

Barbie Across the Curriculum

The library's October display is out, and we are pinking it up! Students have many opportunities to do reading activities for prizes. I put together some ideas for how the theme could extend into various classrooms, focusing somewhat on careers, since I am working with the HirePaths curriculum this year. You are welcome to use all of career resources, many of which are adaptable to different curricular areas, located at <https://hirepaths.com/>. Please feel free to use any of the worksheets I created or tap into the links I found with other Barbie-related lesson plans across the curriculum. I will be putting a list of library activities in your boxes, too, if you want to share with your SSR classes. Also, I'd love to make bookmarks for those of you who would like to participate!

Ag -

- While it may seem hard to believe that Barbie could play any part in ag education, surprisingly, Barbie has a number of ag related careers, and ag industry writers have taken note. Since so many young women are involved in ag classes now, a great project could be to examine the role of women in varying ag industries by using Barbie as a jumping off point. Here are resources to get started. *Beef Magazine* goes so far as to call Farmer Barbie "pro-agriculture" in this piece, and this article in *Dairy Business* includes statistics about the growing number of women in the dairy industry to support their article on the Farmer Barbie. <https://www.dairybusiness.com/farmer-barbie-outfitted-to-bring-ag-to-young-girls/>. This article in *Country Guide* examines whether Farmer Barbie sets the right tone: <https://www.country-guide.ca/guide-business/does-farmer-barbie-set-the-right-tone-for-the-advancement-of-women-in-ag/>. After all, Barbie is a doll, and shouldn't agricultural women be less interested in dolls and more interested in the ag business? But ultimately, the article concludes that Mattel's focus on farming as a career for girls to "dream big and aim high" toward is positive. There are actually a number of ag-related Barbies, including Farmer Barbie and Tractor, Chicken Farmer Barbie, Sweet Orchard Barbie, Beekeeper Barbie, Horse Trainer Barbie, Gardener Barbie, Veterinarian Barbie, Cowgirl Barbie, and Farmer's Market Stall Owner.
- HirePaths has numerous resources for your students to explore at these links: <https://hirepaths.com/cool-careers-videos/agronomist>, <https://hirepaths.com/cool-careers-videos/dairy-farmer>, <https://hirepaths.com/blog/2021/07/22/more-than-farmers-and-ranchers-consider-jobs-in-agriculture-and-food-production>, and <https://hirepaths.com/explore-careers/agriculture-animal-health>.
- This is a 7-12 lesson plan in which students have to create a sustainable terrestrial and aquatic farm blueprint based on the Sweet Orchard Barbie. The reviews from ag teachers are really good. The plan does cost \$2.99 on Teachers Pay Teachers, but it may be worth looking into based on the reviews: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Barbie-Sustainable-Dream-Farm-Environmental-Agriculture-Farm-Design-Project--6254979>.
- Did you know that one of the most famous welding artists in the U.S. is Barbie the Welder? This artist has released many welding how-to videos and books, and her welding art could inspire your students to create work of their own. Check out interviews here, <https://motorcyclemojo.com/2023/07/barbie-the-welder/>, and here, <https://www.achrnews.com/articles/151790-this-barbie-is-a-master-welder>. Instructional videos are here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5YIR7pctg>, and here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMFQjZ2wGp8>. I did not watch the whole two-hour video to vet for swear words or anything, but it looks like most of the time she is giving instructions. She also has

how-to books on Amazon (<https://a.co/d/hEsVvWo>) with easy welding projects. HirePaths has welding success stories here: <https://hirepaths.com/profile/kristin-mallon>.

- Auto-mechanics students may be interested in reading about the modifications made the cars in *Barbie*. Here's a look at the makes, models, and modifications, along with a quick review of Barbie's cars through the ages: <https://www.drive.com.au/caradvice/whats-the-car-in-the-barbie-movie/>. HirePaths information about careers in mechanics are located here: <https://hirepaths.com/bus-and-truck-mechanic-and-diesel-engine-specialist>.

