

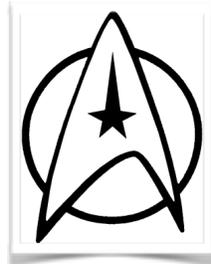
Unit 9:

Space Operas



A Warm up

1. Have you ever seen any of the Star Wars or Star Trek movies? Which ones? Which do you prefer?
2. Which of the following images are from Star Wars? Which are from Star Trek? Write SW or ST beside each image.



B Vocabulary

1. Match the words with their definitions.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| a) accuracy | ___ collections of media in which several works have been produced from an original movie |
| b) epic | ___ a large group of stars and planets |
| c) franchises | ___ first appearance |
| d) galaxy | ___ bad guys |
| e) debut | ___ relating to what is right and wrong in human behavior |
| f) moral | ___ freedom from mistake or error |
| g) die-hard | ___ very great or large and usually difficult or impressive |
| h) villains | ___ very determined or loyal |

C Discussion

1. What's your favorite sci-fi film? Do you think it was a "serious" film?
2. Do you prefer sci-fi films to be more action-oriented or philosophical?
- 3.

Space Opera conventions:

- spaceship travel and super-advanced technologies
- alien species interacting with humans
- space battles
- scientifically advanced future societies built around amazing technologies.

Popular space operas on TV

- Star Trek (1966-69)
- Battlestar Gallactica (1978-79, 2004-09)
- Star Trek: The Next Generation (1987-94)
- Red Dwarf (1988-1999)
- Babylon 5 (1993-1998)
- Stargate (1994-2011)

D While Reading

Complete the following exercises while reading the article on the next page.

Star Wars vs Star Trek

Space operas are set in civilizations where space travel is a normal part of life. These movies are usually set in the distant future and feature advanced technologies (but these technologies are rarely explained).

Space operas have an _____

feel to them: the universe is large, there are usually many civilizations, both human and alien, and there are political conflicts and drama. The action takes part throughout an entire solar system,

possibly throughout a whole _____.

In addition to super-technology, there are often super abilities associated with space operas, including psychic or mental powers, or unexplained abilities such as the Star Wars' "the force" powers.

While most "hard" science fiction movies focus more on scientific _____ or technical details, space operas focus more on love stories, epic space battles, macho heroes and _____, grand scenery... and like most action films, very good-looking men and women.

Because successful space operas usually develop into _____, this genre is useful for long stories and character arcs that unfold over the course of multiple films. But space operas are also expensive to film, and this is probably the main reason that the genre has disappeared from TV screens and is now mostly found in movie theaters.



The two best known franchises of the space opera sub-genre are of course *Star Wars* (beginning in 1977) and *Star Trek* (beginning in 1966 on television, 1979 in movie

theaters). These two franchises share similar names, but when comparing them, the Star Wars series is often said to be more action-oriented, while Star Trek tends to examine more philosophical and _____

issues.

So which franchise is better? Decades after the _____ of these two series, the rivalry between Star Wars fans and "trekkies" is still going. Fans for both series often dress up as their favorite characters and attend conventions where they can mingle with like-minded geeks. While some _____ fans love one and hate the other, most moviegoers who enjoy one of these famous franchises will also enjoy the other.

Bringing Star Wars and Star Trek together for a movie would be a sci-fi geek's dream, but because the two franchises are owned by different movie studios, it's unlikely that we will ever see the USS Enterprise fighting against the dark side of the force.

E Check Your Understanding

Circle true (T) or false (F) for the following statements about the article.

1. What is the setting (time/place) for movies in the space opera genre?
2. What is the difference between space operas and hard science fiction?
3. Why are space operas rarely seen as TV shows?
4. Which franchise is older, Star Wars or Star Trek?
5. Why is it unlikely that Star Wars and Star Trek characters will appear in the same movie?

F Iconic Scene

1. Watch the following scene from *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980).

In this scene, Luke Skywalker learns the truth about who his father is.

Darth Vader: You are beaten. It is useless to resist. Don't let yourself be destroyed as Obiwan did. There is no escape. Don't make me destroy you. Luke, you do not yet realize your importance. You have only begun to discover your power. Join me and I will complete your training. With our combined strength, we can end this destructive conflict and bring order to the galaxy.

Luke Skywalker: I will never join you!

Darth Vader: If you only knew the power of the Dark Side. Obiwan never told you what happened to your father.

Luke Skywalker: He told me enough. He told me you killed him.

Darth Vader: No, I am your father.

Luke Skywalker: No. No. That's not true. That's impossible!

Darth Vader: Search your feelings; you know it to be true.

Luke Skywalker: Noooo!

Darth Vader: Luke, you can destroy the Emperor. He has foreseen this. It is your destiny. Join me, and together we can rule the galaxy as father and son.

Come with me. It is the only way

2. Ask a partner the following questions.

1. Had you seen this famous scene before?
2. Why do you think Luke jumped?