

Teaching Trailers Primary 2012

Lesson Plans

These teaching notes are to be used in conjunction with the Film Education Teaching Trailers Primary 2012 DVD. Here, teachers can find a set of key questions and activity ideas linked to each trailer featured on the disc. The [Schemes of Work](#) outline how these can be incorporated into genre-specific Teaching Trailers projects through Literacy and ICT.

If you are already on Film Education's mailing list, the FREE DVD will be sent to you automatically. If you have yet to sign-up, just enter your details via the [online form](#).

List of trailers featured on the Teaching Trailers Primary 2012 DVD:

1. *Brave* (Walt Disney Motion Pictures, UK release date: 3rd August 2012)
2. *Despicable Me 2* (Universal Pictures, UK release date: 2013)
3. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* (Twentieth Century Fox, UK release date: 3rd August, 2012)
4. *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax* (Universal Pictures, UK release date: 27th July, 2012)
5. *Frankenweenie* (Walt Disney Motion Pictures, UK release date: 19th October 2012)
6. *Hotel Transylvania* (Sony Pictures Releasing, UK release date: 12th October 2012)
7. *Ice Age: Continental Drift* (Twentieth Century Fox, UK release date: 13th July 2012)
8. *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted* (Paramount Pictures, UK release date: 19th October 2012)
9. *ParaNorman* (Universal Pictures, UK release date: 14th September 2012)
10. *Rise of the Guardians* (Paramount Pictures, UK release date: 30th November 2012)

Introduction

Teaching Trailers Primary 2012 uses a selection of trailers linked to activities to help pupils understand how the film industry uses the trailer to persuade audiences to come to the cinema to see their film. A trailer is a taster of the film in its entirety, and as such, can also be an extremely useful teaching tool for narrative and genre. The trailer's short duration and strong visual content make it an ideal text type for pupils of all ages and abilities in one sitting.

The accompanying schemes of work provide genre-specific units of work:

- Myths and Legends (*Brave; Dr. Seuss' The Lorax; Rise of the Guardians*)
- Sequels (*Despicable Me 2; Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days; Ice Age: Continental Drift and Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*)
- Dark Fantasy (*Frankenweenie; Hotel Transylvania and ParaNorman*).

There are many ways you can use film trailers in your teaching. These downloadable lesson plans and schemes of work incorporate key questions and activity suggestions. They can be used exactly as they are, or adapted to meet the needs of your learners.

It is worth using the principals of close-analysis when working with the film trailer:

- visual literacy
- close analysis
- the 'Film High Five'

These notes provide you with a series of stimulus questions, further to those suggested in the Lesson Plans provided for each trailer. Using these as prompts for discussion will help to give each trailer some context, then to take understanding to a deeper level.

When watching a trailer: watch it once without any intervention, then watch the clip again with the finger poised over the pause button, ready to ask your pupils 'Why?'. For example:

- Why start the trailer with this shot?
- Why that camera angle?
- Why choose this shot to follow that one?
- Why is the set decorated in that way?
- Why does the music change at that point?
- Why are the characters in those positions?
- What does their body language tell us about their state of mind?

- Why use natural lighting for this scene?
- Why use those particular colours to set the scene?

These trailer questions refer to the Film Language Mind Map which can be found as a separate PDF on the website.

Through a dialogic teaching approach, the learning attention is to develop children's understanding of how the different aspects of film language come together to make meaning on screen.

The '[Thinking Film](#)' *Film High Five* approach can also be used as a model for children to explore trailers.

Trailer Lesson Notes

Each trailer can be examined in detail in one lesson, or you might decide to use the [Schemes of Work](#) which group the trailers so that you can focus on a particular theme / genre (Myths and Legends; Sequels and Dark Fantasy). Either way, you can use these key questions and activity ideas to stimulate learning.



