



# 7

# Breaking bad

FICTIONS ET RÉALITÉS

How does the antihero redefine  
the American heroic ideal?



↑ Deadpool 2, David Leitch (2018)

## SCENARIO

The American hero or heroine is the main character in a story, a perfect role model who is brave and always makes the right decisions. But the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st have seen the rise of a new type of protagonist: the antihero.

## FINAL TASK

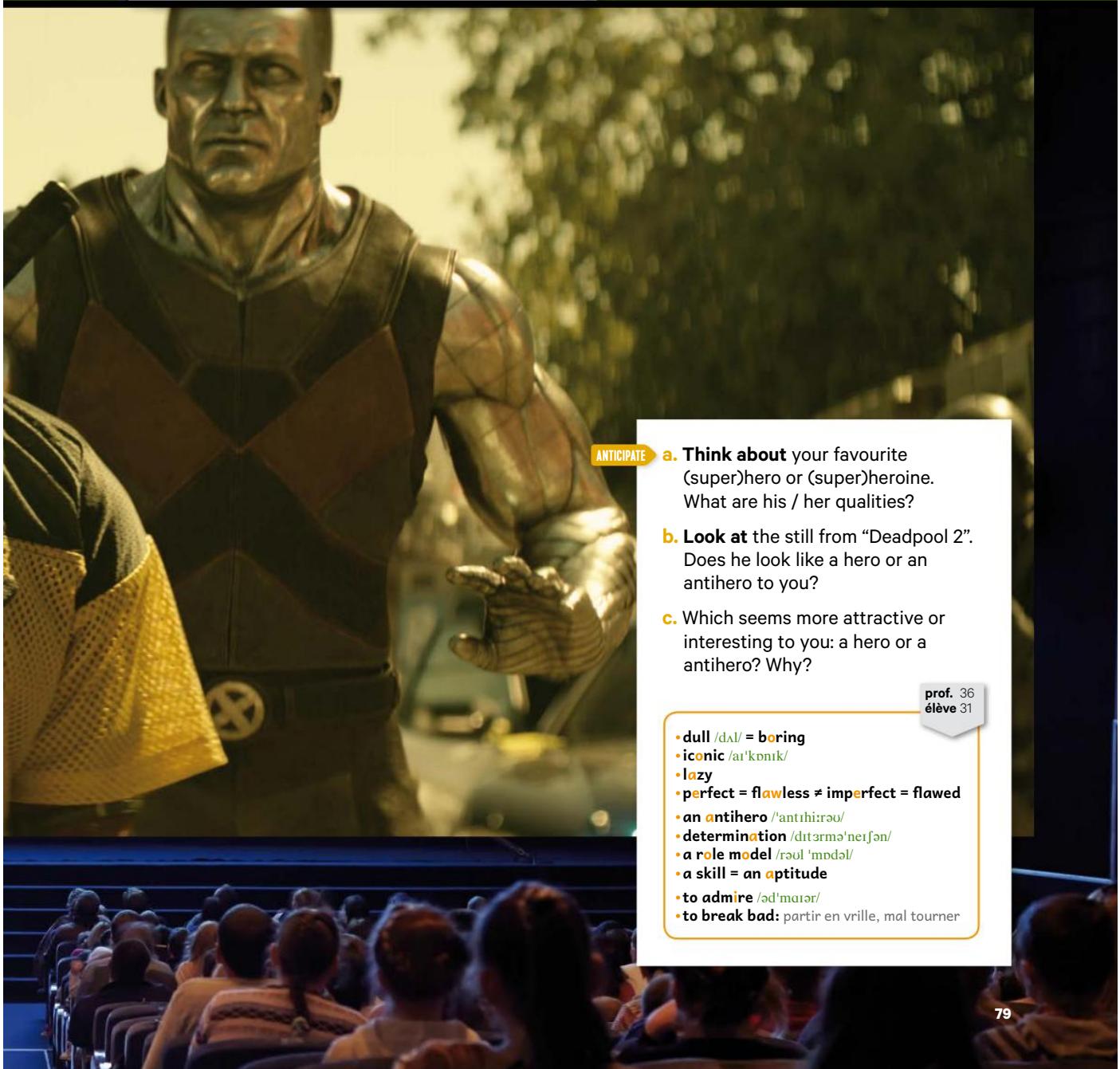
Draw the portrait  
of an antihero  
or  
an antiheroine  
for a new TV series

### ANTICIPATE

- a. Think about your favourite (super)hero or (super)heroine. What are his / her qualities?
- b. Look at the still from "Deadpool 2". Does he look like a hero or an antihero to you?
- c. Which seems more attractive or interesting to you: a hero or a antihero? Why?

