

TEACHERS' NOTES

This guide has been written for use at GCSE, A Level and GNVQ for Media and Communication Studies, Design and Technology and Business Studies. This guide is written in two parts:

Part one, **A Case Study – Film Marketing and 'Judge Dredd'**, encouraged the students to look at film marketing with specific reference to 'Judge Dredd'. The information and tasks within this section aim to provide an insight into the planning and preparation of a film marketing campaign.

Part two, **Background to the Film 'Judge Dredd'**, provides the teacher and students with an insight into the origins of and themes dealt with in the character Judge Dredd.

THE FILM

Based on the lead character of the popular science-fiction comic '2000 AD', the film 'Judge Dredd' is directed by Danny Cannon and stars Sylvester Stallone in the title role. The film will be released in the UK on 21 July 1995.

SYNOPSIS

In the Third Millennium the face of the earth had been virtually destroyed by uncontrollable disasters – earthquakes, fires and floods. Only a few cities remain, humanity itself turned as violent as the planet. Civilisation threatened to collapse. And then... a solution was found. The crumbling legal system was merged with the overburdened police, creating a powerful and efficient hybrid. These new guardians of society had the power to dispense both justice and punishment. They were judge, jury and executioner... and Dredd (Sylvester Stallone) is the most awesome of them all.

PART ONE: A CASE STUDY – FILM MARKETING AND 'JUDGE DREDD'

'Judge Dredd', starring Sylvester Stallone is released in Britain on 21st July 1995. Made at Shepperton Studios, England and directed by British director Danny Cameron, the film is a futuristic action adventure based on the lead character of a British science-fiction comic '2000 AD'.

The first part of this guide will look at the marketing of a film with specific reference to 'Judge Dredd'. The marketing of a film starts 6-8 months before the release date. The film's distributor is responsible for its marketing – for bringing the film to the attention of the public. Marketing is an expensive business – buying advertising space, producing publicity materials and running promotions all costs money. It has been known for more money to be spent on the marketing of a film than on the production. Many films

are released each week and film marketing has become increasingly aggressive as more and more films compete for the same audience.

What makes us go and see a film? When faced with a choice of up to ten films, on what basis do we make our choice? Do we go and see a film because of the stars, the director or the subject matter? Or has someone recommended that we see it?

Conduct a survey with the members of your class to find out how and why people decide to see one film rather than another. Is it because of the poster? The trailer? The adverts? The star? The genre? The special effects? The director? It may be a combination of reasons. Write up your findings in a report.

As an audience, how do we become aware of a new film? First of all, we might read an article in a magazine or see the publicity posters on a bus shelter or in a shopping centre. Then we might see a trailer at the cinema, hear an advert on the radio or see adverts in magazines and newspapers. And in the weeks before the film opens, the stars appear on various television programmes promoting the film, and the trailer might be shown on television.

This is the marketing campaign from the point of view of the audience. In the weeks before the film opens we are bombarded with 'hype' about the film, the stars, special effects, the soundtrack and genre, all of which influences our decision to buy a ticket. All of this is the effect of the carefully planned marketing campaign. It is no coincidence that we see a particular poster, trailer or advert. In the months leading up to the opening of a film, the distributor executes a meticulously planned campaign using all media and research available to promote the film to hit its target audience 'right between the eyes'.

SELLING DREDD

The marketing campaign for 'Judge Dredd' began in January 1995 when trailers for the film appeared with the sci-fi adventure 'StarGate'. London bus shelters began featuring posters for 'Judge Dredd' in May, showing just Dredd's badge, the words "I am the Law" and the film's release date, July 21st.

When a film is being marketed, researchers need to identify who the film's target audience is – in other words, which people will particularly enjoy the film. The target audience for the majority of films are the 'heavy cinema goers', i.e. 15-24 year olds and it is they who will be mainly targeted by the 'Judge Dredd' marketing campaign.

FILM MARKETING – THE PROCESS

The distributor's awareness of the film has two stages. Firstly, they are kept informed about forthcoming films going into production. They are advised about the purchase of a script, the signing of a director and cost, and the start date of production. In some cases, the distributor can have a say in casting decisions and will be consulted on changes to the script.

