

TEACHING TRAILERS PRIMARY 2017

FILM TRAILERS AS PERSUASIVE TEXTS

TEACHERS' NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Trailers Primary uses a range of age appropriate film trailers to provide upper Primary pupils with a way into the 'Persuasive Texts' Literacy unit. Within this resource, there are 4 learning strands designed to help pupils deepen their understanding of the persuasive text genre:

- **FEATURES** [pupils will discuss the features of persuasive texts, analysing the impact of certain devices through looking at three different versions of a trailer for the same for film.]
- **CRITERIA** [pupils will examine different movie trailers to come up with a list of criteria for persuasive texts.]
- **LANGUAGE** [pupils will explore the language used in the trailer alongside the film language.]
- **IMPACT** [pupils will plan and develop their own trailer as an example of a persuasive text.]

They will use two frameworks through which they will examine the trailers:
The Four Features of Persuasion (Questions; Imagery; Humour and Empathy) and
The Trailer Trio of Film Language (Shot, Sound and Sequence)

Why film trailers?

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, it is also an extremely useful teaching tool for learning about persuasive texts. Its short duration and strong visual content means that the trailer can be used successfully with pupils of all ages and abilities in one sitting.

Learning outcomes

For use with pupils between the ages of 8 and 11, these learning strands and accompanying activities can help develop the following skills:

Listen and respond appropriately

Interrogate texts, ask questions, deepen understanding

Articulate & justify opinions

Distinguish between fact (true; can be proved; backed up with evidence) and opinion (cannot be proved; linked to feelings; can be argued; can be supported by facts)

Context and starting points

Teachers may wish to start their unit on Film Trailers as Persuasive Texts with a general discussion about the role of the film trailer within the wider context of the cinema-going experience. Here are some starting points:

Why do film companies need to use trailers?

When a film is released at the cinema it has only a short space of time in which to become a 'box-office hit'. The marketing campaign plays a vital role in advertising the film to the potential audience and in encouraging them to come to the cinema to see it.

What does a film distributor actually do?

Activity: find out about the role of the Film Distributor by exploring this website:

<http://www.thefilmSPACE.org/incinema2016/>

Write a job description for a film distributor post based on the skills needed to carry out the job.

The major elements of a film marketing campaign are

- Posters,
- Trailers,
- Radio/TV adverts,
- Social media channels,
- Online communities,
- Websites (with links to booking tickets),
- Interactive digital advertising.

Some films have more of a digital marketing presence than anything else.

Prompter questions

What makes you want to go and see a film?

How do you decide which films to see?

Where do you watch most trailers? At the cinema, on TV or online?

Why is the trailer important?

The trailer is a powerful tool in the marketing campaign. Posters are important in capturing the initial interest of the audience and drawing them into the cinema, but they cannot convey the excitement and atmosphere of film in the same way as a trailer does. The combination of moving images and sound, both experienced 'larger than life' through the advanced equipment of the cinema auditorium, is an exciting experience.

Prompter questions

Look at the title of each trailer on the contents list. What clues do the titles give you as to what the film will be about?

Freeze a frame where you can see the title of the film. How does the font used give you clues as to what it will be about?

Which is more important in a trailer – the sound or the images?

The voiceover (including words on screen) is one of the most frequently used conventions of the trailer genre. It is used for several reasons:

1. It helps us make sense of the narrative by giving us background such as where the action is set
2. It showcases the stars appearing in the film
3. It can give us information about the important filmmakers behind the film such as the director and producer and their previous work
4. It helps to build a sense of anticipation about the film's release
5. It reinforces the title of the film
6. It sets the tone for the film

Prompter questions

Do all of the trailers have voiceovers?

Think about how the choice of words reflects the tone of the film

Think about the length of the words used

What words and phrases are designed to 'excite'?

What repetition can you see within the words and sentence structure?

What effect does this have on our expectations?

Think about the length of each line

Where does the emphasis fall in the spoken text? (It may help to listen to the voiceover without looking at the images.)

Think about the accent and delivery of the voice used

A voiceover can summarise the story between 5-8 lines. It does not give away the ending,

but helps us anticipate what is to come. Choose a story you know well and do the same.