prof. 36  
élève 31

- dull /dʌl/ = **boring**
- iconic /aɪ'kɒnɪk/
- lazy
- perfect = **flawless** ≠ **imperfect** = **flawed**
- an antihero /'anthiːrəʊ/
- determination /dɪtər'meɪnəʃən/
- a role model /rəl 'mɒdəl/
- a skill = an aptitude
- to admire /əd'maɪər/
- to break bad: partir en vrille, mal tourner



## DOCUMENTS



### 1 A true hero

ANTICIPATE

- Look at the painting for 30 seconds.  
Close your book and ask a classmate three questions to test him / her on the details.
- Who is the centre of attention?  
What can you guess about these characters and the historical context?
- Listen to the audio.  
What three elements of the painting show that the soldier is a hero?
- The newspaper clipping on the wall proudly proclaims "Garageman A Hero".  
Imagine the content of the article.  
Write 100-150 words.



prof. 37



Homecoming Marine, Norman Rockwell (1945)



### 2 Two antiheroes

ANTICIPATE

- Read the first 12 lines aloud.  
Imagine what happened to George and Lennie in the city of Weed.  
  
They must have + V-en...  
I gather that they... because...

Lennie droned to himself softly, "I ain't gonna say nothin'... I ain't gonna say nothin'."

"O.K.," said George. "An' you ain't gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither."

5 Lennie looked puzzled. "Like I done in Weed?" "Oh, so ya forgot that too, did ya? Well, I ain't gonna remind ya, fear ya do it again."

A light of understanding broke on Lennie's face. "They run us outa Weed," he exploded triumphantly.

10 "Run us out, hell," said George disgustedly. "We run. They was lookin' for us, but they didn't catch us."

Lennie giggled happily. "I didn't forget that, you bet."

George lay back on the sand and crossed his hands under his head, and Lennie imitated him, raising his head to see whether he was doing it right. "God, you're a lot of trouble," said George. "I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn't have you on my tail. I could live so easy and maybe have a girl."

- Read the whole text. Who seems to be the leader of the gang? Why?

From what we read, ...



- Describe George and Lennie. Why can't they be considered heroes?

For a moment Lennie lay quiet, and then he said hopefully, "We gonna work on a ranch, George." "

20 Awright. You got that. But we're gonna sleep here because I got a reason."

25 The day was going fast now. Only the tops of the Gabilan Mountains flamed with the light of the sun that had gone from the valley. A water snake slipped along on the pool, its head held up like a little periscope. Far off toward the highway a man shouted something, and another man shouted back. The sycamore limbs rustled under a little wind that died immediately.

30 "George, why ain't we goin' on to the ranch and get some supper? They got supper at the ranch."

George rolled on his side. "No reason at all for you. I like it here. Tomorra we're gonna go to work. I seen thrashin' machines on the way down.

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (1937)



### 3 Difficult men

prof. 38

- Listen to** the recording.  
**Make a list** of all the antiheroes that are mentioned.
- Listen again.**  
**Write down** the different definitions that are given for an antihero.
- Come up with** your own definition of an antihero.

prof. 39-40  
élève 32-33

#### TRAIN YOUR VOICE

##### La prononciation du « h » en début de mot

En début de mot, le « h » se prononce généralement /h/.

1 Écoutez ces mots. Concentrez-vous sur le son « h ».

hero heroine help hello

2 Écoutez la phrase suivante. Répétez-la.

Hello Henry, is Andrew at home or is he out?

Il existe des exceptions : au début de certains mots, le « h » ne se prononce pas.

honour hour honest



### 4 One of a kind



↑ Daenerys from "Game of Thrones"



↑ Rick from "The Walking Dead"



↑ Eleven from "Stranger Things"



- Look at** the images. Have you seen any of these shows?  
**Explain** the plot briefly.
  - Choose** one of the characters in the posters.  
Write a psychological self-portrait. **Focus on** your skills, flaws, obsessions...
- I'm (not) very good at... / I am such a...  
I have trouble + V-ing... / I lack...  
I may be..., and yet... / Although I am mean, I...
- Read** your text aloud.  
Your classmates **identify** your character. **Correct** or **complete** the descriptions you hear.
  - What do these characters have in common?**

prof. 41  
élève 34

- ambiguous /æm'bɪgjuəs/ ~ mysterious /mɪ'stəriəs/
- cold-blooded /kəuld'blʌðid/ ~ ruthless: insensible, sans pitié
- cunning /'kʌnɪŋ/: astucieux(euse), malin / maligne
- simple-minded /'simpl'maindɪd/ = foolish
- a protagonist = the main character
- to have an agenda = to pursue a personal goal
- to lack: manquer
- to relate to sb /rɪ'lætɪ/: s'identifier à qqn
- to root for = to support

#### • L'expression du haut degré → p. 200

Lennie is a **very** strong man.