Business –

- What can we learn about business and economics from Barbie? A *Forbes* article gives the low-down in accessible language that students might find interesting. The article introduces terms like mortgage, bottom line, and supply/demand: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanderousseau/2023/07/31/here-are-three-financial-lessons-from-the-barbie-movie/?sh=175a5bfe4701>.
- In the world of business, change is inevitable. Those who refuse to adapt are often left out of the big profits. This lesson introduces how Barbie adapted to the digital age to continue growth into the 21st century: <https://medium.com/@williammeller/barbies-business-lessons-adapting-to-the-digital-age-e234aa0514c0>. What I like about this piece is the information on branding, responsiveness to customer feedback, and social media as a business tool.
- What could be better than a lesson plan with linked standards, ready-made game cards, a PowerPoint, and citations? This labor force in business lesson has all of that and more, plus it was developed by the Federal Reserve. Here it is for business teachers to download and teach – voila! <https://www.stlouisfed.org/-/media/project/frbstl/stlouisfed/Education/Lessons/pdf/Barbie-in-the-Labor-Force.pdf?la=enn>.
- Have students look into careers in business at the HirePaths link here: <https://hirepaths.com/explore-careers/business-administrative>.
- Sales tax, property tax, and income tax are a part of life in flesh, even if they are not a part of life in plastic. To teach business students about these concepts using Barbie, you can first read this short article: <https://taxfoundation.org/blog/barbie-movie/>. Then, have students research the sales tax rate in states where they may want to live. You could have them calculate the sales tax on various Barbie dolls, or you could even have them calculate the annual property taxes for Barbie's 1959 C1 Corvette. Students could investigate the average salaries for any of Barbie's over 200 careers, then find out how much income tax they would have to pay in the state they want to live.

English –

- The fourth lesson plan down in this resource is a writing activity involving a narrative reflection about the importance of childhood toys. I would LOVE to read your students' responses to this one, as I had a strong attachment to toys as a child. Evidence suggests that comfort toys play a different role in the lives of children in families with high ACES scores. Bringing in your own special childhood toys to share would be striking way into this writing assignment: <https://aml.ca/back-to-school-barbie/>.
- Can a heavy equipment operator also be a poet? Find out more about how writing can enrich the lives of people in a wide array of professions at the HirePaths link here: <https://hirepaths.com/blog/2021/02/09/meet-eric-borden-heavy-equipment-operator-and-poet>.
- This is just a very basic editing activity. Students read an unedited paragraph about Barbie, make corrections, and turn in. Simple but solid: https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/edit/edit0309.shtml.
- The seventh lesson plan down in this resource is about the hero's journey trope in literature. The outline also gives interesting writing prompts: <https://aml.ca/back-to-school-barbie/>.

- This is a fabulous lesson plan: <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/223>. Students read poetry and persuasive text, watch a vintage ad, analyze text, and construct an argument. All of the links are available within the plan.
- Creating a resume and cover letter is an essential writing task that will help all students to understand content development, parallelism, word choice, and professional editing. Have students select one of Barbie's over 200 careers, found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbie%27s_careers, or one of Ken's 40 careers, found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_\(doll\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_(doll)), and develop a professional resume and cover letter for the chosen doll and career. If you need additional help structuring your plan for teaching students to write resumes, here is an excellent resource for 7th and 8th grade students that could easily be adapted to 9th and 10th graders as well: <https://www.txcte.org/resource/lesson-plan-resume-writing-teens>.

Math –

- In the same year that Barbie became president (1992), Mattel also released Teen Talk Barbie, which, unfortunately, uttered the ditzy phrase, “Math is tough!” However, since then, Barbie has become a human calculator, with many of her careers requiring expert math skills. Here's an article linking Barbie with modern careers that utilize math skills for success: <https://excelined.org/2023/08/21/math-monday-barbie/>. And for all of those students who whine, “I am never going to use this!” here's a lesson plan you can use along with the math skills Barbies: https://secure.cfwv.com/images/wv/pdfs/pro/math_how_will_i_ever_use_it.pdf.
- Read an inspiring story that Barbie and Ken are sure to approve of, since it involves ice cream! HirePaths shares how the practical application of math changed students' attitudes in a sweet way: <https://hirepaths.com/blog/2023/08/10/sweet-success-ice-cream-cart-job-melts-math-struggles>
- A number (pun intended) of math projects could be planned around Barbie. One easy plan would involve calculating percentage of increase from the original sale price of \$3.00 to the record sale of an unopened Barbie for \$27,450. Students could do many percentage activities based on the appreciation of collector Barbies and the depreciation of non-collector Barbies (think Weird Barbie). Though there are many sources, here's one: <https://www.one37pm.com/collectibles/most-expensive-barbie-dolls-ever-sold> .
- The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics suggests having students plan a Barbie bungee activity using linear equations and scatterplots following the lesson plan here: <https://www.nctm.org/Classroom-Resources/Illuminations/Lessons/Barbie-Bungee/>.

