

Barbie™: Blessing or Curse?

Style, Format, and Genre

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	150 minutes
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature, Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

How do style, format, and genre affect a text? Are there particular styles or formats that are more effective for a particular genre?

Summary

By analyzing a variety of resources, students consider how style, format, and genre affect meaning and effectiveness. Students then craft an argument in a genre of their choice and present it to their classmates. While this lesson is aligned to 9th-grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 9 through 12, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students watch an original Barbie™ commercial from 1959 and compose a Quick Write in response.

Explore

Students read the poem "Barbie Doll" by Marge Piercy and a related opinion article, "Barbie Is Past Saving," by Alexandra Petri.

Explain

Students fill out a genre table while considering the style, literary choices, evidence, and effectiveness of the commercial, poem, and opinion article.

Extend

Students collaborate to craft an argument in a genre of their choice.

Evaluate

Students present their arguments and provide feedback for their classmates.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.3.W.4: Blend narrative, informative, and argumentative writing to suit their audience and purpose.
9.7.R: Analyze and evaluate the techniques used in a variety of multimodal content and how they contribute to meaning.

Attachments

- Feedback Forms Barbie—Blessing or Curse - Spanish.docx
- Feedback Forms Barbie—Blessing or Curse - Spanish.pdf
- Feedback Forms—Barbie Blessing or Curse.docx
- Feedback Forms—Barbie Blessing or Curse.pdf
- Genre Table Barbie—Blessing or Curse - Spanish.docx
- Genre Table Barbie—Blessing or Curse - Spanish.pdf
- Genre Table—Barbie Blessing or Curse.docx
- Genre Table—Barbie Blessing or Curse.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Barbie Blessing or Curse.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- “Barbie Doll” poem by Marge Piercy (linked)
- “Opinion: Barbie is Past Saving” by Alexandra Petri, opinion article (linked)
- Genre Table handout (attached; one per student or student pair)
- Feedback Forms handout (attached; one per student)
- Writing materials (paper, pens, pencils, etc.)
- Large poster or butcher paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes in various colors

30 minutes

Engage

Display **slide 2** of the attached **Lesson Slides** as students enter the classroom.

To begin the lesson, display **slide 3** and briefly go over the essential questions, and then display **slide 4** to discuss the objectives.

Display **slide 5**. Inform students that you are going to show them a short video, the first-ever Barbie™ commercial from 1959. Ask students to consider the following questions as they watch:

- What stylistic choices do they see in the commercial (graphics, sounds, word choice, syntax)?
- Is the commercial effective? Why or why not?
- What influence do they think Barbie has had on society?

Display **slide 6** and show "1959 First Ever Barbie Commercial." Play it at least twice so that students have a sufficient opportunity to carefully watch the commercial and consider the questions.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=9hhjjhYGQtY

Display **slide 7** and pose the three questions again. Use the Think-Pair-Share strategy to help students formulate and develop answers to the questions. This strategy allows students to first consider the questions individually, then discuss with a peer, and finally share with the whole class and see what others have to say.

- **Think:** Ask students to complete a 5-minute Quick Write to get their ideas down on paper in any way, shape, or form, without worrying about conventions or correctness.
- **Pair:** Display **slide 8**. Ask students to work in pairs to discuss the three questions.
- **Share:** After a few minutes, ask for volunteers to share out.

30 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 9**. Students will now look at two other pieces related to the topic of Barbie.

Distribute digital or printed copies of the following poem: "Barbie Doll" by Marge Piercy. Read the poem aloud or ask a student (or multiple students) to read aloud. Alternatively, students could read the poem silently to themselves.

Divide students into groups of four or five. Provide each group with a large sheet of poster or butcher paper and markers. Ask each group to break down the poem line by line, stanza by stanza, paraphrasing the poem in their own language. In the end, groups should have a completed paraphrased poem on their paper.

Display **slide 10**. Engage students in a Gallery Walk in which they view other groups' paraphrased poems and leave feedback and comments using sticky notes. Give each group a different color of sticky notes so that you know which group has commented. Encourage students to add to the conversation by agreeing, disagreeing, and asking questions.

