

Warm-up

First, start the session by having students work in small groups to create the plot for a movie with a central female character. Then, set a time limit of five minutes, and have groups present their plots. Finally, students should vote on the movie they would most like to see.

Teaching Tip

For Exercise 2

First, use tape to make a line on the classroom floor labeled *Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Not Sure – Agree – Strongly Agree*. Then, quickly recap or read aloud the relevant part of “Spin a Yarn” that addresses student opinions on how a filmmaker’s gender might influence the portrayal of female leads. Highlight any contrasts or differing student perspectives in the text. Next, read the three answer options aloud, one at a time. For each, students physically place themselves on the “opinion line” based on how much they agree or disagree with the statement. After each movement, ask two students from different positions to explain their reasoning, and encourage students to refer back to the text or real film examples (for example, *Lady Bird* by Greta Gerwig). Optionally, students can change their position after hearing others’ opinions. Finally, in pairs, students choose one of the three opinions.

Differentiation Strategy

For Exercise 3

Go to the Differentiation Strategies Bank and adapt this exercise using Strategy 6.

Flexi Exercises

(To adjust to students’ needs, you can either use or not the activities below)

Exercise 4

Arts

How does gender affect filmmaking?

01 Work with a classmate. Name as many female lead characters in books, series, or movies as possible in three minutes. Write them here.
Answers will vary.

02 Read “Spin a Yarn” and circle the answer that best reflects the students’ comments.

1. The filmmaker’s gender does not impact the portrayal of female leads.
2. The gender of the filmmaker can have an impact on the portrayal of female leads when the film is not based on a book.
3. The gender of the filmmaker can have an impact on the portrayal of female leads when portraying them as complex individuals.

03 Read the text again and complete the chart about the three female leads discussed.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Jo March | She’s strong and is not looking for approval. |
| Wonder Woman | She was not sexualized, was powerful, warm, thoughtful, curious, and complex. |
| Katniss | She has inner strength, values, her own voice, and principles. |

Spin a Yarn

Student 1: Last weekend, I saw *Little Women*. It was great. In particular, the role of Jo March was exciting. We read the book in Literature class, and she is a strong character. I think it’s different in a book than in a mainstream movie, but she is unwavering, not looking for approval from anyone, especially a man. Does anyone have an idea what I mean?

Student 2: Yes, there’s an article about this online. The film’s director is Greta Gerwig, and her approach is different because she’s a feminist director and creates female leads that are distinct from those of the past—they’re strong, independent, complex, and not the ‘sidekick’ of the male lead. Unless I’m mistaken, analysts call it a revisioning of female leads.

Student 3: There’s a similar analysis of the portrayal of Diana in *Wonder Woman*, directed by Patty Jenkins, because Diana is not sexualized as female superheroes usually are—think *Catwoman*—and her actions are driven by her values, not a reflection of a man’s values. In addition, she’s complex and powerful, obviously, but also warm, thoughtful, and curious.

Student 4: Katniss in *The Hunger Games* is also a complex female lead, like with Jo March. While there’s a difference in the novel Katniss and the film Katniss, her voice’s inner strength, values, and clarity—by which I mean her values, perspective, and way of being, remain consistent. Interestingly, the first film was directed by a man. Still, the subsequent ones had a female director who worked closely with the author to ensure Katniss’s voice was authentically hers. She is strong and principled, but she also feels the weight of her responsibility to save her people, which leads us back to the question: if more feminist directors make mainstream films, will this change continue to take place?

04 Work in a small group. Look at the female leads from Exercise 1. Are any of them characters like Jo March or Katniss?



Language Structures and Functions Tip

For Exercise 5

First, have students identify why the sentence is incorrect, looking at the type of conditional sentence (real present/future, unreal present future, unreal past, negative), the verb structures used, and the conditional linker's meaning to determine whether the sentence is correct or incorrect. Then, have students correct the incorrect sentences. Finally, if time allows and you deem necessary, review the grammar point in more detail.

Teaching Tip

For Exercise 6

First, have students work with a classmate to combine the sentences. Model the exercise with two example sentences if needed: *It might rain tomorrow. We will go to the park tomorrow. / Unless it rains, we will go to the park tomorrow.* Elicit when commas are required. Finally, ask volunteers to share their answers with the rest of the class.

Differentiation Strategy

For Exercise 8

Go to the Differentiation Strategies Bank and adapt this exercise using Strategy 2b.

Wrap-up

First, close the session with a role-play of a scene from the new *Iron Woman* movie to be presented to potential investors in the film. Give students time to prepare their scene. Then, have them create a TikTok-type video of their scene. Finally, have the investors watch each scene, identifying the ones they think will earn the most money at the box office.

Flexi Exercises

(To adjust to students' needs, you can either use or not the activities below)

Exercise 7

Q5 Identify if the sentences are correct "C" or incorrect "I."

1. Unless directors are highlighting emotional complexity, their characters would have lacked depth. I

2. Had a woman directed the film, the female lead would have had more agency. C

3. Providing that female directors will be given more opportunities, the industry would already be more diverse. I

4. The character development wouldn't be so flat only if a woman directed the film. I

5. Supposing she made the film today, it would be more progressive. C



Q7 Write a paragraph presenting your opinion on whether the director's perspective affects the film and how. Answers will vary.

Q6 Rewrite the sentences using conditionals.

Answers will vary.

1. There weren't many female directors. Women-led characters lacked complexity.

2. *Little Women* is based on a beloved book. The director had less flexibility.

3. Two different directors directed *The Hunger Games* movies. Is there a difference in their approach to portraying Katniss?

4. Feminist directors do not often direct mainstream films. They may look different in the future.

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Q8 Work in a group of four. Imagine you have been asked to direct a new version of *Iron Man*, but it should be *Iron Woman*. How will you change the character? Write your notes and present your ideas to another group.