As the film goes into post production and editing, the distributors receive publicity material from the studio; production notes, including background information about the making of the film, credits and biographies of the cast, director and crew; black and white stills and colour slides taken on set by photographers or lifted from the footage of the film.

In the case of 'Judge Dredd', the making of the film had generated a great deal of publicity because it was made in England and starred Sylvester Stallone. This led to an initial public awareness of the film, which the marketing campaign could build on.

The second stage happens 6-8 months before the release date and involves the marketing team viewing the film followed by a brainstorming session in which the following points are discussed:

- personal opinions
- how they think the public will react, based on audience research
- which audience might most appreciate the film
- what the film might take at the box office
- when to release the film, taking into account competition from other films and holiday times
- how much money will be spent on advertising

David Willing, the Director of Marketing and Publicity and Guild Entertainment, says the following about his approach to marketing 'Judge Dredd': "Despite the fact that 'Judge Dredd' is a British product we can't assume that people know about it. Our job is to create hype and anticipation – in other words, to get people talking about and wanting to see the film!"

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE FILM

A marketing campaign for a film is divided into three areas:

- publicity
- advertising

- promotion

The budget of a film marketing campaign is divided into 'above-the-line' and 'below-the-line' costs.

The advertising budget is an 'above-the-line' cost, where the distributor pays a certain amount of money to buy advertising space (on television and radio, and in magazines and newspapers). They pay for a slot and know what they are getting for their money. They know the size of the advert, when and where it will be placed and roughly how many people are expected to see it.

Publicity and promotion are 'below-the-line' costs – where money is spent on bringing stars from America, for example. The distributor hopes to get good coverage in the media, but this is not guaranteed. It's all about taking a risk and hoping the gamble pays off.

• **PUBLICITY**

POSTER AND ARTWORK

The poster campaign is the primary medium for selling a film, and will generally start in the early stages of a film's production and continue during the weeks building up to the release.

The poster is the basis of the whole publicity campaign and out of this 'Key Art' or central image come the standees (displayed in cinema foyers), ranges of posters and television adverts.

Artwork for a film poster can either be an original painting based on a key idea in the film or it can be produced from the colour transparencies which are taken during the shoot. The aim in both cases is to find a 'narrative image' that sums up the film. For example, let us say that we have to publicise a comedy-drama about two friends racing across America in vintage cars they have restored themselves. Our stars are Eddie Murphy and Sylvester Stallone, two very popular actors. We will want to show various elements in our poster which include the stars, their vehicles and the fact that the film is a comedy.

Sometimes an image for a poster can be originated from photographs of the actor taken on set. These are taken during filming and, on approval of the actor concerned, will be released for the poster image and any other publicity. On the set of 'Judge Dredd' 20,000 stills have been taken and rights have been given for 200 to be used!

THE COPY

As well as a visual image, posters carry a certain amount of copy (writing), depending upon the stage in the campaign at which they appear. 'Tag lines' are used to underline key elements of the film. Awards win or names of the director or cast can also be used. Quotes from critics and tag lines on the poster help reinforce the image and make the poster more effective.

Design a publicity poster for 'Judge Dredd'. Your poster must include:

- The title of the film
- The names of the film's main stars
- Information in small print about the film's director, writers, producers, distributors and music.
- The film's certification
- A 'tag line' that tells us something about the film – something that makes us want to know more. The 'tag line' for the United States campaign for the film 'StarGate' was "It will take you a million light years from home – but will it bring you back?" See if you can come up with something as exciting for 'Judge Dredd'. You do not need to keep the "I am the Law" tag line.

THE PRESS KIT

Press kits are sent to journalists all over the country to give them information about forthcoming films. They are one of the basic tools of any publicity department. Kits include a set of authorised stills, cast and crew credits, production notes, biographies and filmographies of the case, director and producer.

In addition to materials sent to print journalists, journalists working in television or radio also receive electronic press kits (EPKs) containing selected video clips and interviews for television, or audio clips for radio.

STAR INTERVIEWS

To promote the film in the weeks leading up to its release, the stars are brought into the country at the distributor's expense. This means paying for flights, travel (usually a chauffeur driven car), hotels, entourage, meals, a daily spending allowance and entertainment. A busy schedule of press interviews and events are planned by the distributor to fully exploit the value of the stars' visit.

When stars are unable to travel, perhaps because of other filming commitments, a press junket will be arranged. These take place in America or the United Kingdom and involve a number of key journalists taking part in a round-the-table interview with the star(s).

TRAILER

The trailer often plays in the cinema around six weeks before the release of a film and continues to play until the film opens at the cinema. The trailer aims to: raise audience awareness of a film by logging the film title in their minds; give an overall impression of the film to its potential audience; make sure that the audience is aware of the stars, particularly where their names will help to sell the film. It should also create the desire to see the film when it finally opens. Trailers tend to use a combination of footage from the film, graphics and voice-over to generate curiosity.

'Teaser' trailers also exist to whet the appetite of the audience and give them a shorter, sharper hint of what is to come. Lasting approximately 60 seconds, they play in a cinema for anything up to 6 months before a film opens. Can you recall any trailers that had an impact on you? What was it that made the film stand out in your mind and did you eventually see the film when it was released?

• ADVERTISING

PRESS ADVERTISING

The main medium for press advertising is newspapers. The print media advertising campaign usually starts two weeks prior to the opening of the film and for daily and weekly publications advertisements can be booked just a few days in advance.

DREDD MAGS

The back page of the June 1995 'Games Master' (an 'all platform' computer games magazine) carries a full page advertisement for the new Super Nintendo game 'Judge Dredd', as does, unsurprisingly, the June edition of 'Nintendo' magazine. But Sega's 'Mean Machines' magazine goes one - even two - better since it features a free 16 page guide to Probe/Acclaim's new platform game 'Judge Dredd' which contains "unseen pictures of the game and the film". Open the magazine and you are confronted by a full colour picture of Sylvester Stallone as Judge Dredd topped with the caption "We are the Law" and tailed by the caption "Welcome to Sega-City One" - geddit?

Go to a large newsagents to carry out this piece of research. Look at all the papers and magazines which are on display and decide which magazines/newspapers would be the best place to advertise 'Judge Dredd'. Whilst you are there, note down which periodicals carry advertisements, reviews or interviews connected with films. Are there any periodicals or magazines carrying adverts for films that you didn't expect? Why?

Design an advertisement to appear on the outside back cover of a magazine for the film 'Judge Dredd'. Make sure that the main parts of the advertisement (especially the title) can be read from about two metres away. Bear in mind that these act as 'mini posters' that people carry around with them, and think about what a poster needs to convey.

TELEVISION ADVERTISING

It is usually only high budget films which can afford a television campaign. The trailer will usually be shown on television 5-10 days before the film is due to open and be repeated during the first week of release. The scheduling of the advert will depend on who the film's target audience is. For example, a horror film can benefit from being shown late at night during programmes like 'Hammer House of Horror', which are far cheaper than the peak-time spots which reach a wider audience. Satellite television is also increasingly being used to advertise films.

Whilst an advertising slot after 'Sesame Street' is probably a waste of time for reaching the target 'Judge Dredd' audience, the break between 'The Chart Show' (Saturday 11.30pm on TV) and 'Movies, Games and Videos' (Saturday 12.30pm on TV), will reach not only the 15-24 year olds but may also be seen by 8-15 year olds. This is good news for the advertisers because 'Judge Dredd' is an aspirational film. This means that although it may have a '15' certificate, younger cinema goers will be eager to see it. Even though they cannot, they may nevertheless be enthusiastic purchasers of spin-off merchandise from the film, such as computer games, toys and clothing.

Advertising films on television involves commercials of 10 or 20 seconds. A longer (60 second) commercial could be shown, but would obviously be more expensive. In order to make sure that you will hit your target audience, you need to show the advert during a *high converting programme*. This means that, unlike most TV programmes, it is almost certain to be seen by the target audience. List the programmes/films that you would consider to be the high converting programmes during which you would plan to transmit a 60 second 'Judge Dredd' television advertisement.

RADIO ADVERTISING

Radio advertising is considerably cheaper than television and is usually used for mainstream films. However, targeted radio stations - a jazz station or a classical station, for example - might be appropriate for the advertising of specialist films. Adverts themselves consist of music from the film and narrative voice-over detailing the venue and release date.

