

SUPERHEROES – WHY ARE WE OBSESSED WITH THEM?



Superheroes have existed for as long as stories, before writing, and across every culture. For example, the story of Hercules has been around since ancient times and there is the story of Samson in the Bible, just to name a few.

A superhero is a fictional character who possesses extraordinary abilities beyond normal human capabilities. Heroes are like us, but more so – they are stronger, cleverer, and faster. They use their powers to make this world a better place. They help people, they save their lives.

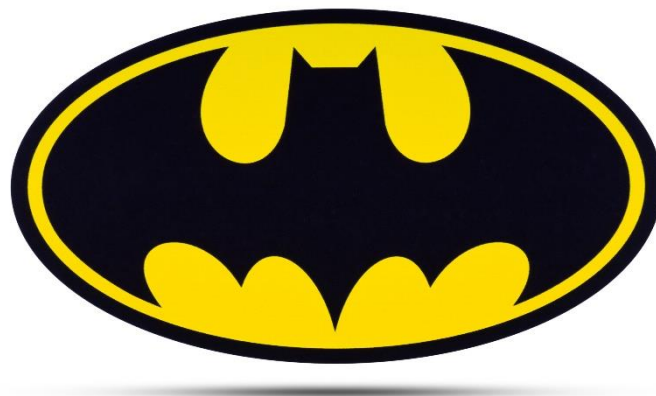
Every superhero has his origin story, and a surprisingly large number of modern heroes owe those origins to myths of gods and heroes who existed millennia before them. Some superheroes possess non-human or super-human strength (e.g. Superman and Spider-man), while others use advanced technology they create (e.g. Batman and Iron Man).

SUPERMAN



Clark Kent was born on the planet Krypton and he was rocketed to Earth as a baby seconds before Krypton's destruction. He was found by the Kents, a childless couple, who decided to raise him as their own. Clark didn't really fit in with the other kids. His parents soon noticed that Clark had some extraordinary gifts and Clark also became aware of his supernatural powers. The adult Clark lived a double life. In one he worked as a journalist for the Daily Planet and in the other, he used his superpowers to help powerless victims and do good in the world. He also met Lois Lane, a fellow reporter, and fell in love with her. Meanwhile, Lex Luthor, the world's greatest criminal mind, was planning to take over the world. Superman was the only one who could stop him. The only problem that Superman has is that he loses his power around kryptonite.

BATMAN



As a child, young Bruce Wayne witnessed the violent death of his millionaire parents, which led him to become obsessed with revenge. He went to Asia where he trained martial arts. Unlike Superman and most other superheroes, he has no supernatural powers and he also never uses a gun to fight his enemies. He just made a goal for himself and achieved it. He makes use of intellect, detective skills, science and technology, wealth, physical strength, and intimidation in his war on crime. When a bat flew through his window, Bruce was inspired to dress as Batman to scare cowardly

and superstitious criminals. So he became Batman, a Dark Knight to protect Gotham City and its citizens from criminals. Batman found a friend in Captain James Gordon, a Gotham detective who didn't approve of Batman's methods, but appreciated the results of his nightly crime-fighting.

A1 Which of the two superheroes are these sentences about? Or maybe both of them?

- 1 He has no superpowers.
- 2 His parents were killed in front of him.
- 3 He is an alien.
- 4 He helps people and fights crime.
- 5 He uses gadgets, weapons and technology to fight his enemies.
- 6 He is very rich.
- 7 He was adopted as a baby.
- 8 His weakness is kryptonite.
- 9 He leads a double life.

A2 Match the words from the text with their meaning.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1 wealth | a) very old |
| 2 origin story | b) thousands of years |
| 3 martial arts | c) be thankful for (something) |
| 4 intimidation | d) have a positive opinion (of something) |
| 5 millennia | e) fighting sports such as karate, judo, kung fu |
| 6 ancient | f) fortune; a lot of money |
| 7 appreciate | g) tells us how a superhero came into existence |
| 8 approve | h) when you try to frighten someone into doing what you want |

B What about you?

- Who is your favourite superhero and why?
- Name all the superheroes you know.
- What superhero powers would you like to have?

C1 What do you know about other superheroes? Match the superheroes with their descriptions.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1 Ant-Man | a) has a multiple powered armour suit and bullets cannot hurt him |
| 2 Aquaman | b) can sense danger and he can cling to any surface and climb walls |
| 3 Thor | c) has three razor-sharp claws on each of his arms. |
| 4 Iron Man | d) has the Lasso of Truth and bracelets that can block bullets |
| 5 Spider-man | e) uses his new hammer and strength to fight evil. |
| 6 Wolverine | f) can shrink to the size of an insect. |
| 7 Wonder Woman | g) can communicate telepathically with creatures of the sea |

C2 Quiz time

How many questions can you answer without looking for help online?

- 1 What is the name of Thor's hammer?
- 2 How did Spider-man get his superpowers?
- 3 Which superhero says: 'With great power, there must also come great responsibility'?
- 4 What was Superman's birth name on the planet Krypton?
- 5 What does Wonder Woman's lasso force anyone caught in it **do**?

6 Whose real name is Selina Kyle?

7 Who is Batman's crime-fighting assistant?

8 Which superhero does Bruce Banner turn into when he's angry?