

"Shakespeare and Star Wars": Lesson Plan Day 4  
by Adam Watson (NBCT)

*Academic Goals:*

Explain changes that occur when the same source material is adapted in various media.  
Analyze the visual medium of film, especially how it is unique compared to other media forms.  
Understand the plot of *Star Wars*.

*Core Content Standards (for Reading Literature, 9th Grade):*  
9-10.RL.7, -9

*Handouts:*  
n/a

*Instructional Plan:*

Note: Watching *Star Wars* is academically crucial to the unit for two reasons. First, one cannot assume all have seen the movie, or at least have seen it recently. Therefore, the movie helps reinforce comprehension of the plot, in case students reading the play are lost or unsure. Secondly, viewing the movie builds a foundation to compare how WSSW changes the source material (i.e. the film).

1. Tell students they are to be active viewers of *Star Wars* with two purposes in mind: to better comprehend the story, and to watch for differences between how the film and play handle the same scenes. (You may want students to make a two column chart on their own paper and maintain the log throughout the viewings. Column 1 is an example from the movie, and Column 2 is the same scene in the play, but describe the difference.) Think how film depends on cinematic techniques that add meaning, as opposed to media such as plays or novels.
2. Watch from beginning of film to the end of Chapter 18 (42:31), when Luke decides to leave with Ben to Alderaan. This is equivalent to the end of Act Two of WSSW.
3. If time, have students share some of their findings.

*Suggested Extensions and/or Alterations :*

Our overall thematic arc for our freshmen English curriculum is "Coming of Age." Luke's story is a perfect example of this arc. Looking at just this section of the movie (and first two Acts of WSSW), have students consider how Luke has already begun to mature and change.

The idea of "coming of age" is also a crucial part of the [Hero's Journey](#), a concept popularized by [Joseph Campbell](#). Campbell (1904-1987) was an acclaimed historian and writer of comparative religions. For the original trilogy, Luke is definitely our Hero. In this portion of the story, you have a Call to Adventure, when Luke first hears Leia's message, and the Refusal of the Call, when Luke expresses to Ben, "Look, I can't get involved. I've got work to do. It's not that I like the Empire; I hate it, but there's nothing I can do about it right now... It's all such a long way from here." (Of course, the influence of Campbell's

written work on Lucas while structuring the Star Wars saga has been well documented and discussed.) Have students analyze and compare Luke's story to the Hero's Journey. Some suggested materials:

- [The Hero With a Thousand Faces](#) (1949) is one of Campbell's most popular and accessible works.
- [The Power of Myth](#) (1988) is a conversation between Campbell and Bill Moyers. Campbell befriended Lucas late in life, and he makes several analogous comparisons to the Star Wars saga in his talks. The book is a companion piece to the PBS broadcast from the same year, aired shortly after Campbell died. The series was released on DVD, which I bought years ago; some of the episodes contain clips from the original trilogy, and a bonus feature is an interview with George Lucas discussing Campbell's influence. A [25th anniversary edition](#) is now available.
- If you are willing to register for free to become a JCF associate, there are materials to access at the [Joseph Campbell Foundation website](#).
- Last but not least, some of our other Rogues have teaching materials on the Hero's Journey, such as [Craig "Rogue 3" Dickinson](#).

*Post-Lesson Reflection:*

Time was very tight in my 50 minute period to get this viewing done in one day. To save time, you may want to take a few minutes to prep the movie the day before. If you expand on the activities, you may easily need a second day.

For the full unit overview, [click here](#).