



CRITICAL VIEWING GUIDE

STAR WARS AND THE HERO'S JOURNEY

EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE

It is a period of civil war. Rebel spaceships, striking from a hidden base, have won their first victory against the evil Galactic Empire. During the battle, Rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon, the DEATH STAR, an armored station with enough power to destroy an entire planet. Pursued by the Empire's sinister agents, Princess Leia races home aboard her starship, custodian of the stolen plans that can save her people and restore freedom to the galaxy...

Characters and Locations

Luke Skywalker: A young farmer who lives with his aunt and uncle on the planet Tatooine.

Han Solo: Rogue smuggler and captain of the *Millennium Falcon*.

Chewbacca: A two-hundred-year-old Wookiee who is co-pilot of the *Millennium Falcon* and constant companion of its captain.

Princess Leia Organa: A young Senator who is secretly leading the Rebellion against the evil Imperial forces.

Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi: A noble Jedi Master of the Old Republic who possesses a special power called the Force.

See Threepio (C-3PO): A tall, humanlike protocol droid who translates thousands of languages.

Artoo-Detoo (R2-D2): A clever astromech droid who speaks only in electronic sounds.

Darth Vader: The evil Imperial Dark Lord of the Sith who uses his mastery of the Force to try to crush the Rebellion.

Grand Moff Tarkin: An Imperial Governor who commands the gigantic and powerful battle station named the Death Star.

Tatooine: Desert homeworld of Luke Skywalker in the Outer Rim of the galaxy.

Mos Eisley: Spaceport on Tatooine where Luke and Ben go to find transport to Alderaan, the peaceful homeworld of Princess Leia.

Yavin 4: Jungle moon that serves as the home to the hidden Rebel base.

Mythic Elements

As you view the film, look for examples of each of the following mythic elements:

1. The Call to Adventure: The Heralds
2. Threshold Guardians
3. The Wise and Helpful Guide
4. The Magic Talisman
5. Refusal of the Call
6. Passing the Threshold
7. Hero Partners
8. Mystical Insight
9. The Labyrinth
10. Rescue of the Princess
11. Losing the Guide
12. Heroic Deeds
13. Slaying the Dragon

Critical Viewing Questions Part One

Having carefully watched the film, answer the following questions:

1. Color is often used by filmmakers to convey a certain message or establish a particular mood. What colors seem to be associated with the Empire? The Rebellion? Why are these colors used for each?
2. Describe the interior of the Death Star. How does it “feel?”
3. Describe the location of the Rebel Base (on Yavin). How does it “feel?”
4. What words would you use to describe the following characters?
 - a. Luke
 - b. Leia
 - c. Han
 - d. Chewbacca
 - e. Ben Kenobi
 - f. C-3PO
 - g. R2-D2
 - h. Vader
 - m. Grand Moff Tarkin
5. Of these characters, which one do you identify the most with? Explain.
6. What parts of the story show evidence of being influenced by Twentieth Century people or events?
7. What are the lessons that are being taught through this story? What do you think is the overall

Critical Viewing Questions Two

Having carefully watched the film, answer the following questions:

1. Compare a republic to an empire. Which do you think is more powerful?
2. Explain the role that the Senate played in Rome during the time of the Roman Republic and Roman Empire. Were there differences in their power and authority?

“The Imperial Senate will no longer be of any concern to us. I have just received word that the Emperor has dissolved the council permanently. The last remnants of the Old Republic have been swept away.”
Grand Moff Tarkin
3. How does Governor Tarkin suggest that order will be maintained in the Empire without a representative council? Do you believe his assessment is correct?
4. How would you describe the Rebel Alliance, as freedom fighters or terrorists? Give evidence to support your answer.
5. Does “might make right?” Why or why not?