Trailer 1: *Brave*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Brave~29754>
Distributor: Walt Disney Motion Pictures
Director: Mark Andrews
UK release date: 3rd August 2012

Synopsis

Brave is an animated fairy tale from Pixar Studios. Headstrong tomboy and skilled archer, Princess Merida is determined to break with tradition and carve out her own path in life. In defiance of her parents, King Fergus and Queen Elinor, Merida flies in the face of an age-old custom held sacred by the three principal lords of the land, Lord MacGuffin, Lord MacIntosh and Lord Dingwall. Her actions lead to chaos in the kingdom, and it is now up to Merida not only to restore harmony in the land but to undo an ill-fated wish bestowed upon her by a wayward wise woman.

Key questions

1. Why do you think the trailer starts with a voice over?
2. What do you think the voice could be describing?
3. What other Pixar films are referenced at the start of the trailer? Why?
4. Create a *Brave* mind map – write down all the clues that we are given that identify the film as being set in Scotland.
5. Meredith is the heroine of the film. Describe how the filmmakers have created her so that she acts and looks different to the other characters?

Activities

- Draw Pixar-style designs for the creature that King Fergus is describing at the start of the trailer.
- Transcribe King Fergus' words, spoken at the beginning of the trailer. Use different coloured pencils to highlight the verbs, adjectives, connectives, adverbs and superlatives that he uses. Discuss the language style and how this contributes to the feel and tone of the trailer.
- The trailer is split into sections by sub-headings – for example, 'A hero will rise'. Identify the words used in these sub-headings and think up one more that could be used in the trailer e.g. A mythical beast. Draw the shot that will follow your sub-heading.



Trailer 2: *Despicable Me 2*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Despicable-Me-2~47022>
Distributor: Universal Pictures
Directors: Pierre Coffin, Chris Renaud
UK release date: 2013

Synopsis

Universal Studios presents this sequel to the 2010 animated movie following Gru, the ex-scheming evildoer-turned-parental figure.

Key questions

1. Where is the camera placed to film this teaser trailer? Does the camera move at all?
2. How are we able to differentiate between the characters when they look so alike?
3. Why do you think the multi-coloured party blower is shown to come out of the shot? What effect does this have?
4. Watch the characters' eyes and describe how they move – what does this tell us about each personality?
5. Why does this teaser trailer only show us the minions and not the main characters of *Despicable Me*?

Activities

- Why are these minions singing about potatoes and bananas?! Create a character name and back-story for the group as a whole, then for each individual character. With a partner, create voice-overs for the two Minions in the middle. As the trailer plays out, record yourselves voicing their inner most thoughts!



Trailer 3: *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Diary-Of-A-Wimpy-Kid-Dog-Days~39466>
Distributor: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation
Director: David Bowers
UK release date: 3rd August 2012

Synopsis

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days is based on the fourth book in the 'Wimpy Kid' series by author and cartoonist Jeff Kinney. Greg is having his worst summer ever. A self-confessed 'indoor person', all he wants to do is spend his holidays playing computer games in his room with the curtains drawn. But his mother has other ideas, and packs him off with his best friend, Rowley, to stay at a country club, where – to Greg's horror – outdoor activities and family bonding are the order of the day.

Key questions

1. How much does this trailer rely on prior knowledge of the books and films?
2. Why are the cartoons mixed with the real footage? What if the cartoons were missing from the trailer? What effect would this have?
3. Who do you think will go and see this film? Explain your answers.
4. Create a graph of the calamities that happen to Greg. Your x-axis should be Greg's disasters and the y-axis should be labeled 'time'. Plot the disasters against the time. How many things happen to Greg?
5. Describe the music used in the trailer. Why do you think this type of music is used?

Activities

- Create a poster for the film that uses both cartoon and live action images.
- Come up with a suitable tag line for the film.



Trailer 4: *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Dr-Seuss-The-Lorax~25629>
Distributor: Universal Pictures
Directors: Chris Renaud, Kyle Balda
UK release date: 27th July 2012

Synopsis

A 12-year-old boy searches for the one thing that will enable him to win the affection of the girl of his dreams. To find it he must discover the story of the Lorax, the grumpy yet charming creature who fights to protect his world.

