

Sample Detailed Lessons

LESSON #1 (MEDIA ANALYSIS): DECONSTRUCTING MOVIE ADS

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, students analyse the ways in which advertisements for movies are designed to attract and communicate information to their intended audiences.

Students will sort and classify different genres of movie by identifying techniques and conventions that are used in each ad. They will also acquire appropriate vocabulary to describe the conventions used for particular effects and will become aware of the elements that are characteristic of effective ads. They will be able to use this knowledge to create movie advertisements of their own.

Whenever possible, students should be encouraged to analyse media works that are relevant to them. Teachers who use engaging media texts drawn from the students' environment make media literacy learning authentic for junior learners.

To teach students how to deconstruct movie ads, teachers need to:

- obtain samples of movie ads from newspapers, magazines, local movie-rental stores, or local theatres;
- request students to bring in their favourite movie ads to analyse with the class (these ads will need to be previewed for appropriateness before they are used with junior students);
- retrieve images of movie ads online and display them to the class using a computer and LCD projector.

For information on current movie titles and ratings, visit "Tribute Canada" at <http://www.tribute.ca>. For a complete annotated listing of movie titles, including messages about sensitive issues (age-appropriateness, mature theme, violence), visit Yahoo's "The Movie Mom" at <http://movies.yahoo.com/mv/moviemom/>.

NOTE: This lesson is intended to take 50-65 minutes.

LESSON FOCUS

What is the focus of the lesson? How will I teach it?

The lesson uses the *Audience* and *Production* sides of the Media Triangle. Students will sort and classify genres of movie advertisements by comparing media techniques and conventions.

RATIONALE

Why am I teaching this lesson?

Students will acquire an awareness of the graphical elements typically used to create effective movie advertisements and will learn vocabulary to help them describe the conventions used to obtain particular effects.

ASSESSMENT

How will I know when my students are successful?

- from anecdotal records
- from media-log entries

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

What prior knowledge do my students need in order to be successful with the focus of this lesson?

Prior to this lesson, students will need to:

- be familiar with the Five Key Concepts of Media Literacy and the Media Triangle
- be aware of different genres of movie
- understand basic media techniques and conventions
- have experience with keeping media logs

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Which expectations will I address?

The Arts: Visual Arts

1. Students will demonstrate awareness that an artist intentionally uses some of the elements and principles of design to convey meaning and will explain how this is accomplished.

Language: Media Literacy

Understanding Media Texts: Purpose and Audience

- 1.1 Students will identify the purpose and audience for a variety of media texts

Understanding Media Forms, Conventions, and Techniques: Form

- 2.1 Students will identify elements and characteristics of some media forms and
- 2.2 Identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms and explain how they help convey meaning

Reflecting on Media Literacy Skills and Strategies: Metacognition

- 4.1 Students will identify what strategies they found most helpful in making sense of and creating media texts, and explain how these and other strategies can help them improve as viewers/listeners/producers

MATERIALS/PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

What will I need to know, have, and be able to do before I can begin the lesson?

- Ten to fifteen different books from the classroom or school, spanning a range of text forms (e.g., fiction, non-fiction, curriculum-related, high-interest, dual-language) and a range of age groups (e.g., primary, junior, intermediate, child, adult)
- Ten different movie advertisements, spanning a range of genres (e.g., adventure, friendship, horror, romantic comedy, mystery or thriller, documentary, sports, drama)
- chart paper
- students' media logs
- computer, LCD projector, screen or Smart Board™ (optional)

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

How can I ensure that I am meeting the needs of all my students?

- Collaborate with the school's librarian to arrange for students to learn more about genres of novel or to view a selection of movie genres in the library.
- Post anchor charts around the classroom to remind students of media terminology.

