Vaccinologist Barbie: Prof Sarah Gilbert honoured with a doll

Prof Sarah Gilbert has had quite a year. The co-creator of the Oxford/AstraZeneca jab has been made a dame, been given an emotional standing ovation at Wimbledon – and now a Barbie doll has been made in her honour.

Gilbert, who led the development of the Covid vaccine at Oxford University, said she initially found the gesture "very strange" but hoped it would inspire young girls to work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem).

"I am passionate about inspiring the next generation of girls into Stem careers and hope that children who see my Barbie will realise how vital careers in science are to help the world around us," she said. "My wish is that my doll will show children careers they may not be aware of, like a vaccinologist."

As well as the likeness of Dame Sarah, the toy company has created models in honour of five other women working in Stem around the world.

They include US healthcare workers Amy O'Sullivan and Dr Audrey Cruz, Canadian doctor and campaigner Dr Chika Stacy Oriuwa, Brazilian biomedical researcher Dr Jaqueline Goes de Jesus and Dr Kirby White, an Australian medic who co-created a reusable gown for frontline staff.

Lisa McKnight, senior vice-president and global head of Barbie and dolls at Mattel, said: "Barbie recognises that all frontline workers have made tremendous sacrifices when confronting the pandemic and the challenges it heightened. To shine a light on their efforts, we are sharing their stories ... to inspire the next generation to take after these heroes and give back."

Over the years, Mattel has made dolls to the likeness of stars including Johnny Depp, Jennifer Lopez and Cher, in celebration of their career milestones. Last month a Barbie doll modelled on tennis star Naomi Osaka sold out hours after its launch.

Meanwhile earlier this year Radio 1 presenter Clara Amfo unveiled a Barbie doll in her image. Known for fighting racial inequality and championing women's rights, Amfo's Barbie was released ahead of International Women's Day in March.

Mattel also recently released a Rosa Parks Barbie (as part of its Inspiring Women series). In 2019, Barbie was accused of having a "wokeover" after Mattel launched a new range of gender-inclusive dolls that are free of labels.

They join a growing list of inclusive Barbies and Kens. There's now a Barbie that uses a wheelchair, a black Barbie with a natural hairstyle, and a Ken with a slightly higher BMI.

Question 1: What has Mattel done and why? Answer in your own words (80 words, +/-10%)

Mattel, the toy company that makes Barbie dolls, has just released six new dolls based on high profile women scientists – including Prof Sarah Gilbert who developed a vaccine – from around the world in order to pay tribute to their invaluable contributions in the fight against COVID-19. The dolls are meant to embolden young girls by showing the host of different scientific career paths open to them. They are also the latest in a long line of inclusive dolls which celebrate diversity as well as extraordinary individual accomplishments.   **87 words**

Points-clefs:

A. **Mattel, that makes Barbie dolls, has issued 6 new dolls based on female scientists**
   - A1 Including Vaccinologist Sarah Gilbert (=major example which takes up the first four paragraphs)
   - A2 Linked to the fight against covid.
   - A3 From around the world

B. The purpose:
   - B1 to embolden girls to embark on various scientific careers.
   - B2 by telling them stories of role models

C. Backdrop:
   - C1 In recent years,
   - C2 Mattel has been developing a series of inclusive dolls
   - C3 to celebrate diversity / and extraordinary accomplishments

Remarques: Vos réponses ont été décevantes:
- Vous n'avez pas tenu compte de l'articulation TEMPORELLE autour d'une nouvelle :
  - le lancement récent de nouvelles poupées ;
  - flashback : depuis quelques années déjà, Mattel s'es mis aux poupées inclusives

- Évitez les exemples mais gardez un peu de jugeote :
  - OUI pour la vaccinologue est au cœur de la nouvelle (et présente dans 4 paragraphes) ; il fallait donc la mentionner ce qui n'a été le cas de quasiment aucun d'entre vous
  - NON pour Michael Jordan et Rosa Parks en revanche (même si vous considérez qu'ils ont davantage fait l'histoire) ne sont que, dans le texte, que des exemples de « role models » (carrière exemplaire, modèle pour la cause noire et les femmes).

Question 2: In your opinion, what can be done to reduce the STEM gender gap. Illustrate your answer with relevant examples. (180 words +/-10%)

Most people can easily reel off a list of famous male scientists, but are hard pressed to name any woman except for Marie Curie. So how can the STEM gender gap be bridged?

Actually, progress is being made, albeit not in the giant strides needed. Ever since Annie Rogers became the first female graduate from Oxford University in 1920, a steadily growing number of women have entered STEM. Currently, almost half of the students at MIT are female. The struggle is by no means over though. Many young girls are still brought up to believe that sciences are not for them. All too many girls in the world do not even have access to education let alone one that develops their STEM skills.
Perceptions have to change. Initiatives like the UN's HeForShe help raise awareness and break down STEM gender stereotypes. Social and conventional media must play a key role. NASA's Kathryn Johnson became a household name after films were made about her. Similarly, the likes of mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani, the first woman to win the Fields medal in 2017 should be celebrated.

So for these inspirational role-models to shine, they must be brought out of the shadows.

198 words

Remarques :

Respectez strictement la fourchette de mots autorisés ; sinon, vous serez pénalisé.

Lisez bien les remarques et corrections individuelles.

L'introduction doit commencer par un accroche, c'est-à-dire un exemple ou une contextualisation.

La qualité de la langue est centrale ; donc, appliquez-vous.