



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.

03 Read the article again and answer the questions.

- What role did Captain America play during World War II?

- What new conflict started after the war ended? How did it make people feel?

- Were superhero movies pure escapism? Why or why not?

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.



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

therefore because
after although



- The war ended. Superhero films quickly became very popular.

- 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.

- Superheroes were popular. They offered a sense of justice and 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.

06 Correct an error with the conjunctions in each sentence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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?