Eleven is **such a** unique and enjoyable antiheroine!  
Traditional heroes are **so** stereotypical!

#### • L'expression de la concession → p. 197

**Although** she is a criminal, she comes across as likeable.  
Daenerys Targaryen is a ruthless character, **and yet**  
she always does her best to protect her people.

## 5 The bad girls club

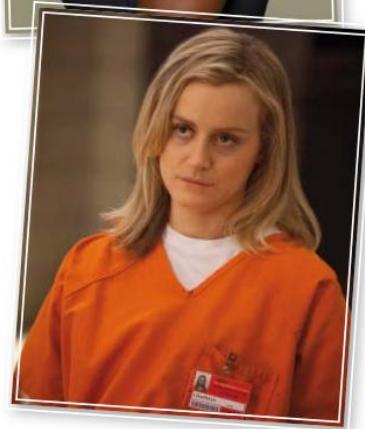
As television has matured, and as content has begun to uncover the incredible complexities of storytelling, character development and human nature alike, a bridge between male and female antiheroes has been laid, which is a good thing, because female antiheroes should be portrayed and received in a way similar to their male counterparts that have garnered universal attention and even admiration. (...)

Annalise Keating (Viola Davis) of Shonda Rhimes's "How to Get Away with Murder" is one of two female characters who stand out in the world of antiheroism. The other is Piper Chapman (Taylor Schilling) of Jenji Kohan's "Orange Is the New Black". (...)

Annalise and Piper are everything male antiheroes are in television: cunning, self-motivated, oftentimes evil but still human, neither too brutal to be villains nor too gentle-hearted to be heroes. We want to like them, despite their misdeeds and the wrongs they don't want to right. Even when we find admiring or understanding them to be difficult, something I think is essential in a consumer / character dynamic, we want them to succeed. Just as Walter White from "Breaking Bad" could cook meth and mow down his enemies in a 2004 Pontiac Aztek, Annalise can frame an ex-lover for her husband's murder, falsify evidence or lie to her students, and Piper can single-handedly send girlfriend Stella Carlin (Ruby Rose) to maximum-security after realizing she had betrayed her trust. And, in many ways, we want them to get away with these things.

Though they are not totally perfect antiheroes, Annalise Keating and Piper Chapman are damn close, standing out as some of television's best bad girls. They represent a hope not only for acceptance of female antiheroism but for a change in how we view female characters overall.

Bad girls club: the rise of the female antihero, The Young Folks (2016)



Main characters in "How to Get Away with Murder" and "Orange Is the New Black"

a. **Read** the text.  
Make a list of the TV series and characters.

b. **Read** again.  
Pick the different adjectives used to describe heroes, villains and antiheroes.

c. **Explain** how viewers feel about antiheroes and antiheroines.

d. **Focus** on the last paragraph.  
What does the author mean by "they represent a hope" (l. 27)?

e. **Sum up** the article in one or two sentences.

MEDIATION



f. **Choose** a female character from a film or a TV series. Is she a heroine, a villain or an antiheroine? Do you root for her? Why (not)?  
**Present** her to the class.

I am currently watching...  
The protagonist is a very...

prof. 42  
élève 35

- **charismatic** /kærɪz'mætɪk/
- **despicable** /dɪ'spɪkəbəl/: méprisable
- **gentle-hearted** = kind
- **likeable** ≠ **unlikeable**
- **machiavellian** /maekiə'veliən/ = **unscrupulous** /ʌn'skrupjʊləs/
- **tormented** /tɔːr'mentɪd/
- **a misdeed** /mɪs'di:d/ = **a wrongdoing** = **a wrong**
- **to have a leading role**
- **to stand out** = **to be remarkable**

• **Les quantifiants** → p. 183  
All the TV channels are looking for the next hit series.  
Most actresses are willing to work for Netflix.  
In this TV series, Piper Chapman lied to many people.

