

Essay #2:

Playing with Gender

Rough Draft Due: 4/4/17 (in class)

Final Draft Due: 4/6/17 (via Safe Assignments)

Assignment:

For this essay, you will be exploring gender codes. More specifically, you will examine the role of toys in the process of gender socialization. This project will require traditional research as well as field research. You should visit a toy store, the toy section of a store, or the website of a company that specializes in toys specifically and perform a semiotic analysis of the toys and the gender codes that are present. Your thesis should make an arguable claim about the gender messages communicated through toys, and the sources you include should help to inform your semiotic analysis and should be used as supporting evidence.

****Although we have all been kids before, please attempt to view everything with fresh eyes. Remember that very often gender codes seem “natural,” so it takes special effort to analyze cultural mythologies****

Questions to consider:

- What are the implications of growing up male/female?
- How do toys reflect existing gender codes?
- What trends appear?
- What kinds of qualities do these toys encourage children to develop?
- What assumptions about gender inform the products?
- What marks a toy as being for a boy or girl?
- Are there any gender-neutral toys? If so, which ones and why?

Requirements:

- Length: 750 words, minimum
- Follow MLA formatting guidelines
- Include at least one citation from *Signs of Life* AND one additional source authoritative source from the City Tech library and/or database (minimum)
- Conduct field research and take careful notes of your observations