Music –

- The Barbie soundtrack is packed with big musical artists like Nicki Minaj, Billie Eilish, Brandi, Indigo Girls, Lizzo, and of course, the musical prodigy, Ryan Gosling. It would follow that lessons abound for the music classroom. One of my favorites is the breakdown and discussion of “What I Was Made For,” found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT-NSpLRPHc> . If you have six minutes left in class, here's an educational time filler that discusses chords, songwriting techniques, and improvisation.
- This is a complete kit for high school music teachers about music and film: https://www.oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/complete_sound_and_music_activities_guide.pdf . It really is just one of those “wow” resources that includes activity masters, instructional guides, and even posters. It's a turnkey job, and all the music teacher needs to do is plug in the particular movie she wants the students to tackle. And to top it off, the resource was developed by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

- The ninth lesson plan down in this resource is about the use of song in movies: <https://aml.ca/back-to-school-barbie/>. There is good information about how music impacts the mood of cinema, along with a list of artists contributing to the soundtrack for the movie.
- Here is a quick link to all of the songs in the movie, along with their artists: <https://www.denofgeek.com/movies/barbie-soundtrack-every-song-from-the-movie/>.

Science –

- Here's a quick space science lesson plan: (1) Show a photo of the original Barbie and explain that if she were scaled as a real person, she would be 5'9" and weigh 110 pounds (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/heres-what-physics-tells-us-about-barbies-world/>). The average American woman, who is only 5'4", weighs 171 pounds (<https://www.thelist.com/890274/what-is-the-average-weight-for-a-woman-in-the-us/>). Have the students calculate their own weight on the moon and various planets and then discover which planet Barbie might be from! The formulas for calculating weight on other planets is here: <https://sciencenotes.org/how-to-calculate-weight-on-other-planets/>.
- Is life in plastic really fantastic? Have your chemistry students investigate with this infographic of Barbie's chemical composition: <https://www.compoundchem.com/2023/08/18/barbie/>. The website contains several links to chemistry research into Barbies, including information about the negative impact of the doll on the environment.
- Barbie has held over 20 careers in science. Have students choose one of the following careers represented by a Barbie and investigate degree required: aeronautical engineer, astrophysicist, astronaut, chemist, computer engineer, conservation scientist, dentist, entomologist, video game developer, marine biologist, medical doctor, microbiologist, optometrist, pediatric doctor, polar researcher, renewable energy engineer, robotics engineer, paleontologist, science teacher, veterinarian, wildlife conservationist, and zoologist. Students can complete this graphic organizer: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFvdqIFQlw/BgtGF3SMPwi5HFAIEBAwvg/view?utm_content=DAFvdqIFQlw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor. Follow up by having students share their research.

Fonensics –

- The potential for an informative Barbie speech qualifying for state is extremely high this year. Tracing how Barbie mirrored societal changes, beginning in 1959, in a dynamic, well-researched informative speech, could be sublime.
- An oration with a central claim that Barbie has either positively or negatively impacted women's progress could also make a strong run at state. The library is here for it with all the citations! My only caveat might be that we could see a surplus of Barbie speeches, but since ours would be better than all the others, we could still do a simply sublime job. There are multiple sources that back up BOTH claims, and the library can help students find trustworthy sources that could bolster arguments.
- A sleeper opportunity might lie in a Ken speech – that might just be Kenough to win. To get students started writing an informative speech, have them head over to the timeline here: <http://www.barbiemedia.com/ken/timeline.html>.
- Here's a lesson plan for students to develop a movie review speech with elements of comparisons to other movies that had big releases: <https://theenglishflows.com/lesson-plans/barbie-fever/>.