Fact or Opinion?

Any work on Persuasive Texts should consider whether the information being presented is fact or opinion. Film trailers are presenting some facts to the audience (release date; certification; names of the cast and crew involved), but otherwise, they are distilled versions of narrative, presented in a way to convince you to go and see the film at the cinema. Pupils could spend some time exploring the type of language used to, for-instance, explain when the film is released compared to the 'wow words' that may be used to describe the plot, action and 'uniqueness' of the film.

S1: FEATURES

Trailers

Cars 3 (trailer 1)

Cars 3 (trailer 2)

Cars 3 (trailer 3)

Teaching Notes

The Big Picture

Pupils will identify features of persuasive texts by examining 3 different trailers for the film Cars 3.

Objectives

Pupils will:

Understand that film trailers are persuasive texts.

Identify the Four Features of Persuasion and how film trailers use these features (asking questions; using humour; memorable imagery and taglines; building empathy with main characters).

Engagement

Pupils will:

Understand that film trailers are persuasive texts.

Identify the Four Features of Persuasion and how film trailers use these features (asking questions; using humour; memorable imagery and taglines; building empathy with main characters).

Stickability

Children will remember the trailers and make the link between trailers and persuasive texts; how they can be examined through the film language 'Trailer Trio' framework, and through the 'Four Features of Persuasion' framework. They will also see how these two areas overlap to convince audiences to see the film.

Assessment

Can pupils:

Listen and respond appropriately?

Interrogate texts and ask questions showing a deeper understanding?

Articulate & justify opinions?

Discuss features of persuasive texts?

Evaluate trailers as effective persuasive texts?

Key Words

Trailer; persuasion; features; humour; questions; imagery; tagline; empathy; character; film language

Differentiation

Pupils must: share their thoughts on the similarities and differences between the trailers

Pupils should: identify how the trailers function to persuade an audience to see the film

Pupils could: differentiate between the effectiveness of each trailer and explain which was most effective and why

Learning episodes

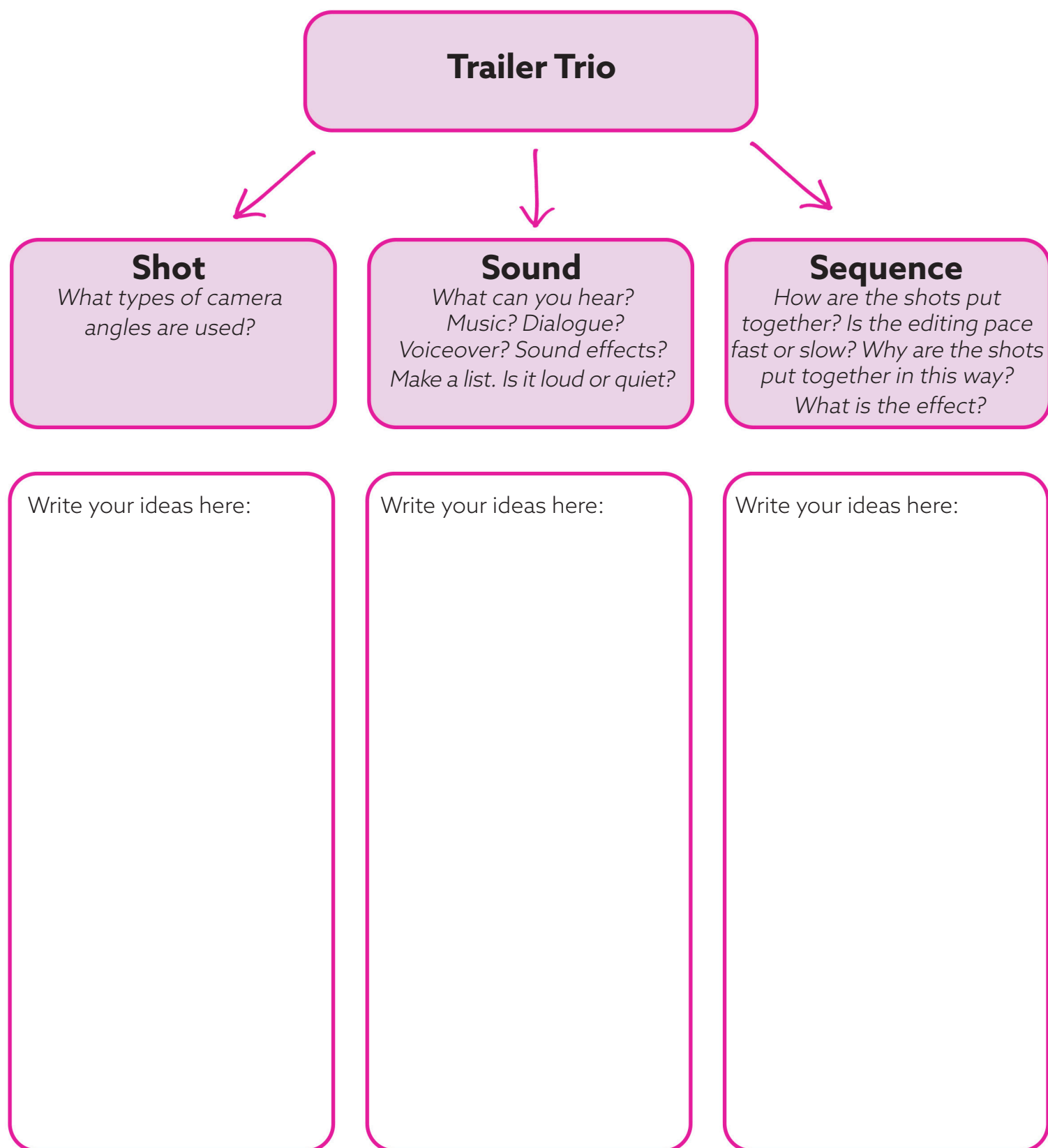
Session 1 - teacher led starter

1. Watch the trailers.
2. Discuss why there are three different trailers for the same film? *A distribution company may decide to release more than one trailer for a film, particularly if it is a blockbuster with a large marketing budget. These trailers will be released at different times prior to the film's release, to build excitement and anticipation for the film's release.*
3. Divide the pupils into three groups and tell them they are going to analyse one of the three trailers in detail and present their views to the rest of the class.

Session 2 - pupil led group work

Give each of the three groups one of the trailers. Ask them to watch and analyse it using the following Trailer Trio Analysis sheet:

TRAILER TRIO ANALYSIS



Session 3 - whole class sharing and evaluating

When pupils are feeding back their ideas, be sure to ask them these four questions:

Why? E.g. Why did the trailer makers decide to use that particular camera angle to start off with?

What is the effect? E.g. How does it affect the way the audience understand the story of the film?

How does it persuade? E.g. how does that particular technique work to persuade audiences to see the film at the cinema?

How do the three trailers compare? Which is the most effective? Why?

Session 4 - Teacher led

Features of trailers as persuasive texts

Trailers are not 'mini-films'. They are a genre in their own right and have their own set of easily recognisable features or conventions. Trailers are designed to capture our attention and hold it for a short space of time. They give us just enough information to raise our curiosity but not enough to spoil the story of the film. They create a mood or atmosphere and heighten our anticipation of what is to come. In short, they tease but they don't tell.

In some ways watching a trailer is like doing a jigsaw puzzle – we're given some information as to plot and character and our task is to fill in the missing pieces in the time available. The style in which the information is conveyed is fast moving and requires our attention one hundred per cent of the time. To watch a film at this pace would be impossible – we could not cope with the input and would 'switch off'. However, we enjoy the rollercoaster effect of a trailer.

The sound is very important in a trailer, particularly the music, which helps to create an atmosphere. The voiceover, a feature of advertising, is used to summarise the story and emphasise credit information (such as star or director names) where appropriate. Like every other element of the trailer, the voiceover also looks to promote the film by building our anticipation.

