hero is charged with a quest.</b></p>	<p>Rama has more than one quest. One, in his responsibility as Vishnu, is to defeat Ravana. Another, in his role as the human Raman is to retrieve his wife Sita her captivity on Lanka. See under “The Forest Life,” where the text begins “Upon reurnng to the hut, Rama cried out, “Sita is gone. What will I do?””</p>
<p><b>The hero is tested, often to prove the worthiness of himself and his quest.</b></p>	<p>Rama is tested by his father’s ordering his into exile in the forest. See under “Life in Ayodhya,” the passage beginning “Father, your word is law. I shall do whatever you bid...”</p>
<p><b>The presence of numerous mythical beings, magical and helpful animals, and human helpers and companions</b></p>	<p>Rama’s brother Laskhmana, the monkey general Hanuman and his army, the mythical bird Jatayu, who warns Rama of Sita’s abduction.</p>
<p><b>The hero’s travels take him to a supernatural world, often one that normal human beings are barred from entering.</b></p>	<p>Rama’s journey to Ravana’s kingdom on Lanka fulfils this requirement. See under “The Great War,” the passage beginning “Rama stood on the shoreline...”</p>
<p><b>The cycle must reach a low point where the hero nearly gives up his quest or appears defeated.</b></p>	<p>Rama is thrown into despair when his army appears to have been slain by an onslaught of the demons’ arrows. See under “The Great War,” the following passage: Rama looked upon the the ground and said, “The battle has been lost.”</p>
<p><b>A resurrection.</b></p>	<p>Rama sends Hanuman to retrieve a particular herbal medicine on a far away mountain. The medicine revives the army and they rejoin Rama in their final push to victory. See under “The Great War,” the passage beginning “When he returned to Lanka...”</p>