

SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT BATMAN?

BATMAN RETURNS follows the success of BATMAN, released in the United Kingdom in 1989. For Warner Bros. the film company that distributed the film, it was their biggest ever box office success.

So why make number 2? What do you think were the attractions? BATMAN RETURNS stars Michael Keaton in the title role, repeating his success in the earlier film. But are movies which follow on from an earlier success simply a total repeat of the earlier formula?

A company that is distributing and marketing a film needs to know what sort of awareness a potential audience has of a film, or the type of film that it is trying to promote. So, how do you fit into that audience profile?

1. Did you see the 1989 BATMAN film?
2. Apart from the film, where else might you have heard about BATMAN?
3. If you saw BATMAN, what would you be expecting from a film called BATMAN RETURNS?
4. What do you know about Batman as a character? List some of his qualities. Is he similar to any other characters from films or books or comics?
5. What other characters do you associate with Batman? Does he work by himself? Who are his enemies?
6. Where would you expect to find Batman? What country or town? What would you expect the locations to look like?

You may find that in your group some of you know a lot about BATMAN, others may know nothing at all. It is the job of a Marketing Department in a film company to attract all of you, both the Batman fans and those who think they would like to see a film and so might want to know more about BATMAN RETURNS - what sort of film it is, who is in it.

Your answers to the above questions should help you in the work that you are about to do -which is to devise an advertising and publicity campaign for the forthcoming film BATMAN RETURNS.

Before you start work on your campaign, however, it is worth thinking about some of the things that attract you to films. After all, you may not be a Batman fan. You will need to be persuaded to go and see the film for different reasons and so we should start by thinking about why you go to see a film.

YOU AS A FILM GOER

In the box below, write down as many different things as you can think of which:

- a) persuade you to go and see a film
- b) give you information about a film.

Some of these things might not influence you in making your decision but they might well be methods by which film companies promote their films and let audiences know that a film is about to open.

When you have done this, write down which you think are the three most important things which help persuade you to go and see a film

Then, from your list of all of the different ways in which a film company can let you know about a film, divide your list into two sections. Firstly, list all of those things that you think a film company has to pay for (for example advertisements). Then list all of the things that you think that a film company can get for free. You may also find certain things in shops which feature the logo or characters from the film - merchandise such as mugs, T shirts, books.

When you have completed your listings, you will have an idea of the complexity of the film distributor's job. It is not simply a case of just designing a poster and hoping that people will want to see the film. The job of the Marketing and Promotions Department is to ensure that potential audiences are aware of the film, that they are looking forward to its arrival in their local cinema.

Your task will be to devise a campaign for the film *BATMAN RETURNS*, using as many of the ideas that you have just had in order to come up with a campaign that you think might persuade audiences to come and see the film

THE TRAILER

All films released at the cinema will have at least one trailer prepared for them which is shown in cinemas well before the film opens. Some films will have two or three different trailers, some quite short (often known as 'teasers'), others longer. The trailer is one of the direct ways that a distributor has of interesting a cinema going audience in a forthcoming film. It can also be used in television advertising, although here a shorter version would be used.

Before starting work on your own campaign, it is worth paying close attention to the first trailer for *BATMAN RETURNS*. This will give you some information about the possible storyline and also some of the characters within the story. It will also give you information about who stars in the film.

The trailer lasts 2 minutes and ten seconds. In that time 26 different sequences are shown!

Because a trailer is very carefully edited together, we must assume that everything within the trailer has been put there for a purpose. It is our first task to carefully study the trailer and to think why each of the short sequences was included in the two minutes and ten seconds.

2D TASKS

1. View the trailer once through without stopping. This will give you an overall feel for the image that it is trying to put across. After this viewing, write down what sort of film you think *BATMAN RETURNS* will be. Can you remember what information you are given? What do you think will happen in the story? This first exercise will give you the impression that a cinema audience has when it sees the film. Compare what you have written down with others in your group. How similar are your ideas? What was not included in the trailer?
2. You will now examine the trailer in more detail. We have already, said that there are 26 sequences in the trailer. On the breakdown chart provided, we have already included some of the scenes. What you should do is complete the sequence breakdown. Then complete the other sections of the chart.

These include sound sections and also timing sections.

You will notice that certain sequences occur more than once - Bruce Wayne with the woman at the party for example. However, for the purpose of this exercise, make sure that every time there is a cut from one scene to another you list this as a new sequence.

- 3 When you have completed your breakdown, try to say why you think each sequence was included. What message does each sequence suggest? What are the effects of various edits put one next to the other? Why do you think that the sequence is ordered in the way it is? You might choose to cut up a photocopy of your chart and try to rearrange the various sequences. You might choose, for example, to start with the rocket attack on the store.

