

Name _____

Date _____

Epic Poem

An **epic** is a long narrative poem. It recounts the adventures of an epic hero, a larger-than-life figure who undertakes great journeys and performs deeds requiring remarkable bravery and cunning.

Read the following epic poem excerpt and answer the questions.

The Quest of Aric

Sing to me, O Muse, of brave Aric's mighty quest,
Who journeyed across storm-tossed seas at gods' behest.
Son of King Theron, with hair like golden flame,
Destined to restore his kingdom's fading fame.

The gods had grown angry at mortals' prideful ways,
And cast the sacred Shield of Dawn beyond their gaze.
Without its protection, darkness crept through the land,
While crops withered and died on once-fertile sand.

Ten ships strong, Aric sailed with warriors bold,
Their armor gleaming bright, their courage untold.
"We shall return," he vowed to his grieving queen,
"With the Shield restored to where it once had been."
Seven days of calm seas raised the sailors' hope,
Until vengeful Poseidon sent storms they could not cope.
"You dare to cross my waters," the sea god roared with
might,
And raised a wave that towered to a fearsome height.

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"Great Poseidon," Aric called, humbling his proud heart,
"We seek only to save our people, before they fall apart.
Not for glory do we sail, but for those who starve and weep,
Grant us passage, I beg you, across your mighty deep."

The sea god paused, impressed by Aric's selfless plea,
And calmed the raging waters of his vast angry sea.

"One ship I shall spare you, but trials still await,
For heroes must prove worthy before they alter fate."

1. What characteristics in this excerpt identify it as an epic poem?

2. What is the hero's quest in this epic poem, and why is it important?

3. How does Aric demonstrate the qualities of an epic hero in this excerpt?

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Epic Poem-Answer Key

1. What characteristics in this excerpt identify it as an epic poem?

This excerpt shows key epic poetry characteristics: an invocation to a Muse, a noble hero, an important quest, supernatural elements (gods), formal language, and epic scope. The poem uses elevated language and addresses themes significant to an entire civilization.

2. What is the hero's quest in this epic poem, and why is it important?

Aric's quest is to retrieve the Shield of Dawn taken by the gods. This quest is important because without the shield, the kingdom suffers from darkness and crop failure. The consequences affect the entire civilization, not just the hero himself.

3. How does Aric demonstrate the qualities of an epic hero in this excerpt?

Aric shows epic hero qualities: noble birth (son of King Theron), bravery (leading ships across dangerous seas), leadership (commanding warriors), humility (when addressing Poseidon), and selflessness (seeking salvation for his people rather than personal glory).