



Lesson Plan: **Good vs. Evil and the Limits of Empathy in K-Pop Demon Hunters**

By Elizaveta Friesem

Grade level / Audience

High school or college media literacy, film studies, or social studies courses

Time

Time can be adjusted depending on whether you watch the film together in class and whether you choose to rewatch certain parts during the discussion.

Prerequisites

- Students should have watched K-Pop Demon Hunters (either at home before class or together in class, depending on available time).
- Familiarity with basic storytelling concepts (protagonist, antagonist, conflict, resolution).
- Optional: students read parts of the essay "Good vs. Evil and the Limits of Empathy in K-Pop Demon Hunters."

Learning Goals

By the end of the lesson, students will:

1. Recognize how the good vs. evil binary operates as a recurring narrative structure in popular media.
2. Analyze how K-Pop Demon Hunters both challenges and reinforces that binary.
3. Reflect on why morally simplified stories are so emotionally appealing.
4. Explore alternative ways of imagining conflict and empathy in storytelling.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify examples that reinforce or challenge the good vs. evil binary in K-Pop Demon Hunters.
- Explain how genre conventions and commercial pressures (such as time limits, pacing, and audience expectations) can simplify moral framing.
- Discuss psychological reasons for the persistence of "heroes vs. villains" stories.
- Experiment creatively with alternative storylines that move beyond the binary.

Materials

- Film: K-Pop Demon Hunters
- Projector / screen (if viewing in class)
- Whiteboard or shared digital workspace
- Discussion handouts or slides with guiding questions

Procedure

1. Warm-up (10 minutes)

Ask students:

- What popular movies or shows have clear “good guys” and “bad guys”?
- Why do you think we find such stories satisfying?

2. Film Discussion (25–30 minutes)

Guide students through discussion using these questions:

1. How does the film K-Pop Demon Hunters present the conflict between humans and demons?
2. In what scenes do we see hints that demons might have emotions or depth?
3. Why might the film choose not to develop this idea further?
4. What do we learn from Rumi’s hesitation and her reaction to the song Take Down?
5. Who receives empathy in the story—and who doesn’t?
6. What might your answers to the previous questions suggest about storytelling patterns in popular culture (both fiction and non-fiction texts)?

3. Reflective Writing or Group Discussion (20–25 minutes)

Give students one of the following creative or analytical prompts:

Option A – Narrative Expansion:

Ask yourself what questions (especially about demons) remain unanswered in K-Pop Demon Hunters. Imagine K-Pop Demon Hunters as a television series instead of a single film. How could the extra time allow the creators to explore demons more deeply, with more nuance and compassion? Outline one episode or short scene that develops this theme.

Option B – Moral Reimagining Poster:

Design a poster or visual campaign for an imagined sequel (film) or series that would explore characters, including demons, with more nuance and compassion. How could visuals, taglines, or lyrics express moral complexity rather than simple victory?

Option C – Song Rewrite:

Write a few lines of lyrics that could replace Take Down, showing how Rumi’s group might express a new understanding of demons through music. (For an example, see the scene where Rumi attempts to rewrite a couple of lines herself, 46:42–47:05.)

4. Debrief and Reflection (10–15 minutes)

Bring the class together for closing reflection:

- Why might it feel uncomfortable to empathize with the “enemy”?
- What risks or rewards come with seeing moral complexity instead of clear villains?
- How could empathy change the way we tell stories—or the way we see real-world conflicts?

Optional

Short written reflection (1–2 paragraphs):

Ask students to reflect on their learning experience after the class discussion. They can choose one or more of the following prompts:

- What did I learn from our conversation about K-Pop Demon Hunters?
- What, if anything, surprised me or made me think differently?
- Did I feel uncomfortable or disagree with some of the ideas discussed? If so, why?
- How do I usually respond when stories challenge clear ideas of “good” and “bad”?
- What questions about empathy or moral complexity am I still thinking about?

Extension Ideas

- Compare K-Pop Demon Hunters with another film that challenges, or appears to challenge, moral binaries.
- Connect the discussion to online communication. How do conversations on social media—such as comment threads, news debates, or influencer controversies—reinforce “good vs. bad people” narratives?
- Reflect on how “good vs. bad people” thinking shapes your view of conflict—in personal relationships or in society. How does this binary influence the way you talk about disagreement or justice, and what changes in language or perspective could help you move beyond it?