Key questions

1. How is colour and light used to create the mood for the film?
2. Describe the various settings that we see in the trailer.
3. How does the film mirror the Dr. Seuss 'style'?
4. What type of story is being told? How did you decide on your classification?
5. Why do most films have a Facebook link at the end of the trailer?

Activities

- Create a Dr. Seuss style rhyming voice over for the trailer.



Trailer 5: *Frankenweenie*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Frankenweenie~25716>
Distributor: Walt Disney Motion Pictures
Director: Tim Burton
UK release date: 19th October 2012

Synopsis

Tim Burton's black and white stop-motion animated homage to Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein' is a remake of his 1984 film of the same name. The first stop-motion film to be released in IMAX 3D cinemas, the film tells the story of a young boy called Victor, who harnesses the powers of science to bring his beloved pet dog, Sparky, back to life – with unexpected and alarming consequences.

Key questions

1. Why is the film shot in black and white?
2. How do we know that Victor misses his dog?
3. Turn your back to the screen and listen to the sounds and music of the trailer. How do the sound effects and music create mood?
4. What is the story about?
5. What type of story is *Frankenweenie*? How does the trailer make you feel?

Activities

- Watch the trailer and pause it at your favourite shot. Draw this shot and add labels, outlining why you think the shot is so effective.



Trailer 6: *Hotel Transylvania*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Hotel-Transylvania~47016>
Distributor: Sony Pictures Releasing
Director: Genndy Tartakovsky
UK release date: 12th October 2012

Synopsis

Animated movie about a ghoulish five-star resort for the world's most famous monsters. Dracula is the proprietor of 'Hotel Transylvania', a luxury hotel for monsters who need to relax and recover from their relentless persecution by human beings. To celebrate the 118th birthday of his daughter, Mavis, Dracula invites a roster of A-list monsters, including Frankenstein and Murray the Mummy to the hotel. But when 21-year-old human, Jonathan, turns up unexpectedly, Dracula must do all he can to prevent Mavis from falling in love with him.

Key questions

1. Describe the use of music in the trailer. What type of music is it? Describe the 'shape' of the music - the pitch, rhythm, duration, dynamics, tempo, texture and structure of the music. Why do you think it was chosen for this trailer?
2. Apart from the music, what other sounds can you hear in the trailer? Why were these sound effects added?
3. Watch the trailer and explore the use of colour and light. What are the predominant colours? What do these colours represent? How are light and shadow used to convey meaning?
4. Examine how the character of Dracula is presented on screen. What type of person is he? Write his resume for 'MonsterBook' – an online social networking site for monsters.
5. How many different monsters can you spot in the trailer?

Activity

- Draw the contents of a suitcase for your favourite travelling monster – on his or her way to Hotel Transylvania.



Trailer 7: Ice Age: Continental Drift

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Ice-Age-4-Continental-Drift~39083>
Distributor: Twentieth Century Fox
Directors: Michael Thurmeier, Steve Martino
UK release date: 13th July 2012

Synopsis

When the entire continent is set adrift following a global cataclysm, Manny, Diego and Sid find themselves separated from the rest of the herd. Commandeering a nearby iceberg as a makeshift boat, they take to the high seas. Fearsome sea creatures and battle thirsty pirates are among the challenges faced by the intrepid trio as they ride the waves of the world in search of their family.

Key questions

1. Watch the first 7 seconds of the trailer and discuss the genre (type of story) of the film.
2. How does the introduction of Scrat and his acorn change the tone of the trailer?
3. 'The continental drift' takes place in seconds in the trailer, whereas in the real world, Scientists believe that it took millions of years! Count how many shots there are between the moment when Scrat is about to place his acorn into the ice to when he realizes that he is about to fall from a great height.
4. How do you think the animators made the sea look so realistic?

Activity

- Storyboard the 'continental drift' scene. Include the extreme long shots of the earth and extreme close ups of Scrat's snout!



Trailer 8: *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Madagascar-3---Europes-Most-Wanted-38755>
Distributor: Paramount International
Director: Eric Darnell
UK release date: 19th October 2012

Synopsis

Third film in the CGI-animated children's series follows the adventures of a number of New York zoo animals that are deemed unruly and released into the wild. Though their previous attempt to escape Madagascar and make it back to New York failed, Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra and Melman the Giraffe remain determined to return to the Big Apple. When the trio find themselves in Monte Carlo on the run from European animal control, they decide that their best chance of making it home is to join a travelling circus as performing animals. Though the circus, led by a world-weary tiger, appears to be on a downward slide, the zest of Alex, Marty and Melman quickly helps to reinvigorate it. But will the circus finally help them make it back to New York?

Key questions

1. Does this trailer assume that its audience know about the other *Madagascar* films? If there are children or adults in the class who have not familiar with the Madagascar franchise, ask them their thoughts about the trailer. Do you think it will make as much sense?
2. Why do sequels refer to the other film(s)?
3. Which shots or sequences do you think were designed to look good in 3D?
4. Watch the trailer again and time each shot. What do you notice about the duration of each shot as the trailer progresses? Why do you think this happens?
5. How is music used to help the audience understand about the story's setting and events?

Activity

- Design a poster that shows the castaways' journey across Europe – include as many famous European landmarks as possible.



Trailer 9: *ParaNorman*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/ParaNorman-39580>
Distributor: Universal Pictures
Directors: Chris Butler, Sam Fell
UK release date: 14th September 2012

Synopsis

The makers of *Coraline* return with this feature-length animated adventure about a boy who can talk to ghosts. Norman is ostracised by his family and bullied at school because of his odd behavior. What none of them know is that he is in continual dialogue with the ghosts, ghouls, vampires and zombies that prowl his neighbourhood unseen. However, when the town comes under threat from a centuries-old curse, it is up to Norman to save the day.

Key questions

1. How many monster noises do you hear at the start of the trailer? Why do you think the trailer starts this way?
2. Explain how Norman could be described as:
 - a normal boy
 - a boy with a 'gift'
3. How does the trailer show us that Norman is the most important character?
4. List the 'horror' elements of the trailer.
5. List the 'comedy' elements of the trailer.
6. Do you think the two genres (story types) work together? Why?
7. Who do you think is the target audience of this film?

Activity

- Create a screengrab, or draw the final image of the man frantic and terrified waiting or his packet of 'Greasy Pieces' to be dispensed. Label the shot to show how the Film High Five (lighting/colour, camera angle, mise-en-scene, editing and sound) come together to create the tension and humour.



Trailer 10: *Rise of the Guardians*

URL: <http://www.findanyfilm.com/Rise-Of-The-Guardians~39101>
Distributor: Paramount Pictures
Director: Peter Ramsey
UK release date: 30th November 2012

Synopsis:

This film is based on 'The Guardians of Childhood', a series of popular books by William Joyce.

Key questions

1. The first part of this trailer depicts famous children's legends as we imagine them. Write down the words that the voice over says about the characters. What type of language is he using and why?
2. When we see the Sandman create an airplane in the air, we go beyond the traditional. We suddenly see these characters as magical and powerful. Why does this happen? What function does this serve in how the story is being explained?
3. How does the pace of the trailer change when we are introduced to the bad character?
4. Why do you think that *How to Train Your Dragon* is mentioned?
5. Having watched the trailer, who do you think is speaking at the start? Watch it again if you need to. How important is the voice in giving a character a personality?

Activity

You are a marketing executive for Paramount Pictures and it is your job to decide when to release *Rise of the Guardians*. Prepare a short presentation on the weekend date that you would suggest as the best time to release the film at the cinema. Explain your reasons thinking about:

- school term time
- coinciding celebrations (e.g. Halloween, Christmas etc.)
- how you will make sure that you get the maximum amount of people through the doors of the cinema to see your film and no one else's.