



Barbie Suggested Reading

Compiled by Leslie Goddard, Ph.D.

Jennie D'Amato. *Barbie: All Dolled Up: Celebrating 50 Years of Barbie*. 2009.
Friendly, succinct look at the evolution of Barbie

Cindy Eagan and Amy Bates, *The Story of Barbie and the Woman Who Created Her*.
2023. Great choice for kids ages 4-8 years

Robin Gerber. *Barbie and Ruth*. 2010. The only full-length biography of Ruth Handler.
Focuses especially (but not only) on her work developing Barbie. My top pick

M. G. Lord. *Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll*. 2004.
Fascinating (often academic) exploration of the many cultural meanings of Barbie

Jacqueline Shannon and Ruth Handler. *Dream Doll: The Ruth Handler Story*. 1994.
Hard to find but fascinating autobiography. Recommended for die-hard fans

Carol Spencer. *Dressing Barbie: A Celebration of the Clothes That Made America's Favorite Doll and the Incredible Woman Behind Them*. 2023. Engrossing memoir

Tanya Lee Stone. *The Good, the Bad and the Barbie*. 2010. Grade 6 and up. Fun look
at the various conflicts over Barbie and what Barbie has meant to people over time

Tiny Shoulders: Rethinking Barbie. Documentary, 2018. Available on Hulu. Directed,,
written, and produced by Andrea Blaugrund Nevins. Explores the history of Barbie,
her meaning in American culture, and the development of the Fashionistas line.

Official website. www.barbie.com



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Barbie Timeline

- 1959 Barbie, aka Barbara Millicent Roberts, introduced at New York Toy Fair on March 9. First Barbie TV commercial airs during Mickey Mouse Club
- 1961 Ken Carson, Barbie's boyfriend, introduced in response to consumer requests
- 1962 Barbie gets her first car and her first dreamhouse
- 1963 Midge introduced as Barbie's friend (later joined by Allan, Ken's friend)
- 1964 Skipper, Barbie's younger sister, debuts
- 1967 First celebrity Barbie, Twiggy
- 1968 Christy, the first African-American doll in the Barbie line, debuts
- 1971 Malibu Barbie introduced, with a suntan and eyes that look forward (not to the side)
- 1980 The first African-American (and Hispanic) Barbies debut. Previous black dolls in the lines had been friends of Barbie
- 1992 Totally Hair Barbie, the best-selling Barbie ever, debuts
- 2004 Mattel announces that Barbie and Ken have broken up (they will reunite in 2011)
- 2016 Mattel introduces the Fashionistas line (classic, petite, tall, curvy)