

Warm-up

Before class, write the names of ten superheroes on paper and put them in an envelope. Then, create enough sets for each group of four students in your class to have a set. Next, elicit or review the rules for charades and model charades with a name that is NOT on one of the slips of paper. Finally, have students play charades in their groups. The group that has the most correct guesses wins.

Teaching Tip

For Exercise 2
First, have students highlight the information in the text they used to support their argument. Next, have students compare their summaries and source information. Finally, the exercise will be extended by having students discuss their reaction to the use of superheroes in popular culture in times of uncertainty and whether they feel superheroes are being used in similar ways in the twenty-first century.

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 do superheroes shape popular culture?

01 Tell a classmate about your favorite superhero and why they are your favorite.

02 Read "Hope Springs Eternal" and write a one-sentence argument summary. Then, compare your summary with a classmate.

Answers will vary.

03 Read the article again and answer the questions.

- What role did Captain America play during World War II?
He was used in war propaganda.
- What new conflict started after the war ended? How did it make people feel?
The Cold War with the USSR. People felt uncertain.
- Were superhero movies pure escapism? Why or why not?
No, the superheroes gave people hope for the future.

Hope Springs Eternal

In this article, I'll argue that **superheroes** came when we needed them most. Here's the scene: the war has ended, but there's no rejoicing as new troubles are brewing: a **Cold War** with the USSR, global crises, and an unsettling feeling of uncertainty.

Sure, there was growing **prosperity**, but most Americans were not just looking for escapism at the movies; they wanted safety, reassurance, and **justice**: enter the superhero.

Captain America had evolved from his role in war propaganda to a **post-war crime fighter**, and was joined by Superman and other larger-than-life heroes such as the Avengers.

These fantasy figures were not just an entertaining alternative to the out-of-fashion war heroes. In an increasingly uncertain world, superhero and fantasy films presented a straightforward narrative: right versus wrong. Superman and the others promised to restore order to the torn-apart world. They provided moral clarity after the horrors of World War II, and finally, they empowered ordinary people with their superhero alter-egos. In addition, woven through the narratives are nation-building themes: resilience, recovery, and national pride.

In conclusion, superhero films were not pure entertainment, engineered to help people forget the drudgery of their lives. They embodied what people wished to see in their worlds—hope—and I would argue they continue to do so today. What do we want in uncertain times? Hope and the belief in a better future.

04 Write a letter to your favorite superhero explaining why they are important. Then, share your letter with a classmate.



Language Structures and Functions Tip

For Exercise 5

First, if appropriate for your students, review the uses of the conjunctions in the word bank. Then, write examples of simple sentences as a scaffolding strategy, and have the students insert the correct conjunction. Next, elicit the relationship between the two sentences in an example to help students choose the correct conjunction for each pair. For example, *she was tired after school. She helped her brother with his homework. (although) Although tired after school, she helped her brother with his homework.* Finally, have students review their answers with a classmate before checking the exercise in a whole group report back session.

Teaching Tip

For Exercise 6

First, have students complete the task individually and compare their answers in pairs. Then, in the review stage, encourage students to identify why the conjunctions are incorrect and create new sentences using the original conjunction correctly. Finally, if time allows and you deem necessary, review the target grammar point in more detail.

Differentiation Strategy

For Exercise 7

Go to the Differentiation Strategies Bank and adapt this exercise using Strategy 3.

Wrap-up

If you are including Exercise 8 in the session, have groups create short TikTok-style videos introducing their superhero to the group. Then, create a listening task for students to complete in small groups. For example, list each superhero's characteristics and superpowers. If you're NOT including Exercise 8, have students work in small groups to select the superhero that best represents our times. Then, have them discuss the characteristics the superhero must possess to help us through uncertain times. Finally, have them share their choice and the reasons for choosing it.

Flexi Exercises

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

Exercise 8

05 Combine the sentences with conjunctions from the word bank. Use each word only once.

therefore
after
because
although



- The war ended. Superhero films quickly became very popular.
After the war ended, superhero films quickly became very popular.
- Some post-war films focused on realism and loss. Others used superheroes for escapism.
Although some post-war films focused on realism and loss, others used superheroes for escapism.
- People enjoyed superhero movies. Filmmakers began creating origin story films almost immediately.
People enjoyed superhero movies; therefore, filmmakers immediately began creating origin story films.
- Superheroes were popular. They offered a sense of justice and hope.
Superheroes were popular because they offered a sense of justice and hope.

06 Correct an error with the conjunctions in each sentence.

1. In addition the war had ended, filmmakers still used heroic characters.

in-addition
-
although

2. Superman became a symbol of justice, unless audiences were seeking hope after the war.

Unless
-
because

3. Captain America stood for national pride, whereas his stories inspired people worldwide.

whereas
-
and or but

4. Post-war films needed uplifting heroes; therefore not all audiences embraced superhero themes.

therefore
-
although

5. Superheroes have moral clarity, inasmuch as they provided relief from the horrors of war.

inasmuch
-
therefore

6. Superhero and fantasy movies were more than escapist entertainment in addition they gave people what they wished for.

in-addition
-
because

08 Imagine you have been asked to create a new superhero to provide hope for teens today. Answer the questions and draw a picture of your superhero, and present it to your class:

- What will your superhero's enemy be?
- What superpowers will they have?
- Will they have an alter-ego like Clark Kent and Superman?
- How will they give people hope?

07 With a classmate, create a conversation between two superheroes. Use five different conjunctions. Then, exchange conversations with another pair and exchange the conjunctions for synonyms. Finally, perform the new conversation for the other pair.

Answers will vary.