From your re-ordered trailer, does a different image of the film emerge?

4. Instead of 26 sequences you are only allowed 12. These must include the Warner Bros. logo and also the Bat motif. Which 12 sequences would you choose and what order would you put them in? Using your photocopy of your original breakdown, construct your 12 sequence trailer. Does this give the same idea as the original trailer?

- 5 Different audiences.

Again using your photocopy of the breakdown try to create two different trailers. One should be for 12 year olds who really like action films, the other should be for old time fans of Batman. You may choose from any of the 26 sequences that you have listed, using as many or as few of the sequences as you wish. When you have completed your two trailers, explain why you have included the sequences that you have and how you see these sequences attracting the defined audiences.

WHAT DOES THE TRAILER TELL US?

Having completed your work on due trailer, you should now have a fairly clear idea both of what is contained within it and also some idea of why the various sequences were included.

By answering some of the following questions is it possible to make any predictions about what happens in the film?

- a) Do you think that Batman will 'win' at the end of the film? Give reasons for your answer.
- b) What do you think the story will be about, considering that we have been introduced to three main characters – Batman, Penguin and Catwoman? Also think that we have also seen two other characters Bruce Wayne and a woman. How will these two characters relate to the other three?
- c) What sorts of events within the film do you think an audience will be expecting?
- d) What type of film will the audience be expecting - that is what genre of film?
- e) At the end of the trailer we are given the names of the three major stars who appear in the film. Have you heard of any of them? If you have, can you remember any other films that they have been in? What sort of roles did they play in these films? Bearing in mind these other roles, do they seem to be playing similar parts in BATMAN RETURNS?

From the detailed work that you have done here, you should now have some firm ideas as to what the film is about!

What would you say are the major selling points of the film?

SEQ NO.	VISUALS	SOUND-MUSIC/SPEECH EFFECTS	IDEAS GIVEN
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			

SEQ NO.	VISUALS	SOUND-MUSIC/SPEECH EFFECTS	IDEAS GIVEN
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			

BRIEFING

By now you should have some ideas about the selling points of the film *BATMAN RETURNS* and also some ideas about the possible audiences for the film.

You are now going to devise a marketing campaign for the film, ranging from posters to press schedules, from radio ads to T-shirts.

At each stage of the process you should write down why you have made the decisions that you have. You will have to decide on marketing strategies and create campaigns. In many ways, the level of success of any film relates to ways in which it is 'sold' to the potential audiences.

The key points to remember about your campaign are as follows:

- a) There will be a large audience out there who saw *BATMAN* and will probably want to see *BATMAN RETURNS*.
- b) There are a large number of Batman fans who know about the character and the stories and having read comics and also seen the television series. You will need to bear in mind, however, that the *BATMAN* films are very different from the television series. Robin does not appear in the films. The television series was quite amusing. There is nothing worse than raising people's expectations for a film through misleading publicity. Imagine people who have seen the television series and think that Robin must appear in the film. Your job will be to make people realise that the film is different.
- c) There are other audiences out there who could also be persuaded to see the film.

You have to create an awareness of the film for all of these possible audiences. How will you go about it? You have seen the trailer for *BATMAN RETURNS* and so have a flavour of the film.

Perhaps the first thing to do is to write a press release for the film, announcing that it will soon be showing in cinemas.

The information that you might choose to give is as follows:

The stars - Michael Keaton, Dann DeVito and Michelle Pfeiffer
The characters they play - respectively Batman, Penguin and Catwoman

Other information to give could be either about the previous film, *Batman* in general or about the stars. You must write a press release which will interest reporters and film critics. You are not simply looking for reviews. You want to make editors and television researchers phone you up asking for more information. They will be the ones who make the decisions about whether to invite stars of the film onto their programmes or ask writers to do a feature on the film or on the star. So make it short but interesting. Make them want the story.

ON RADIO

As well as running trailers in cinemas and on television, film distributors may also run a radio campaign using an audio trailer. This will have to be very different from the visual trailer - run the trailer again but close your eyes. What sense can you make of what is happening? What sound clues help you?

This might give you an idea of how to go about constructing a radio advertisement for *BATMAN RETURNS*.

TASK

You have to produce a 30 second radio trailer. No less, no more than this time. You will have to create an idea of the film which fits in with the one you have chosen from the trailer.

You may use sound bites from the visual trailer to use in your radio advertisement. However, you will probably need to use voice-over and so you will need to write a script which gives information to the listeners.

How are you going to sum up the film and give the audience some idea of what the story is about? Also, tie in the audience who saw BATMAN and who might want to see the new film?

These are some of the problems that you will have to solve in 30 seconds. You can then record your advertisement. You could add background music or sound effects - the choice is up to you.

