

EPIC CONVENTIONS

EPIC- a work that meets at least the following criteria: it is a long narrative poem on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style and centered on heroic or semi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation or the human race.

Epic Conventions:

1. **HERO OF IMPORTANCE:** The hero is a figure of great national or even cosmic importance.
2. **LARGE SCALE SETTING:** The setting of the poem is ample in scale, and may be worldwide, or even larger.
3. **SUPERHUMAN DEEDS:** The action involves superhuman deeds in battle or a long, dangerous journey accomplished despite the opposition of the gods.
4. **SUPERNATURAL INVOLVEMENT:** The gods and other supernatural beings take an interest or an active part.
5. **CEREMONIAL STYLE:** Narrated in a ceremonial style that is deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and proportioned to the grandeur and formality of the heroic subject and epic architecture.
 - Grand style
 - a. Diction and elaborate and stylized syntax
 - b. Lists of names and wide-ranging *allusions*
 - c. Epic similes and Homeric epithets

6. INVOCATION TO THE MUSE: The narrator begins by stating his argument, or epic theme, invokes a muse, or guiding spirit, to inspire him in his great undertaking, then addresses to the epic question, the answer to which begins the narrative.
7. *EN MEDIAS RES*: The narrative starts *en medias res*, that is “in the middle of things” at a critical point in the action.
8. CATALOGUES: There are catalogues of some of the principal characters, introduced in formal detail – these characters are often given set speeches that reveal their diverse temperaments and moral attitudes.

Allegory – a story in which the characters, setting and events stand for abstract or moral concepts. There is a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning.

Archetype – repeated images, plots, character types or images that are identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature