LESSON: **LINGERIE IS NOT ARMOR** (60 MINUTES)

In this lesson or series of lessons, students will watch the "Lingerie is not Armor" video from the Feminist Frequency series *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games*, and will consider how the hyper sexualisation of female characters impacts players' understanding and valuing of these characters. The idea that characters' clothing design is a conscious choice is emphasized, where how practical or impractical a character's clothing is, how power is represented through clothing choice and sexuality, and how female characters are objectified through certain clothing choices limits players' valuing of female characters as authentic individuals. Often decisions regarding clothing choice for female characters represent attempts to sexualize and objectify female characters in a mere effort to cater to the gaze of the presumed straight male player.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this lesson/series of lessons, students/viewers will:

1. Explore clothing choice as a communicative tool that develops character and believability;

2. Consider the problematic relationship between female sexualisation and power/empowerment that is imposed on female characters, and connect this to the real-world trappings of sex and power;

3. Explore positive representations of sexuality in the media, where sexuality is expressed in ways that empower female characters/individuals.

MATERIALS

- Computer

- Projector

- Printed copies of "Lingerie is not Armor" note companions

- Video game examples and computer access

Before: Minds On

If this is the first lesson being used in the *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games* series, a preliminary discussion regarding 'critical analysis' as a process of questioning and 'tropes' as identified patterns will help students understand the goal of the videos (helping viewers question the media they use/consume and the broader implications of media); An introduction to season 1 of the series might also be needed. **[5 MINUTES]**

Activities/Professions Brainstorming Activity: Spend 5 minutes as a class brainstorming activities that require special equipment or clothing (sports, recreational activities such as scuba diving, rock climbing) and professions that have specific equipment/clothing requirements. **[15 MINUTES]**

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During Action!

Watch the "Lingerie is not Armor" video (places to pause due to time constraints or opportunities for embedded discussion and/or activities below):

00:30	Perfect Dark and Female Sexuality to sell video games
03:00	Character clothing and first impressions
04:45	Hypersexualization of female characters
05:25	Female sexualization and power/empowerment
08:50	Common defenses for sexualized costumes
11:30	Visual designs as choices
12:30	Practical clothing in-game and in reality
13:45	Sexuality vs. Sexualization
15:50	Consequences of impractical/sexualizing costumes and objectification **[20 MINUTES]**

Differentiated Instruction:

- Note companions to help students work through definitions and content, including collaboration following viewing;

- 'Pause and Reflect' opportunities throughout viewing

After: Consolidation & Connection

In groups, have students brainstorm a list of female characters in video games, TV shows and movies who wear practical clothing that is contextually appropriate with regards to their professions or the activities they are performing, their personalities or the stories they inhabit. Have them also create a list of female characters who they deem as wearing clothing that does not match their jobs, stories or activities. Provide laptops or other ways to access the internet to explore characters further. **[15 MINUTES]**

Debrief these lists with the class through a discussion, prompting students to consider the differences in their lists and the consequences of their findings. Encourage students to share their observations and begin to compare the way female and male characters are depicted, prompting for specific comparisons. **[5 MINUTES]**

POST-VIDEO ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Critical Character Comparisons

This activity requires students to take two of the characters from the list they generated in class (one from each list) and explore these characters, their clothing and contexts from a critical perspective. Students will create a profile of each character, covering personality traits, objectives within their respective story, all costumes they wear, and their relationships with other characters. Students will then be asked to critically compare the two characters in the context of research they conduct regarding the various franchises/texts these characters come from – students will be asked to research prospective audiences, franchise history and any other relevant background information on the game/text itself. Students will be expected to interrogate why the difference exists between both characters regarding how they are portrayed. These characters can come from video games, TV shows, movies or other forms of media.

Extension Activity:

As sexuality is also explored in this video, this activity can also be adapted to allow students to critically compare instances of sexuality in texts. In this extension activity, students will be asked to consider instances in movies, TV shows, video games, etc. where sexuality is positively represented and contributes to the development of characters and relationships in ways that are authentic for the characters involved, and instances where sexuality is presented for the benefit of the viewer or audience. The use of sexuality in character and plot development should be explored in the context of consent and empowerment versus objectification.

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES:
"Lingerie is not Armor"

Clothing as First Impression

"A character's clothing is one of the first things we notice. It's an important part of our first impression of who that character is, and as such, it's a way for designers to immediately communicate to players what is most important and noteworthy about them.

Female heroes in video games might be special agents or soldiers or treasure hunters by trade. […] They are typically performing activities that call for practical or protective clothing. But when we look at the types of outfits that female characters are made to wear, we can see that they are often both sexualized and completely absurd."

Hyper Sexualization of Female Characters

"Because clothing can shape our first impressions of a character and has a tremendous influence on our sense of who they are every time they are on screen, sexualized outfits can contribute to what's called the hyper-sexualization of female characters. Hyper-sexualization in the media occurs when a character is designed to be valued primarily for their sexual characteristics or behaviors. In hypersexualized characters, these attributes are highlighted above all else and made the center of attention, while everything else about the character is made secondary."

Sex Selling Video Games	
Clothing Choices & Hyper Sexualization	

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES: "LINGERIE IS NOT ARMOR"

Objectification & Empowerment	
Common defences for sexualized costumes (visual designs as choices)	
Practical attire: women in reality and in-game	
Sexuality vs. Sexualization	