If you cannot actually record it then you could produce a detailed audio script for the advertisement.

STARS

For the next part of your campaign, we are going to give you the film publicist's dream (and Sometimes their biggest headache!) - the stars. Why a headache? Well, if there are stars in town then everybody from the press will want to meet them. The television chat shows will want them on their show. But you only have a certain amount of time and you might also think that certain types of newspapers or magazines are not suitable for your stars. So you have some very difficult decisions to make.

Here is the problem for you to solve. All three stars will be in town during the month before opening. (All at different times) Because each of them is on a tight schedule, they can only appear on one chat show each. Each will only be available for two newspaper and two magazine interviews.

You have to decide which will be the best places to use for each star. Don't forget that you want to gain as much coverage and publicity for the film as possible, so you will need to bear in mind the following points:

1. Looking back at your work on audiences as a whole for the film, what sorts of people are you aiming at in your advertising and marketing?
2. Which type of audience will most appreciate each star? Having decided this, which chat show would most suit that star?
3. Again, thinking about the appeal of each star, which magazine would best deliver that audience to you?

You should make sure that you have attempted to cover as many different audiences as possible in your schedule. It is no use aiming all the marketing opportunities at just one section of your target audiences. When you have decided on which chat shows and which newspapers and magazines you are going with, write a letter to the Head of Marketing explaining your choices. You should fill in the schedule below giving details for each of the stars.

	TV Chat Show	Newspapers/Magazines
Michael Keaton		
Danny DeVito		
Michelle Pfeiffer		

Of course you can leave nothing to chance when your stars meet reporters or television chat show hosts.

They need to be given information about the film itself and also about the stars.

So, your next task is to produce press notes on all of these areas. You are going to have to research each of the stars' biographical information, names of other films they have starred in, other stars with whom they have been in films. Also you will need to give the names of the characters that they play and some sort of information about the characters This you will have to get from the trailer. You also have the fact that this is the second BATMAN film of recent time the other having appeared in 1989. Find out some information about this - it may be useful in constructing your press notes.

You might also want to include some stills of the stars. On the next page have included publicity stills These were from amongst the first supplied to Warner Bros. in this country

Why do you think that these were the first chosen to be supplied to the press? What do they tell us about the film?. How could they be used in the press or in magazines?

THE RESULTS

For one of the stars that you have scheduled into a magazine interview, you have managed to get a cover story, that is, the star's photo will appear on the front cover of the magazine and you will get a mention of BATMAN RETURNS on that cover.

Using either the publicity still given in this pack or if you do not think it appropriate for the magazine that you have chosen try to find a different still and construct the cover of the magazine. You will need to think up a good headline and also consider what else would be shown on that front cover.

THE POSTER

Look back at your list of the things that persuaded you to go and see a film. We are certain that in your list you will have included either the poster or advertisements. Quite often the same image is used in both. Can you remember the image used for BATMAN back in 1989?

Just as a trailer gives us an idea of the film, then so should the poster. It should instantly say something about the film - possibly its genre, its stars. It should also be eye-catching. Similarly, it should not contain so much detail that if it has to shrink in size and be used as a newspaper advertisement, it would look too finicky.

You should carefully study a number of film posters or advertisements before you start work on your BATMAN RETURNS poster. Look carefully at the various pieces of information that are included in the poster. You will probably find the names of the stars, the title, and also a tagline - something like a catch phrase.

Let's look first of all at the title. What does the title BATMAN RETURNS suggest to you? Note down a few ideas. What does BATMAN suggest? What about the idea of RETURN?

How could you use these ideas:

- a) in deciding what to put in your poster?
- b) in thinking up a tagline a catch phrase for the film?



Look back at the work that you did in the trailer and all of the ideas that you had about the film.



Because your campaign must all fit together your poster should in some ways link in with the trailer. This could be the actual trailer that you were shown or one of the trailers that you made up. You will also be shown the 'teaser poster' for BATMAN RETURNS'. This may not be the final poster. It exists simply to raise people's interest in the film What does it tell you about the film? What expectations does it raise?

Your task, having thought through these few questions, is to come up with a final poster design for the film BATMAN RETURNS. We have included two pieces of artwork that you may wish to use. The first is the BATMAN logo and the second is the title. Both are in black and white and so you can colour them as you wish. You do not need to use them if you do not want to. You might have your own idea about what to include and the style of lettering that would be appropriate for the poster.

What you put in the poster is up to you. But remember, it must be eye-catching, give an idea about what the film could be about and most of all, it must endeavour to interest audiences.