Cinema -

- The movie is Warner Brothers' highest grossing film ever, leaving the *Harry Potters* in second place in late August. Here's the citation on that: <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2023-09-12/barbie-streaming-records-broken-box-office> .
- The movie's popularity would be a great opening to look at women's directorial history (hint: it's short and not too sweet!). Here's an article that discusses how women have fought to make their way in the world of Hollywood film directing: <https://thehelm.co/hollywood-herstory-book/> .
- Greta Gerwig (I think she may only be 40 years old) has already directed a couple of other important films, and one of them, an adaptation of *Little Women*, offers an excellent chance to compare versions, as Louisa May Alcott's classic novel has been adapted for film over a dozen times. Here is a GREAT look at the history of *Little Women* movies going all the way back to silent films: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/specialfeatures/little-women-adaptations/#> .
- Check out the Hirepaths resource about making animated film at <https://hirepaths.com/multimedia-artist-and-animator-business-administrative> .

Art -

- "It's pink! Good enough to drink! We like other colors, but pink just looks so good on us!" The first plan listed here is an AWESOME art lesson about the color pink in design. <https://aml.ca/back-to-school-barbie/> . I would have loved to do an art lesson like this as a junior high or high school student!
- Check out art-heavy careers at these Hirepaths links: <https://hirepaths.com/graphic-designer-business-administrative> , <https://hirepaths.com/multimedia-artist-and-animator-business-administrative> , and <https://hirepaths.com/jeweler> .
- This is a kit put together by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences about the art and design of movies. You could plan a couple of WEEKS around this all-inclusive teaching kit, and the Barbie movie is just prime for this application because of its unique look: https://www.oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/complete_art_direction_activities_guide.pdf .
- Barbie has made her way into art. This article shows several examples that I can't imagine high school students wouldn't find interesting: <https://hyperallergic.com/834650/the-complicated-legacy-of-barbie-in-art/>. My personal favorite is the image of Barbie who has been put through the aging software. After showing slides of the art you find most interesting, give each student a thrift store purchased Barbie (believe me, they are abundant and cheap) and have them incorporate the doll into their own art.

Woods/Shop -

- How can Barbie teach students in shop class about board and batten siding? What can students in shop class learn about Herman Miller furniture design from Barbie? This architectural review of Barbie Dream Houses through history is a teaching video that includes 31 architectural and furniture building terms: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nPsqxs33IM> . One lesson plan is simply to have the students choose one of the terms from the vocabulary list I made found at https://www.canva.com/design/DAFvdxzNtHM/ku9mQBIS1_Z4KCzrUTw2KA/view?utm_content=DAFvdxzNtHM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor to research and report on. Another is to have the students write out definitions for each of the terms on the sheet. Alternatively, you could even make up a crossword puzzle or wordsearch containing the terms.
- If you don't follow BarbieWoodshop on Instagram, you should, even if you're not a woods teacher. You can read more about this father daughter project at <https://blog.lostartpress.com/2020/04/21/an-interview-with-barbie-of-barbie-woodshop/> or follow at

<https://www.instagram.com/barbiewoodshop/?hl=en> . One idea for classroom use is to have students identify all of Barbie's woodworking tools in the photos. Another idea is to use the Barbie videos as a humorous way to introduce each activity.

- In this short unit, students plan and build a scale model of a piece of Barbie furniture. Students must first understand the concept of scale, which is used by architects and engineers to design models of projects such as bridges, buildings, highways, furniture, and other structures. A packet containing all teaching materials, including videos, worksheets, and instructional guides is located here: https://www.teachengineering.org/activities/view/cub_scale_model_lesson01_activity2 . A guide to scale models for dolls is found here: <https://www.dollshouseboutique.com.au/dolls-house-scale-guide/> .
- Hirepaths provides many informational links about careers in woods and shop. Check out a few of those here: <https://hirepaths.com/woodworker> , <https://hirepaths.com/carpenter> , and <https://hirepaths.com/cool-careers-videos/carpenter> .