

Name: _____

Period: _____

Article of the Week – Week Three

Hey, Star Wars Toymakers, Where's Rey?

Directions:

1. **Read and annotate** the article with a minimum of 8 markings.
2. **Write a synonym** or simple definition above the bolded words found throughout the article.
3. Complete the **They Say / I Say** section by using the template provided on the back of the instructions sheet.
4. Complete the **Quick Questions** section by creating two researchable questions and writing out the answers.
5. Complete the **Grammar** section by using the example mentor sentences to craft your own sentences.

Hey, Star Wars Toymakers, Where's Rey?

By Leonard Pitts

I used to consider women pitifully weak and pathetically delicate. For this, I blame Marvel Comics.

As a boy in the 1960s, I was seldom without my nose in one of that company's fables. From them, I learned many valuable life lessons:

- Always lock the portal to the Negative Zone
- Never ignore your spider-sense

Mutants are people, too.

But I also learned that women — “girls,” actually — were like fine china, fragile and decorative.

The Avengers, the Fantastic Four and the X-Men all had distaff members, but when the fighting started, the girls usually stood — or were ordered — to the side, if, indeed, they were allowed to go on the mission in the first place.

Yes, occasionally, Marvel Girl would trip a bad guy with her telekinetic powers or the Invisible Girl would throw up a force field to protect her partners. Then they would promptly faint from the exertion. Once revived, they'd start dinner. So the idea of girls in the center of the action would've seemed pretty far-fetched to me.

This was a pretty common mindset back in the *Mad Men* era, but you wouldn't think it'd have much currency post *Cagney and Lacey*, post Lara Croft, post Ronda Rousey and the Williams sisters. Apparently, some of us think otherwise.

Or, to put that another way: Where's Rey?

That's the hashtag of a Twitter campaign that has exploded in recent weeks. The Rey in question is no piece of fine china. Rather, she's a scavenger and a scrapper; she pilots — and repairs — the iconic Millennium Falcon space ship, and she's handy with a lightsaber, too. Rey is the

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reactions and questions as
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undisputed star of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, which has earned over \$1.9 billion worldwide at the box office.

Yet if you buy the new Star Wars-themed Monopoly game, you won't find her in it. You'll find a Darth Vader token, and he's not even in the movie, but no Rey. Ditto the Millennium Falcon playset. Ditto a six-pack of movie figurines.

In response to international (yes, international!) **umbrage**, a spokesperson for the Hasbro toy company told Entertainment Weekly that the character was omitted because her inclusion would have revealed a key plot point. The company said Rey will be featured in the second wave of toys reaching stores this month.

Which may sound reasonable until you remember the same company has faced the same complaints before. In 2014, bloggers were upset that the character Gamora was **segregated** out of playsets based on the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movie. Last year, the omission of Black Widow from much of the *Avengers* merchandise was glaring enough for Mark Ruffalo, a star of the films, to tweet a plea for more Widow toys "for my daughters and nieces."

He's right, of course. Toys are the medium by which children act out their aspirations and dreams. My granddaughter, Lena, who is 6, regards herself as a princess. And a superhero. She sees no reason she can't be both and I want her to have toys that help her maintain that sense of herself as a person to whom all possibilities are open and for whom gender is no barrier. Girls can do anything. That's something girls need to know.

But it is also something boys need to know, even if — *especially* if — they are resistant to the idea. Although frankly, I'm not sure if boys really are resistant or if Hasbro just assumes they are.

You hate to think, after all, that boys who understand a hero can be a sentient tree, a green monster or a shaggy, dog-faced furball, would be stymied by the idea that a hero can be a woman. Surely we have done a better job of teaching our sons that courage has no gender.

OK, maybe that's something we couldn't be expected to understand when I was a boy a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. But haven't we all grown up some since then?

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Grammar:

1. The following sentence from the article uses a subordinating conjunction. Circle the subordinating conjunction.

Yet if you buy the new Star Wars-themed Monopoly game, you won't find her in it.

2. Write your own sentence that starts with a subordinating conjunction.

3. Write your own sentence that has a subordinating conjunction in the middle of the sentence.

Quick Questions. Create two higher-level thinking questions similar to what you would see on a test (short answer, not multiple choice). Use complete sentences to write out the answer to your questions.

Question: _____

Answer: _____

Question: _____

Answer: _____

They Say / I Say:

On the back of this sheet of paper, use the following template to write two well developed paragraphs. Fill in the blanks with your own concise word choice(s) using information from the article where needed. Using these sentences as a guideline, develop your own written response on the back.

The general argument made by (the author) in her/his work, _____, is that _____. More specifically, (the author) argues that _____. She/he writes, “_____.” In this passage, (the author) is suggesting that _____. In conclusion, (the author's) belief is that _____.

In my view, (the author) is wrong/right, because _____. More specifically, I believe that _____. For example, _____. Although (the author) might object that _____, I maintain that _____. Therefore, I conclude that _____.