WARNER BROS. AND BATMAN RETURNS

By now your campaign should be complete. But what did the Advertising and Marketing Department at Warner Bros do? How successful were they in creating an awareness of the film? How did they place the film? What audiences do you think they were aiming at?

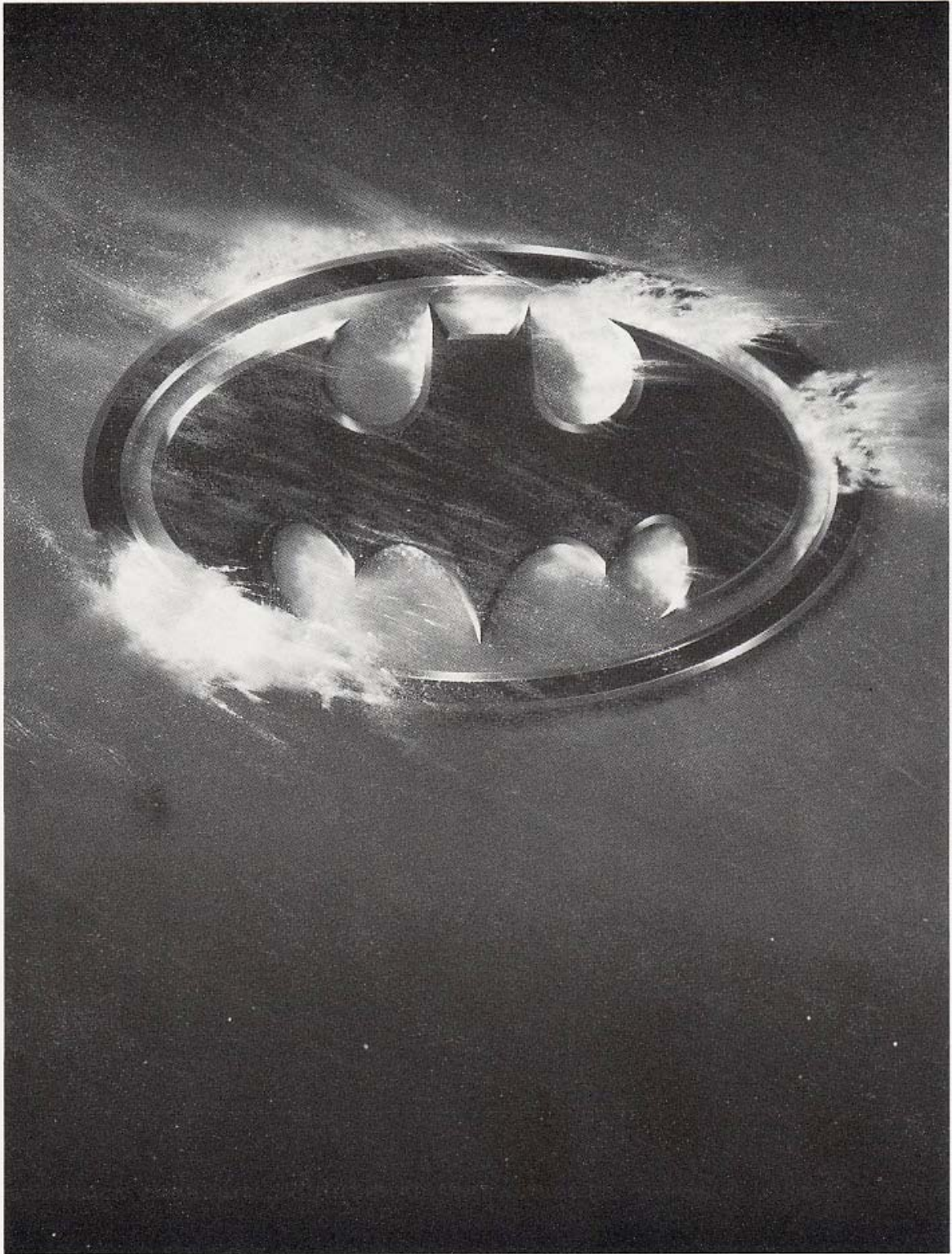
REVIEWS

Collect as many film reviews as you can about the film. Look very carefully at all of the reviews, from both national and local papers. Do they have anything in common? What do they say about the film? How does each describe the film? What information is given about the film (don't forget there is a difference between information and comment about the film).

Also, see if there was an increase in BATMAN merchandising during this period. What went on sale? How well was it displayed in the shops?

Are there any tie-ins? Does the BATMAN logo and mention of the film appear on any other products? Who are these products aimed at? What does this tell you about the type of audience that the Warner Bros. marketing team were aiming at?

You should also try to find out how BATMAN RETURNS did at the box office. Was it the critical and financial success of that summer? How did the press treat the film after it opened?



BATMAN
RETURNS