# VOCABULARY

→ Banque d'exercices p. 164



to admire  
to captivate = to fascinate  
to relate to sb  
to ring true  
to root for = to support  
to want sb to succeed  
to worship = to idolise

to have an agenda =  
to pursue a personal goal  
to stand out =  
to be remarkable

a protagonist = the main character  
a lead character = a leading role  
a stock character =  
a stereotypical fictional character

**VIEWERS**

**GOALS**

**ROLES**

## AMERICAN ANTIHEROES

**PERSONALITY**

brave = courageous  
charismatic  
fascinating  
flawless = perfect = a role model  
gentle-hearted = kind  
iconic  
laid-back  
likeable  
loyal  
original  
remarkable  
unique  
to have skills = to be skillful  
to have heroic qualities  
to right a wrong  
to stand out

ambiguous ≈ mysterious  
cold-blooded ≈ ruthless  
cunning  
despicable  
dull  
extravagant  
flawed ≈ imperfect  
machiavellian = unscrupulous  
to betray  
to break bad  
to commit | a misdeed  
a mistake  
to lack heroic qualities

simple-minded = foolish  
≈ rough and ready  
stereotypical  
tormented  
unlikeable  
violent  
weird

# PREPARATION TIME

## How to create an iconic antihero/antiheroine

Vous devez imaginer et présenter une nouvelle série de télévision qui aura comme protagoniste un antihéros ou une antihéroïne. Suivez ces conseils pour mettre toutes les chances de votre côté !

### La préparation

#### • Réfléchissez et imaginez

Posez-vous ces trois questions :

1) De quel genre sera la série ?

Voici les plus communs :

**ACTION**

**ADVENTURE**

**comedy**

**Drama**

**horror**

**musical**

**science Fiction**

**superhero**

2) Quelle sera l'intrigue ?

Lisez ces intrigues et trouvez les films auxquels elles correspondent. Quelle intrigue vous semble la plus intéressante ?

- Jackson Maine, a veteran musician, discovers—and falls in love with—young artist Ally. She is about to give up on her dream to make it big as a singer but Jackson helps her to become a star.
- After training with his mentor, our superhero begins his fight to free Gotham City from crime and corruption.
- Luke Skywalker joins forces with a Jedi Knight, a cocky pilot, a Wookiee and two droids to save the galaxy from the Empire's world-destroying battle station, while also attempting to rescue Princess Leia from the evil Darth Vader.

3) Combien de personnages vont intervenir ?  
Quels seront-ils ?

#### • Focalisez-vous sur le / la protagoniste

Une fois le contexte général dressé, affinez la description de votre antihéros ou antihéroïne.

Complétez ce tableau pour vous aider.

Parcourez l'unité pour trouver le vocabulaire.

Physical description	Personality	Strengths	Weaknesses

### L'écriture

#### • Structurez votre propos

Présentez la série et votre antihéros ou antihéroïne en suivant les étapes de la page 85.

#### • Soyez clair(e) et concis(e)

Votre présentation doit être captivante et donner l'information essentielle sur ce nouveau personnage.

#### • Optez pour la variété

Pour éviter les répétitions, essayez d'utiliser des synonymes. Par exemple : **the protagonist**, **the main character**, **the lead character**...

#### • Soignez vos transitions

Les mots de liaison sont essentiels pour structurer un texte. Pensez à les utiliser.

Classez ces connecteurs selon l'idée qu'ils expriment.

**however**

**in order to**

**due to**

**and yet**

**although**

**so as to**

**therefore**

**because**

cause	conséquence	but	concession

### La touche finale

#### • Corrigez votre texte

Après avoir écrit la première version, relisez-la pour voir comment vous pouvez l'améliorer. Corrigez votre texte jusqu'à ce qu'il vous semble vraiment efficace et percutant.

#### • Illustriez votre texte

Ajoutez à votre présentation un dessin ou une représentation de votre personnage tel que vous l'imaginez. Cela aidera les producteurs de Netflix™ à mieux comprendre votre projet.

## FINAL TASK



### DRAW THE PORTRAIT OF AN ANTIHERO OR AN ANTIHEROINE FOR A NEW TV SERIES



Netflix™ has decided to create a new TV series for an American audience featuring an antihero or an antiheroine. They are looking for ideas. Send them a proposal!

**a. Focus on** the series.

**Decide on:**

- the genre,
- the plot,
- the characters,
- the title.

**b. Focus on** the antihero or antiheroine.

**Describe** him / her physically and also morally.

**Describe** his or her agenda.

**c. Think about** why the series and the protagonist will appeal to American viewers.



The show is a science fiction and horror series called...

The main character is an antiheroine named Rebecca. She is...

During her first year of high school, she finds out that she has superpowers and... However...

In my opinion, we need this type of characters on TV because...

Viewers will be fascinated because...

They will want her to...

She may bring more... to TV.