

Hero Fact Checklist

In a story, the Protagonist must always be the hero. The protagonist must always defeat the bad guy (unless he gets defeated by the bad guy). At the very least, the Protagonist must be the catalyst to the bad guy being defeated.

This is what's known as "Hero Fact."

There are no exceptions to this. The hero must be heroic. The hero cannot be rescued or saved. He must do the rescuing and the saving.

Or your story won't work.

This checklist will take you through the four parts of story—addressing character arc as it relates to the protagonist becoming the hero. You can use this to either guide your first draft, or during the revision process, to make sure you hit all the marks:

Part One: Orphan

- Are you revealing 10% (or less) of your Protagonist's backstory
- Have you set up your Protagonist's life at the current moment (stakes)
- Is there any foreshadowing of what's to come
- Did you introduce your Protagonist's inner demons
- Is there a set up moment prior to the First Plot Point

Part Two: Wanderer

- Are any attempts at action resulting in failure (it's too early for action)
- Is your Protagonist reacting to the First Plot Point
- Are the Protagonist's inner demons continuing to keep him down

Part Three: Warrior

- Is your Protagonist starting to attack
- Are the Protagonist's inner demons still plaguing him/her
- Does the Protagonist get better at pushing past the inner demons

Part Four: Martyr

- Is the Protagonist being heroic
- Has the Protagonist earned the title of hero
- Does the Protagonist defeat the antagonist
- Is the Protagonist the catalyst to the antagonist being defeated