

# SUPERHEROES OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

Tps : 12h – Niveau : B1 – Classe de Seconde

## Compétence

Les élèves devront tour à tour être capables de présenter leur création devant des jurys de spécialistes et de faire partie d'un de ces jurys au sein duquel ils devront choisir, négocier, exprimer une préférence.

### Tâche synthèse

As a writer and designer, create a superhero(-ine) of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; imagine their portrait and personal history. Imagine the values they embody and defend and the problems they help to solve. Be ready to present your character to a panel of publishers and producers and find arguments to convince them to choose your creation.  
(You'll be in turn a creator and a publisher/producer.)

<u>Composantes de la tâche</u>	<u>Capacités liées à la tâche</u>
Activités langagières dominantes : EOC, EOI Production attendue : une présentation orale de 2mn Contexte : participer à un concours/une audition	Etre capable de raconter les principaux éléments d'une histoire Etre capable de décrire les aspects physiques et psychologiques d'un personnage fictif Etre capable de convaincre

## Contenus de la séquence

langagiers	<b>Linguistiques</b>	1- Lexique : les pouvoir, les sens, le costume, les verbes de mouvement 2- Grammaire : l'expression de la capacité, du devoir, les structures causatives
	<b>SocioCulturels</b>	La fonction sociale des super héros
	<b>Pragmatique</b>	Savoir convaincre un jury
Extra langagiers	<b>Civiques</b>	Prendre conscience des problèmes de la société contemporaine
	<b>TICES</b>	Présentations parfois sous forme de powerpoint par certains candidats

### **Ressources pédagogiques**

- manuel Projects 2° (Projetc n°3 : « It's Superman »)
- vidéo: "the social function of superheroes"
- enregistrement audio : "My favourite superhero"

### Plan de la séquence

1. Expression orale: What do you know about superheroes? Guess who the superhero is.
2. Compréhension écrite/orale. Get more information about superheroes and their role in society.
3. Création d'un nouveau super héros des temps modernes
4. Préparation de la tâche finale : élaboration commune du contenu et des critères de réussite.

## “IT’S SUPERMAN!”

### YOUR FINAL TASK WILL BE :

As a writer and designer, create a superhero(-ine) of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; imagine their portrait and personal history. Imagine the values they embody and defend and the problems they help to solve. Be ready to present your character to a panel of publishers and producers and find arguments to convince them to choose your creation.

(you’ll be in turn a creator or a publisher/producer)

#### I. Superheroes are people who...

##### 1. Complete the following grid

Their origin	Their physical and moral characteristics	Their abilities/ capacities	Their duties
<p>They are fictional characters.</p> <p>They initially appeared in American comic books (the first <u>Superman</u> dates 1938).</p> <p>The most famous American comics in which superheroes appeared are Marvel Comics.</p>	<p>They can be men or women.</p> <p>They have double identities, or alter egos (e.g. Clark Kent alias Superman). They often act under a secret identity.</p> <p>They have a very special dress style: they often wear masks, capes, boots, and colourful skin-tight clothing which reveal their athletic build.</p> <p>There are often symbols on their chests (S for Superman)</p> <p>They sometimes use accessories: Wonder Woman’s lasso and bracelets, Batman’s Batmobile, Spiderman’s webbing...</p> <p>They sometimes have young helpers: for example, Batman and Robin, or Captain America and Bucky.</p> <p>There are also many superhero teams (e.g. the Fantastic Four and X-Men).</p>	<p>They have superhuman powers which <b>enable</b> them to do incredible things like flying, jumping from one building to another in a single bound, clinging to walls like spiders, running faster than a speeding bullet.</p> <p>They are incredibly strong.</p> <p>They <b>have the ability</b> to regenerate within seconds of receiving a wound.</p> <p>They have <b>enhanced senses</b> so they <b>can</b> do extraordinary things such as seeing through walls (thanks to X-ray vision), feeling a presence before anything is visible, hearing from a very long distance...</p> <p>When they are not <b>endowed with</b> superhuman powers, they <b>are</b> at least <b>able to</b> master skills like martial arts or forensic science.</p>	<p>They <b>are in charge of</b> defending oppressed people.</p> <p>They <b>must</b> use their superpowers to fight evil.</p> <p>They <b>have to</b> defend noble causes.</p>

2. More specific words about superheroes' outfit (vocabulary activity)

These are more items that can be part of a superhero's costume. Find a way to classify them in order to remember them more easily.

Skin-tight bodysuit – dark glasses – emblem – elbow pads – shoulder pads – protective vests – mask – knee pads – gauntlets – goggles – helmet – armour – claws – headband – whip – cape – shorts – gloves – tights – cowl – leotard – hood – horns – shields – swords – belt – wings – boots

NB: gauntlet: gant d'armure - leotard : collant de danse ou d'acrobate - cowl : hood (capuchon de moine)

3. What do you think of their costumes? Would you like to be dressed like that? (oral activity)

Their costumes are a bit outfashioned and sometimes even a bit ridiculous:

- Who would wear their briefs over their tights?
- The colours of their costumes are often too flashy / garish/ mismatched

**II. Use the new vocabulary to identify famous superheroes**

1. Choose a famous superhero and write his/her identity card so that the others can guess who he/she is. Give sufficient clues but not too obvious ones to make the activity challenging (oral activity prepared at home).
2. Read the 3 texts page 37 and identify the superheroes they refer to. Justify your answers by giving the clues you have found in the texts.