INSTRUCTION

MODELLED/SHARED LESSON

Before:

- To activate students' prior knowledge, ask them to name the titles of novels they have recently read and to record the titles on the board.
- Ask students to suggest categories (genres) under which the titles could be grouped (e.g., humour, mystery, adventure, friendship stories).
- Choose a big book (e.g., *Natural Disasters*, ISBN 0170112047) and ask students to identify its genre.
- Discuss the cover's characteristics, the media conventions/techniques used on the cover (e.g., colour, font, photographs, graphics, illustrations), and elicit how those conventions/techniques led the students to choose the genre they did.
- Write the words "Characters", "Plot", and "Setting" on the board and use the words to guide a discussion on the fact that different genres of novel have different characteristics. Begin a characteristics anchor chart that students will complete after the lesson. Use the "Movie Genre Characteristics/Movie Ad Media Conventions" sample (Appendix 1) as a guide. Help students to see in what sense "Setting" applies to books and how the graphics and illustrations in the foreground and background of a poster or ad help us to make inferences about the setting of a movie.

During:

- Divide the class into small groups. Distribute novels of various genres to each group and ask the groups to sort and classify the books, basing their decisions only on what they see and read on the covers. Ask students to record in each case the media conventions/techniques that support their classification decisions. Have the groups share their findings with the class.
- Ensure that students use proper media terminology as they share their reasons for their choices.
- Present a movie ad, explain that movie ads are almost always small versions of the posters displayed at movie theatres, and use a think-aloud to identify the media conventions used in the ad and to classify the movie by genre.

Sample think-aloud:

"I can tell, by the bright, bold colours, the graphics of the animated penguin and rooster, the simple, chunky font, the outlined title, and the illustrations of the surfboard and waves, that this ad is promoting a comical, animated adventure movie for young audiences."

- Ask the groups to compare (a) a novel's cover with the movie ad and (b) the media conventions used in both cases.
- Present another ad and ask student pairs to identify the media conventions used and the movie's genre. Discuss findings as a whole class.

Guided focus:

- Do further explicit teaching and modelling with groups in order to help students to identify conventions, to classify, and to compare. Such additional practice will increase students' proficiency and allow them to move on to independent work.

Independent focus:

- Provide students with a variety of movie advertisements and have them repeat the sorting and classifying activity on their own. Ask them to record their findings and then share them with the whole class.

After:

- Reconvene the class and work with students to complete the anchor chart begun prior to the lesson, listing genres of novel, the characteristics of their covers, and the techniques used. Post the chart on the wall.
- Next, work with students to create an anchor chart for selected genres of movies and leave the chart on display.
- Have students reflect on and record the strategies they found most helpful when identifying genres in their media logs.

REFLECTION

Were my students successful? Did my instructional decisions meet the needs of all students? What worked well? What will I do differently in the future? What are my next steps?

APPENDIX 1 – MOVIE GENRE CHARACTERISTICS/MOVIE AD MEDIA CONVENTIONS SAMPLE ANCHOR CHART

Movie Genre		
	Adventure (e.g., “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets”)	Comedy-Drama (e.g., “The Princess Diaries”)
Genre Characteristics		
Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a strong male lead • a pretty female lead • a friendly side-kick • an expert • a villain who is often a former friend or ally of the lead character(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a handsome male lead • a pretty female lead • a wise older man or woman • an awkward friend • someone who is trying to keep the two leads apart
Plot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • something bad is going to happen and must be prevented or resolved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead characters are not happy until they are brought together
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lots of special effects and stunts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more funny moments than serious ones
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loud, exciting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soft, popular
Fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rugged, dirty, active clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fashionable, if a modern story • special costumes, if story is set in the past or future
Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly short speeches • emphasis on action, not dialogue • lead character and villain do not get along 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lots of dialogue as lead characters worry about their relationship
Movie-Ad Media Conventions		
Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spooky or exciting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple, bright, happy
Use of Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text set to look scary or exciting • all production details kept in small, hard-to-read font 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple, centred, few words
Fonts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mysterious-looking font or “action” font 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wavy, elegant font with curlicues
Photographs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead character(s) in foreground • facial expressions clearly visible • maybe face or shape of villain included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead character(s) in foreground • facial expressions clearly visible
Graphics or Illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scary or dramatic background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plain or soft background