Display **slide 11**. Distribute digital or printed copies of the following opinion article: "Barbie Is Past Saving" by Alexandra Petri.

Ask students to use the Stop and Jot annotation strategy as they read. As students Stop and Jot, they should stop periodically to write down their thoughts, reactions, and responses to the text in the margins. Give students an opportunity to read and annotate the article, and then ask them to turn to a partner and compare notes.

Display **slide 12**. Engage in a whole-class discussion to center on students' thoughts, reactions, and responses to the two texts they have just read. During the discussion, pose the following questions:

- How would the message of the poem be different if it were an essay, short story, nonfiction article, etc.?
- How would the message of the opinion article be different if it were a documentary, poem, commercial, etc.?
- In other words, how do the genre and format of each text influence its message or meaning?

Teacher's Note: Conversation Starters

Students will work more on answering these questions in the next section of the lesson. For now, students should be thinking about these features of genre.

Optional: Challenge

Use the prompts on **slide 13** to extend this section of the lesson. Pull the author's purpose into the discussion and ask students to make connections between purpose and format.

30 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 14** and talk through the definition of literary style. Then display **slide 15** and allow students to pair up if they wish. Distribute copies of the attached **Genre Table** handout to each student or student pair.

Ask students to fill out the table as they note style/literary choices, evidence, and effectiveness—or ineffectiveness—of the three genres they've examined in this lesson: commercial (advertisement), poem, and opinion article (nonfiction text).

Teacher's Note: Demonstrating the Activity

You might model this strategy for the whole class. You can talk through some style/literary choices of the commercial (drawing on students' experience with the Quick Write and subsequent conversations), and then pull out evidence from the commercial to demonstrate those choices. You can ask the class if and how the commercial was effective and why or why not?

As students work, encourage collaboration. You could ask students to share out responses with the whole class and compare to other groups' ideas. If other students disagree as they present evidence from their tables, this is a good opportunity for students to debate about what they feel is effective.

30 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 16**. As a class, brainstorm a list of genres and a list of social issues. To facilitate the brainstorm, you might use the Think-Pair-Share strategy and ask students to first jot down some ideas individually, then share with a partner, and finally, share out with the whole class. Fill in the table with student responses.

Possible Student Responses

Genres:

- Journal entry
- Comic book
- Screenplay
- Picture
- Poem
- Blog post
- Opinion article
- Letter to the editor (in response to a recently published article)
- Advertisement
- Song lyrics

Social issues:

- Gaming
- Cyberbullying
- Social media
- Media violence
- Grades
- Mental health
- Sports
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Vandalism
- School dropout

Display **slide 17**. Students now have the opportunity to create their own writing.

Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to create an argument in a particular genre. Encourage students to choose a genre of particular interest to them and craft an argument related to a social issue.

Allow students plenty of autonomy as they decide which genre and topic to argue. Provide them with some time to brainstorm ideas for their creation. Encourage them to rely on literary/style choices as previously discussed.

Allow students to experiment with a variety of texts other than traditional academic essays. The goal here is for students to consciously consider genre features and effectiveness as they compose their arguments.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 18** and pass out copies of the **Feedback Form**. Give students the opportunity to present their arguments to their classmates.

Audience members should provide written feedback for each student, pair, or group, noting literary/style features, evidence, and effectiveness (similar to the Genre Table).

Students can turn in their arguments for a grade, and you can use the same Feedback Form to evaluate their work.

Celebrate students' work by displaying it in the halls or classrooms for all to see, or by posting it on the class or school website. The last stage of the writing process—publishing—is often ignored. Be sure to find a way to show off students' accomplishments!

Resources

- BarbieCollectors. (2008, October 29). 1959 First EVER Barbie Commercial High Quality HQ! [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hhjjhYGQtY
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery Walk/Carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stop and Jot. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/168
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-Pair-Share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139
- Petri, A. (2016, January 28). "Opinion: Barbie is Past Saving." *Washington Post*. *https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/compost/wp/2016/01/28/barbie-is-past-saving/*
- Piercy, M. (2004). Barbie doll [Poem]. PoemHunter.com. https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/barbie-doll/