Here are some of the more common conventions of the trailers:

1. They highlight the 'best bits' of the film; the very funny, the very sad, the action-packed, the bizarre, etc.
2. We are not shown the story in the correct narrative order
3. They showcase the stars of the film
4. Some visual images stay on screen for only just enough time for our mind to realise what we are seeing

5. Conversations between characters usually consist of one line each
6. Unusual angles are often used to show events or characters
7. Action is interspersed with credits on screen
8. Voiceovers are used to tell the story and give credit information
9. Music plays an important role in creating atmosphere
10. The title does not appear until the end
11. The trailer builds to a climax, where it ends

These conventions come together to persuade the audience to see the film at the cinema by: these **FOUR FEATURES OF PERSUASION:**

1. Leaving the audience with a set of questions which can only be answered when they see the entire film.
2. Enticing the audience with memorable imagery and taglines.
3. Using humour, puns or a play on words to engage the audience.
4. Giving just enough information about the main characters to build empathy, but not too much so that we want to find out more!

Session 5 - Individual work

Write a persuasive voiceover for one of the Cars trailers

These trailers differ from normal film trailers in that they do not include a voice over. We are all familiar with the traditional voiceover (a man's voice, specifically not one of the characters) used on trailers. What effect does this have and why do you think the voice was excluded?

Challenge the children to create a voiceover script of their own for one of the Cars trailers. They should think about a script that includes these Four Features of Persuasion:

Questions - ask a question to peak the audience interest e.g. do you want to go faster?

A tagline or quote - e.g. 'From this moment, everything will change.'

A play on words or pun - e.g. 'Accelerate to the cinema this Summer.'

Empathy - e.g. 'will McQueen ever win the race again?'

Whilst writing the script, they should match the voiceover words to the appropriate images on the screen. When finished, they can perform their scripts to each other and evaluate each others' scripts according to how the voiceover adds to the overall persuasiveness of the trailer.

Session 5 - Pair work

Evaluating the trailer as a persuasive tool

Pupils work in pairs to watch and analyse their favourite of the three Cars trailers. They examine it through the following headings to try and work out why they feel it is the most effective:

Examples of the four features of persuasion:

What questions do I have about the film, having seen the trailer?

A memorable image or shot

A tagline

A clever play on words (either spoken or written)

I want to find out more about the main characters because:

Plenary

As a class, take a vote on the best Cars trailer of the 3, talking about it in terms of the Four Features of Persuasion:

QUESTIONS

IMAGERY / TAGLINE

PUNS

EMPATHY

Now examine the 'winning' trailer in terms of the Trailer Trio analysis tool:

SHOT (*were there stand-out images that stuck in your mind?*)

SOUND (*how did the sound effects add to the trailer? Was there music? What mood did the sound effects / music create? For example: the heartbeat sound starting slow and quiet, then getting faster and louder? And the isolated sound of the heavy breathing during the crash sequence? Is the trailer better or worse with the voice over?*)

SEQUENCE (*how did the sequences of blurred, speeding cars contrast with the slow-motion crash sequence?*)

S2: CRITERIA

Trailers

My Life as a Courgette
Red Turtle

Teaching Notes

Create a **Power of Persuasion working wall** with the Trailer Trio analysis tool and Four Features of Persuasion headings. Encourage pupils to add their thoughts to the wall with screen grabs, key words and notes.

Objectives

Pupils will:

Understand that film trailers are persuasive texts.

Identify the Four Features of Persuasion and link them to the Trailer Trio film language model. Understand how film trailers use these criteria to persuade audiences to see the film.

Engagement

Pupils will watch two very different trailers. They will work in groups to create a working wall which they will use as reference for all work on persuasive texts.

Stickability

Children will reinforce existing knowledge about the Four Features of Persuasion and the Trailer Trio of film language. They will create visually stimulating and engaging classroom displays to help them with their learning.

Assessment

Can pupils:

Listen and respond appropriately?

Interrogate texts and ask questions showing a deeper understanding?

Articulate & justify opinions?

Explain the criteria of persuasive texts?

Communicate this information effectively?

