

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



1. When did Superman first appear in comics?

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2. What is the name of Superman's home planet?

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3. According to the lecturer, which of the following made Superman different from other superheroes?

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4. When did "The Adventures of Superman" first air on TV?

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5. When did the popularity of Superman start to decline?

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6. Who starred in "Superman: The Movie" in 1978?

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Discuss these questions with a friend or classmate.

1. What information in the lecture did you find the most interesting? Why?
2. Have you ever read a Superman comic book? Why? / Why not?
3. Have you ever watched a Superman movie? Why? / Why not?
4. Why do you think superhero movies are so popular nowadays?
5. Which superhero would you like to be? Why?
6. What three questions would you like to ask Superman?

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Audio Script

Hands up, who knows who Superman is? Everyone? Well, I'm not surprised. But how many of you here today know the backstory of Superman? No, no one? We'll start off our lesson today, then, with a short history of the man of steel: Superman!

This superhero came to life in 1938 with DC Comics team writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster, when he first appeared in Action Comics #1. The character was supposed to be an alien who was sent to Earth from his dying planet, Krypton. Superman was given extraordinary powers, due to the differences between the Earth's atmosphere and that of his home planet. The character quickly gained popularity among readers and became a sensation. Superman's strength, invulnerability, and ability to fly, were all characteristics that set him apart from other characters of the time.

As Superman's popularity grew, so did the character's influence on American popular culture. The character became the subject of radio shows, movie serials, and, eventually, television shows. On September 19, 1952, the television show, "The Adventures of Superman," starring George Reeves, first aired. It soon became a cultural phenomenon.

Superman also played an important role in World War II propaganda efforts. The character was featured in comics and posters, encouraging Americans to support the war effort. He was a symbol of American strength and resilience, inspiring young readers to emulate his heroic actions.

In the 1960s, however, Superman's popularity began to decline as readers became more interested in anti-heroes and morally ambiguous characters. In response, DC Comics decided to reinvent the character with the 1978 film, "Superman: The Movie," starring Christopher Reeve. The film was a critical and commercial success and it revitalized interest in the character. Since then, there have been numerous theatrical releases starring Superman. In all, eleven movies to date with another film coming out soon. Other performers who have taken on the lead role of Superman include Brandon Routh and British actor Henry Cavill.

ANSWER KEY

1. 1938
2. Krypton
3. his ability to fly
4. 1952
5. 1960s
6. Christopher Reeve