In pairs, script and record a radio commercial advertising 'Judge Dredd'. If you use two tape recorders or a recorder with over-dubbing facilities you'll be able to use the soundtrack or sound effects from the film and also record the voice-over, which will sound professional. Practise before your final recording. Experiment with the equipment to make sure the volume level is right and for best results, count to ten (silently) after you have pressed the record button before you start speaking. Make sure that you speak at the right speed and experiment with the expression in your voice.

MERCHANDISING CAMPAIGNS

The merchandising deals that can be made from a potential 'blockbuster' are very lucrative and in some cases can even necessitate the setting up of a department which deals solely with merchandising produced for the company's films. Merchandising has become a sophisticated business in its own right - toys, clothes and gimmicks such as pencil cases and lunch boxes are now common place. In some ways the wearing of the clothes, using the backpack or playing with the toys from the film is a form of advertising, as you are reminding people of and recommending the product.

For some children the toys and other merchandise that they buy (or have bought for them) give them a chance to create the pleasure of participating in a film which they are not actually permitted to see due to its '15' certification. The toys also give them the opportunity to invent new adventures for the characters in the films.

DREDD MERCHANDISE

The makers of 'Judge Dredd' wanted their film to emulate the success of 'Jurassic Park', which was perhaps seen by 20% of the British public. The film also produced merchandise - such as shirts, baseball caps and backpacks - which was featured in the film, on the shelves of the Jurassic Park gift shop. These were the same souvenirs that audiences would buy in the cinema foyer or various high street shops. Most toy shops stock a full range of 'Jurassic Park' merchandise - especially now that the film has been released on video.

Design a 'Judge Dredd' T-shirt, badge, baseball cap and toy 'bubble pack' or presentation pack. To get some ideas, visit your local toyshop and make a list of other films and television programmes which have spawned toys and merchandise. For example, the most popular range of toys on sale last Christmas were 'Mighty Morphin Power Rangers' products, a 'spin-off' from a TV series created by a Japanese toy company

PROMOTIONS

Promotions give added awareness to a film and help reinforce its title. They tend to take the form of joint involvement with another party who will gain from their involvement; for example, a tie-in with Pizza Hut or McDonald's.

Have a look at the shops in your local high street or shopping centre. How many film-linked products can you find? What sort of merchandise is it and what age group is it geared to? Indeed, can you tell the target age of a film by the merchandise on sale?

You are going to devise a 'Judge Dredd' competition. Competitions like these encourage contestants to take an interest in not just the prize, but the film promoting the competition. You are offering as the first prize for your competition a chance to meet Sylvester Stallone and look round the 'Judge Dredd' film set at Shepperton Studios, London. There will be second and third prizes of 'Judge Dredd' related merchandise. What will these prizes be? Your competition may take the form of a word search, series of questions or a crossword puzzle, but the competition must be connected clearly with 'Judge Dredd' and Mega-City One. Try to set your competition out so that it looks as authentic as possible, complete with entry form.

MARKET RESEARCH

Throughout the marketing campaign, the distributor will be concerned about the effect of the prerelease film publicity. At regular intervals leading up to the release of a film and during its weeks of release, a random selection of the public will be interviewed over the phone or on the street by a market research company. They are asked whether they have heard of the film, whether they intend to see it, and if they have seen it already, whether they enjoyed it. This type of information can then be used by the distributors to find out if the marketing campaign is reaching the target audience.

PART TWO: BACKGROUND TO THE FILM 'JUDGE DREDD'

DREDD ORIGINS

Judge Dredd first made his appearance in the second issue of '2000 AD' comic, which was - in effect - a development of 'Action', a comic which had generated an enormous amount of controversy mainly due to its violent and subversive content.

'2000 AD' began by catering for a mass audience', but editor Pat Mills recalls that as a loyal audience got older the writers "were able to introduce less simple-minded content." The cynical, anti-authoritarian aspects that had so incensed 'Action' comic's bitterest critics resurfaced in '2000 AD' comic - but with a difference - for this was a science-fiction comic and so deemed to be quite safe, apparently nothing to do with Britain in the '70s. But science fiction is not about the future; it is about now and - like 'Blade Runner' or 'Robocop' - the message of the Judge

Dredd strip was "The future doesn't work". David Bishop, editor of the 'Judge Dredd Magazine', suggests that one of the main Dredd writers/creators, John Wagner, "takes a lot of his ideas from newspapers and then imagines how they would be in the future. It's today's society writ large."