Key Words

Trailer; persuasion; criteria; humour; questions; imagery; tagline; empathy; character; film language

Differentiation

Pupils must: be able to understand what the Four Features of Persuasion are

Pupils should: identify how the Trailer Trio of film language work with the Four Features to persuade an audience to see the film

Pupils could: differentiate between the effectiveness of each trailer and explain which was most effective and why

Learning episodes

Session 1 - teacher led starter

Explain that the pupils will be creating a Power of Persuasion working wall display, using the criteria of persuasive texts as outlined in the Four Features of Persuasion (questions; imagery; humour and empathy) and the Trailer Trio of film language (image, sound and sequence).

Watch the two trailers (My Life as a Courgette and The Red Turtle).

Discuss initial reactions. Which film would the children rather see and why?

Session 2 - group work

Split the class into 7 groups. Give each group one of the following headings:

WORKING WALL WORKSHEET

QUESTIONS

What questions would you like answered?

IMAGERY

What are the key images that stand out, or that you remember the most?

HUMOUR

Which elements made you smile?

EMPATHY

How do you think the main characters are feeling? Explain how you know.

IMAGE

Look for interesting camera angles or camera movement.

SOUND

How was dialogue, voiceover, music, sound effects used to create meaning?

SEQUENCE

How were the shots edited together? How many shots were included? Was the editing pace fast or slow? Why were the shots sequenced in that order?

Session 3 - whole class sharing and evaluating

Gather pupils together, and start to collate their work together in order to create the Power of Persuasion working wall. The wall could be presented as two parts to represent the whole, e.g. the Four Features of Persuasion + Trailer Trio of Film Language = persuasive text. Evaluate the children's work as it goes up on the wall. Have they understood and interpreted their criteria?

Session 4 - Plenary

Re-iterate the criteria of Persuasive Texts by going over the working wall as a class. These criteria come together to persuade the audience to see the film at the cinema through a collaboration of the:

FOUR FEATURES OF PERSUASION

- Leaving the audience with a set of **questions** which can only be answered when they see the entire film.
- Enticing the audience with memorable **imagery** and **taglines**.
- Using **humour**, puns or a play on words to engage the audience.
- Giving just enough information about the main characters to build **empathy**, but not too much so that we want to find out more!

TRAILER TRIO OF FILM LANGUAGE

- Image (camera angles, shot types, camera movement)
- Sound (dialogue, sound effects, music, voiceover)
- Sequence (the juxtaposition of the shots and the meaning made on screen)

S3: LANGUAGE

Trailers

Despicable Me 3 (trailer 1)

Despicable Me 3 (trailer 2)

Teaching Notes

The Big Picture

Annotate a trailer script in order to identify how a specific type of language is used for persuasive texts. Discuss how language is used, including figurative language, considering the impact on the audience.

Objectives

Pupils will:

Understand that a specific type of language is used in film trailers in order to make them more persuasive.

Identify the main language types and discuss the effect.

Engagement

Pupils will watch two trailers for Despicable Me 3, then they will read the transcripts and explore the type of language used. They will annotate a script to highlight the different language tools used as persuasive devices.

Stickability

Children will enjoy highlighting and annotating a trailer script, having explored the demonstration model.

Assessment

Can pupils:

Listen and respond appropriately?

Interrogate texts and ask questions showing a deeper understanding?

Articulate & justify opinions?

Describe the type of language used in persuasive texts?

Communicate this information effectively?

Key Words

Trailer; persuasion; modal verbs; exaggerated; hyperbole; alliteration; present tense; casual connectives; word play; strong imagery; rhetorical questions; daring viewer to disagree; opinion as fact; onomatopoeia; simile; metaphor; humour.

Differentiation

Pupils must: be able to understand that exaggerated language is used in persuasive texts

Pupils should: identify a rhetorical question

Pupils could: explore the impact on a trailer if non-figurative language is used

Learning episodes

Session 1 - teacher led starter

Explain that the pupils will be annotating a trailer script to identify the different types of language that are used in persuasive texts.

Watch the two trailers - both for the movie Despicable Me 3.

Discuss initial reactions. How would children describe the type of language used?

Share the script for the first trailer. Watch again, pausing where there is a highlighted word and annotation. Discuss the type of language used and make a list. Explain that this is what children will be doing for the second trailer.