Use expressions of personal opinion such as:

I think/ to my mind/ according to me/ I believe/ in my opinion...

I'm absolutely positive that the superhero referred to in text ... is...

The superhero in text... must be...

YOUR SUPPOSITION	THE CLUES
- Text n°2 is about Spiderman.	The name of the hero is Peter. He's "hanging onto the side of the building like a spider."
- Text n°3 is a portrait of Batman.	He is described as "a dark mysterious character of the night". His most famous enemies are the Penguin, the Joker and Catwoman.
- Text n°4 presents Superman.	It is a description of the moment he discovers he can fly: "makes a fist with his left hand, and his body follows that direction. He <i>can</i> fly!"

### III. The social function of superheroes:

#### A. Watch the video and write down what you understand.

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osY7FXXNPNY>

It's a documentary on the origins of superheroes, and their social function. Superheroes correspond to society's need for strong heroes.

#### a. The origin of superheroes

The superhero in the traditional sense:

- possesses a superhuman ability
- Lives by a strong moral code
- Often has a secret identity
- Fights for those in need

#### A few examples:

- Superman
  - o The original prototype superhero
  - o Came from 2 Jewish writers living during the Great Depression (in the 1930s)
  - o Was created to fight against tyranny and social injustices
- Marvels' Captain America
  - o Was created in response to the atrocities committed by the Nazi reign in Europe
  - o A hero **personifying** American justice
  - o His arch enemy: the Red Skull, personifying Nazi terror
  - o Black and white depiction of **the "good versus evil" fight.**

Transition: Yet, this line has become more and more **blurred** in time in comics and movies.

#### b. Their evolution in time

Superheroes in comics and in films have become more and more **grounded in human.**

For example, the X-Men:

- are gifted with incredible abilities
- deal with common struggles
- are mutants who were born different from the rest of society and were alienated for that very reason. They were written to allegorize minority groups (African-American people, Jews, gay and lesbian people, and anyone unjustly persecuted for being different)

#### B. Follow up work (oral)

Identify modern society problems that could be solved by modern superheroes.

- Junk food / GMOs
- Modern illnesses (AIDS, anorexia...)
- Problems related to modern technologies (hacking, lack of real communication...)

#### IV. For or against superheroes?

##### 1. Listening understanding

Teacher's CD: "My favourite superhero" (track n°6):

This is a conversation between 2 men who speak about their favourite superheroes.

The first man prefers Batman who is an ordinary man, a "normal" man (he doesn't have superpowers). He says Batman is athletic. He is working hard, fighting for good, trying to make people safe.

The second is interested in the first man's point of view but he prefers Superman. He likes him because he differs from all the other superheroes. He didn't get his powers after going through some personal trauma: he was born a superhero. He is therefore Superman and Clark Kent is only his alter ego.

##### 2. Reading understanding

"Doctors warn of dangers of superhero costumes" (article from the Daily Mail)

a. What is from the start the point of view of the text about superheroes?

Superhero costumes may be dangerous for young children who think that just wearing them gives them superpowers.

b. Pick out the various dangers mentioned.

- Falling from a first floor window pretending to be Spider-Man
- Injured when attempting to fly
- Children dressed up as Bob the Builder and using real hammers and saws

c. Pick out the vocabulary referring to the consequences on the children's health

- To hurt oneself
- To end up in hospital
- To injure oneself
- To suffer a head injury / head wound
- To suffer a broken foot / broken bones
- To need a brain scan and X-rays
- To need treatment under general anaesthetic

d. Yet, is the psychiatrists' conclusion so negative?

The conclusion is: though it is true that the advent of superheroes gives children unrealistic expectations, it is also true that children have an extraordinary ability to injure themselves and will always find new ways to do so.

**V. Let's prepare the final task**

**1. You are a storyteller and designer**

Create a superhero adapted to our contemporary society and be ready to present it to a board of publishers and films directors. What do you think is important to do to convince them to choose your creation?

You should:

- Describe his/her physical appearance (body, costume)
- List his/her (super)powers
- List his/her favourite gadgets
- Identify his/her helpers (people, animals, fellow superheroes)
- Identify the cause he/she defends
- Identify his/her archenemy
- Tell briefly the story of his/her life (the trials he/she has undergone, and what he/she has achieved so far)

**2. You are part of a selection committee as:**

Complete the following grid with the different points you are going to focus your attention on in the presentations.