Draw up a list of the negative aspects of the future world depicted in the film 'Judge Dredd'. Now draw up a list of the positive aspects and compare your lists with a partner's. What conclusions can you reach about the future offered to us in 'Judge Dredd'? To what extent do you agree with David Bishop's statement that the world of 'Judge Dredd' is "today's society writ large"?

DREDDSELLER

"Judge Dredd set to go mega in '92", claimed the December 1991 edition of Comics International, 'The Comics Industry Monthly'. The front page story told how London's Virgin Megastore had sold over 1,400 copies of 'Judgement On Gotham' (the Judge Dredd versus Batman graphic novel) in three hours at a launch signing, with fans queuing from 1am, five hours before the start of the event. Meanwhile, a Sheffield comic shop had sold 300 copies of the graphic novel in ten minutes.

The story concluded with speculation about renewed interest in a Dredd movie,

mentioning that the producer Ed Pressman had been unhappy with the film treatments offered so far and had called in Dredd comic writers Alan Grant and John Wagner to submit a screenplay.

DREDD DIFFERENCES

One of the comments made about the film by some fans of the comic book 'Judge Dredd' is that it is 'different' from the cartoon strip. There have certainly been several important changes made to Dredd and his world in adapting it to the limitations of the feature length film.

A weekly comic book can tell its story over several weeks - even months. This will permit a writer to give complex twists and turns to the plotting and allow for characters to be developed and for unusual or unexpected incidents to be introduced to change the direction of the plot-line. Indeed, one of the Judge Dredd stories, 'Necropolis', grew so complex that different inter-related sections of it were dealt with in both '2000 AD' and 'Judge Dredd Magazine'. A film, however, has to tell its story rapidly and coherently in a relatively short space of time, without being able to rely on its audience's familiarity with the characters.

Many strip cartoons have been used as the basis for feature films. They range from the successful ('Superman', 'Batman') through the "sequel is not planned at the moment" ('Dick Tracy', 'The Shadow') to the "best forgotten about" ('Howard the Duck', 'Swamp Thing'). What qualities do you think a comic strip should have to ensure its successful conversion to the cinema? What aspects of comic strips make them resistant to film adaptation?

MIGHTY DREDD

In the comics '2000 AD' and 'Judge Dredd Magazine', Judge Dredd is often depicted as an anti-hero - a brutal, stony-faced thug who unthinkingly - for the most part - implements the fascistic laws of a nightmarishly familiar future version of New York. Charles Lippincott, one of the producers of 'Judge Dredd', explained why they have been obliged to make Dredd the hero of the film: "In the real world, there are very few real heroes, the media eats them up . . . [Dredd] has to be the hero, because for the audience, it's the only way of getting heroes . . . Film gives people a way of living vicariously through the lives of these celluloid heroes. With technology moving so fast, people feel overwhelmed by reality. They want escapist entertainment."

What do you think Charles Lippincott means when he talks about 'escapist entertainment'? To what extent do you think that 'Judge Dredd' is 'escapist entertainment'?

Alan Grant, one of the creators of 'Judge Dredd', offers another possible explanation as to why Dredd has become a heroic character: "Because American audiences are used to superheroes who are done dead straight, without any irony, I think they missed the point when Dredd came along, and saw him simply as a shoot-em-up fascist - which is a little worrying really."

Is Dredd the hero of the film? What does he do or say that makes it clear to the audience that Dredd is the hero of the film? What do other characters do or say that helps to emphasise Dredd's heroic role in the film? Are there any aspects of the film that show Judge Dredd in a negative fashion?

THIS IS NOT AMERICA

Along with the action sequences, the film offers its audience a view of how our future could be. Although Judge Dredd was a British creation, the writers deliberately located him in a future version of New York rather than London. The perspective of the comic strip was therefore that of outsiders looking at how things might be in America.

Why do you think the writers, initially, focused their attention on New York, rather than, say, London, Paris, Moscow or Bombay?