TRANSCRIPT FOR DESCPICABLE ME 3, TRAILER 1

Minion: Whoa! ILLUMINATION!!! Xxx highlighted and annotated with 'exaggerated language' xxx

Bratt: Heist music! Xxx highlighted and annotated with 'humour' xxx

Guard: Eueeeew!

Subtitles: Anti-villain League - Headquarters

Female agent: It's some kind of MONSTER! Xxx highlight monster, annotate with 'hyperbole' xxx

Male agent: Wait, that's not a monster! That's a man wearing shoulder pads! There's only one supervillain whose fashion sense is quite that dated... xxx highlight shoulder pads, annotate with 'humour' xxx

Guards: FREEZE!

Male agent: Balthazar Bratt! I want every agent on the scene immediately! Xxx highlight immediately, annotate with 'present tense' xxx

Lucy: Agents Grucy here, closing fast! Xxx highlight Grucy, annotate with 'word play' xxx

Gru: Yes!
Wait - whaa-?!
What did you call us?!

Lucy: Grucy! Y'know: Gru and Lucy mashed together?! Grucy! Xxx highlight Y'know...together?!, annotate with rhetorical question xxx

Gru: Ah - ho! I like it but not a lot. I don't like it! Xxx highlight but, annotate with 'casual connective' xxx

Subtitles: From Illumination Entertainment

Gru: Whaaaaa-?! He's getting away!

Lucy: That's what he thinks! Get ready!

Gru: Get ready for what?!

TRANSCRIPT FOR DESPICABLE ME 3, TRAILER 1

Bratt: Hello Gru. Ha ha!

Gru: What about that?! What?! Aah, girls! Xxx highlight What about that?, annotate with 'rhetorical question' xxx

Bratt: Dance fight! Xxx highlight dance fight, annotate with 'humour' xxx

Subtitles: Despicable Me 3.

Bratt: This is not over!

Gru: Happy birthday dear Dan, happy birthday...

Minions: To youuuuuu! Xxx highlight this, annotate with 'humour' xxx

Subtitles: Summer 2017.

TRANSCRIPT FOR DESCPICABLE ME 3, TRAILER 2

EXAMPLES OF PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

Minion: Whoa! Illumination!

Headline on newspaper: Bratt Steals World's Biggest Diamond!

Agent: How could you let Balthazar Bratt just get away?! You're fired!!

Sign saying: Toys for sale

Agnes: She's really good to snuggle with.

Gru: Agnes, what are you doing?!

Agnes: Since you don't have a job, I just wanted to help!

Minions: Awwwww!

Gentleman: Excuse me!

Gru: Hey, could you?

Gentleman: Oh, er, of course. Now, as I was saying. I, errrr, oh.

Gru: Goodbye!

Gentleman: Ow, ow, ow!

Gru: Seriously?!

Gentleman: I really MUST have a word with you, on behalf of your twin brother, Dru.

Gru: What?! Twin brother?!

Agnes: Twin brother?!!

Minions: Twin bruder?!!

Subtitles: From Universal Pictures and Illumination

Gru: I can't wait to meet my brother...!

Dru: Brother!!!!

TRANSCRIPT FOR DESPICABLE ME 3, TRAILER 2

EXAMPLES OF PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

Gru: Ooooh!

Subtitles: Steve Carell is Gru

Dru: Who doesn't love this guy?! Look at him! Only hair could make you better! Look at his face! So mad...

Subtitles: Steve Carll is Dru

Dru: You must be his beautiful wife!

Lucy: Stop it! Sweet talker. This place is amazing.

Dru: It's nice, I guess, sure. I'm not really into things.

... Face it, Gru, villainy is in your blood!

Minion: Gru zum boobs!

Dru: You ready to continue the family tradition? You and me...

Gru: no. I left that life behind me.

Dru: Just one heist.

Gru: Mmmmmmmm...?!

Dru: I'm going in!

Gru: Waaaah! I'm gonna be impaled! I'm ok!

Subtitles: Despicable Me 3.

Gru: This does not mean that we are going back to being villains.

Subtitles: Summer 2017.

Look for examples of the following, highlight and annotate!