<b>A publisher of magazines aimed at young children (from 5 to 8 years old)</b>	<b>A producer of TV cartoons aimed at young teenagers (aged 9 to 12)</b>	<b>A film director who wants to shoot a new movie targeting young adults (around 18 years old)</b>
<p>You are looking for a gentle hero whom children can identify with.</p> <p>He/she shouldn't be frightening (nor his/her enemy).</p> <p>There shouldn't be too much violence.</p> <p>There should be an easily understood moral at the end.</p> <p>The design must not be too complex, neither too angular, and there should be bright colors.</p>	<p>There should be action.</p> <p>There should be suspense.</p> <p>There should be twists (unexpected events)</p> <p>There should be humour.</p> <p>Sound must be taken in consideration (jingles, onomatopoeia...)</p> <p>There must be humour.</p>	<p>There must be action.</p> <p>There must be a bit of violence.</p> <p>There must be romance (the main character must be attractive).</p> <p>There must be humour.</p>

**3. Your decision must be motivated.**

Be ready to have a discussion with the other members of the committee you belong to to decide which superhero or super heroine you want to choose.

Decide who will be the spokesperson for the group. You can either accept the character which has been presented without condition, or you can accept the character provided some change.

**FINAL TASK**

**1. You are a storyteller and designer**

Create a superhero adapted to our contemporary society and be ready to present it to a board of publishers and films directors

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- List his/her (super)powers
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<p><b>A publisher of magazines aimed at young children (from 5 to 8 years old)</b></p>	<p><b>A producer of TV cartoons aimed at young teenagers (aged 9 to 12)</b></p>	<p><b>A film director who wants to shoot a new movie targeting young adults (around 18 years old)</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You are looking for a gentle hero whom children can identify with.</li> <li>- He/she shouldn't be frightening (nor his/her enemy).</li> <li>- There shouldn't be too much violence.</li> <li>- There should be morale at the end easy to understand.</li> <li>- The design must not be too complex, neither too angular, and there should be bright colors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There should be action.</li> <li>- There should be suspense.</li> <li>- There should be twists (unexpected events)</li> <li>- There should be humour</li> <li>- Sound must be taken in consideration (jingles, onomatoeia...)</li> <li>- There must be humour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There must be action.</li> <li>- There must be a bit of violence.</li> <li>- There must be romance (the main character must be attractive).</li> <li>- There must be humour.</li> </ul>

**4. Your decision must be motivated.**

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Or you can accept the character provided some change.

**PRESENTING A MODERN SUPERHERO TO BOARDS OF PUBLISHERS AND FILM DIRECTORS (GRILLE D’EVALUATION)**

NAME:

CREATION:

	<b>A2-1</b>	<b>A2-2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B1+</b>
<b>ORIGINALITY AND QUALITY OF THE MATERIAL PRESENTATION OF THE CREATION (posters, power points...)</b>	The creation is not very original: it very much looks like an existing character. The presentation is a bit scruffy <b>(1 point)</b>	The creation is inspired from different existing characters. The presentation is correct but basic. <b>(2 points)</b>	Has created an original character and has used adapted means to present them. <b>(3 points)</b>	The creation is very original, unexpected. The presentation is well organized. The design is very good. <b>(4 points)</b>
<b>SPOKEN PRODUCTION Presenting ideas in a limited amount of time</b>	Can express very simple ideas without developing them. Speaks less than 2mn. <b>(1 point)</b>	Can give a detailed presentation, in spite of some repetitions or hesitations. <b>(2 points)</b>	Can give a detailed presentation with a variety of examples and arguments. <b>(3 points)</b>	Excellent management of time. Wide variety of examples and arguments. <b>(4 points)</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION eye contact, rhythm, tone, gestures, catchy sentences, humour</b>	Can recite their presentation without taking the audience into account: speaks too fast or too slowly; no eye contact; disorganized or inexistent gestures. <b>(1 point)</b>	Can talk to the audience adapting their speech but not their body language. <b>(2 points)</b>	Can use an adapted tone and adapted gestures. <b>(3 points)</b>	Is able to use humour efficiently. Can interact with the audience, or simulate interaction (questions, rhetorical questions...). <b>(4points)</b>
<b>LINGUISTIC RANGE</b>	Can only use : - a few specialized terms (outfit, powers, duties...) -a few structures (ability, obligation, causative structures...) <b>(1 point)</b>	Can use different terms and structures to express simple ideas but with a lot of hesitation. Not a wide range of tools is used. <b>(2 points)</b>	Can use appropriate terms and structures in spite of a few mistakes or hesitations. Can reformulate or find synonyms. <b>(3 points)</b>	Can use many studied terms and structures as well as other technical terms that have not necessarily been seen in class, while still being clear for the audience. <b>(4 points)</b>
<b>LINGUISTIC ACCURACY</b>	Can only use very simple structures and with a lot of basic mistakes. Pronunciation is very faulty. <b>(1 point)</b>	Can communicate ideas in spite of some grammatical, lexical and phonological mistakes. <b>(2points)</b>	Good overall quality of the language produced in spite of a few mistakes. <b>(3 -points)</b>	Can even use complex terms and structures without mistakes. Can produce authentic language. <b>(4 points)</b>