THE LOOK OF DREDD

Over the years Dredd's 'look' in '2000 AD' has changed. In adapting Judge Dredd for the cinema, it was decided that the original Dredd look was too '1970's'. Kevin Walker, who has worked on '2000 AD' comic strips, spent several months updating Dredd.



You are going to 'deconstruct' Judge Dredd's appearance. This means that you will look at the way he is denoted - how he is presented to us and the connotations that his appearance carries. In other words, you will consider what assumptions we may make about the character or appearance of Dredd from the way he is costumed; what messages we can read' from looking carefully at the Dredd costume? Look at Judge Dredd's uniform. What does it tell you about the person wearing it? You should consider all aspects of the uniform, but pay particular attention to the badge, helmet and epaulets - though you may wish to consider Dredd's boots and codpiece (the latter being an item Dredd does not wear in the comic strips)!

Don't be afraid of - initially -stating the obvious. For example, you could say confidently that "Judge Dredd's helmet is primarily a piece of safety equipment, a crash helmet worn by someone who will be riding a motor bike or will be involved in dangerous situations. However, the gold badge at the centre of the helmet suggests that Dredd is an official of some sort and the three stars may refer to.

You should also consider the associations that Judge Dredd's name carries; Judge Archibald Figgins is a name unlikely to strike fear into the hearts of hardened 'perps' or

excite the interest of cinema-goers - unless they're expecting a comedy. Strangely though, the name Judge Dredd probably originates in the title/performer of a rather rude comedy reggae song.

THE FILM

The film 'Judge Dredd' begins with a voice-over explaining how the world got to be in such a terrible state:

"In the Third Millennium, the world changed. Climate. Nations. All were in upheaval. Humanity itself turned as violent as the planet. Civilisation threatened to collapse. And then ... a solution was found. The crumbling legal system was merged with the overburdened police, creating a powerful and efficient hybrid. These new guardians of Society had the Power to dispense both justice and punishment. They were police, jury and executioner, all in one. They were... the Judges."

However, in the comic books the horrors of the Cursed Earth and the development of the MegaCities are the result of a devastating Atomic War.

Why do you think the decision was made for the film to have an environmental disaster as the catalyst for the Cursed Earth and other elements?

DREDD BIOGRAPHY

Many of the Judge Dredd stories have been published in collections by Titan books. It's difficult to know which to recommend but 'The Apocalypse War' will give you a full view of Dredd's world. But take a look at 'America'.

JUDGEMENT ON GOTHAM

DC/Fleetway

TANK GIRL

Jamie Hewlett & Alan Martin (Penguin)

HEARTBREAK SOUP

Gilbert Hernandez (Titan)

MAUS

Art Spiegelman (Penguin)

*The Holocaust as a strip cartoon, with the Jews as mice and the Nazis as cats.
Not funny - a serious and honest work.*

THE WASTELAND

Martin Rowson (Penguin)

*Rowson re-presents T.S. Eliot's poem as a film noir comic strip
and along the way offers one of the best criticisms it has ever received.*

WATCHMEN

Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons (Titan)

This is the superhero book about superheroes.

ADULT COMICS - AN INTRODUCTION

Roger Sabin (Routledge)

*A serious, extremely wide-ranging and authoritative guide.
Don't study comics without it.*

ACTION - THE STORY OF A VIOLENT COMIC

Martin Baker (Titan)

THE PRIMAL SCREEN - A HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION FILM

John Brosnan (Orbit)

The best source of information about Judge Dredd and his world - which is now as complex as the Marvel comic's universe - is '2000 AD' and the 'Judge Dredd Magazine'.

DREDD WATCH

There are many films which offer a vision of the future - usually a bleak one - which one could productively compare to 'Judge Dredd'.

METROPOLIS

(1926)

THINGS TO COME

(1936)

THX 1138

(1970)

SOYLENT GREEN

(1973)

ROLLER BALL

(1975)

MAD MAX 2

(1981)

BLADE RUNNER

(1982)

1984

(1984)

BRAZIL

(1985)

ROBOCOP

(1987)

WEB LINKS

<http://movieweb.com/movie/judgedredd/>

Features background information, stills from the film and the original trailer.

Buy the movie at Amazon.co.uk

VHS: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00004CRJE/filmeducation04>

DVD: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00004D08T/filmeducation04>