Modal verbs - to indicate degrees of possibility [auxiliary verbs], like can; could; may; might; will; would; must; shall; should; ought to

Exaggerated language

Hyperbole - over the top words

Present tense

Casual connectives

Word play - or humour

Rhetorical questions - questions that don't require an answer

Onomatopoeia - words that sound like the thing they are describing, like 'bang!'

Make persuasion more powerful

Session 3 - whole class sharing and evaluating

Gather pupils together in order to share examples of good practice. Talk about the overall effect of using this type of language.

Session 4 - Plenary

Look through the scripts that the children annotated. Explore what would happen if one of the language tools were extracted from the script - for example, exaggerated language or rhetorical questions. How would this affect the effectiveness of the trailer as a persuasive tool? The language, combined with the Trailer Trio film language tools, makes the persuasion more powerful!

S4: IMPACT

Trailers

Diary of a Wimpy Kid 4

Teaching Notes

The Big Picture

Pupils will create their own film script for a teaser trailer version of Diary of a Wimpy Kid 4.

Objectives

Pupils will:

Participate in presentations

Identify audience for and purpose of writing

Develop a script, using what they have learnt about persuasive writing

Engagement

Pupils will watch a long trailer for Diary of a Wimpy Kid 4. They will work in groups to create a shorter, 'teaser' trailer version.

Stickability

Children will be closely examining the given trailer to work out what they need to include in their own version - always thinking about the purpose of their writing: to persuade an audience to see the film.

Assessment

Can pupils:

Write a persuasive film trailer script?

Present it to the group effectively?

Key Words

Trailer; persuasion; criteria; humour; questions; imagery; tagline; empathy; character; film language; modal verbs; exaggerated language; hyperbole; present tense; casual connectives; word play; rhetorical questions; onomatopoeia

Differentiation

Pupils must: be able to write a persuasive teaser trailer script using at least 3 of the language tools e.g. exaggerated language, present tense and rhetorical questions.
Pupils should: make use of the Trailer Trio of film language tools (Shot; sound; sequence) when writing their scripts.
Pupils could: make use of the Four Features of Persuasion in their scripts (Question; imagery; humour and empathy)

Learning episodes

Session 1 - teacher led starter

Explain that the pupils will be creating their own teaser trailer script for the film Diary of a Wimpy Kid 4.

Watch the long version of the trailer and discuss its effectiveness as a persuasive text.

Talk through the Four Features of Persuasion:

- Questions: what questions would you like to have answered having seen the trailer?
- Imagery: what key images stood out to you? Why?
- Humour: did the trailer make you laugh? Which bits and why?
- Empathy: did you empathise with any of the characters? Which ones and why?

Talk through the Trailer Trio of film language tools:

- Shot: what types of camera angles were used?
- Sound: describe the use of music, sound effects, dialogue and voicover
- Sequence: how is the trailer constructed? What information are we given and what is left out?

Discuss the teaser trailer - a trailer that is so short and succinct that it 'teases' the audience about the film. Briefly discuss the key features of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid 4 trailer that would need to be included in the teaser trailer.

Session 2 - group work

Split the class into suitable writing ability groups. Children are to be given time to re-watch the trailer, to make notes on the elements that they wish to include in their teaser trailer version. Then they should spend the rest of the time creating their teaser trailer script. Go through the Success Criteria before they begin and give them copies so that they know what to include.

Session 3 - whole class sharing and evaluating

Pupils are to perform their teaser trailers to each other.

Session 4 - Plenary

Children to evaluate their own and each other's trailers using the following criteria:

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID 4 TEASER TRAILER SUCCESS CRITERIA

- ☐ Persuasive trailer
- ☐ Funny / humourous
- ☐ The trailer made me want to ask questions
- ☐ Imagery
- ☐ Tagline
- ☐ I wanted to find out more about the characters
- ☐ Modal verbs (would; could; might; can)
- ☐ Exaggerated language
- ☐ Present tense
- ☐ Casual connectives
- ☐ Word play
- ☐ Rhetorical questions
- ☐ Onomateoipea
- ☐ Stand out shots
- ☐ Examples of sound, music or sound effects
- ☐ The trailer was sequenced well

Decide which trailers are effective and discuss why.