

TEACHING TRAILERS PRIMARY 2019

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 units. Within this resource, there are 4 learning strands designed to help pupils deepen their understanding of the persuasive text genre:

- **TRAILER TECHNIQUES** [pupils will discuss the features of persuasive texts, analysing the impact of certain devices through looking at three different trailers for the similar films]
- **SEQUELS** [pupils will examine different sequel movie trailers to compare how these convey different messages to non-sequel trailers]
- **COMEDY** [pupils will explore the film language techniques used in the trailers of films in the comedy genre]
- **WORLD CREATION** [pupils will explore the detailed mise en scene of movies that have a 'world creation' theme]

They will use the following framework through which they will examine the trailers: 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

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.

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.

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: TRAILER TECHNIQUES

Trailers

The Secret Life of Pets 2, Spies in Disguise, The Queen's Corgi

Teaching Notes

The Big Picture

Pupils will identify features of persuasive texts by examining 3 different trailers from similar films.

Objectives

Pupils will:

Analyse the trailers through shot, sound and sequence in order to understand how film language is used to create meaning and persuade.

Engagement

Pupils will:

Understand that film trailers are persuasive texts.

Identify the film trailers use film language features to persuade audiences to see a film at the cinema: shot, sound and sequence; 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.

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?
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.

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 trailers

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 trailers. They should think about a script that includes these Four Features of Persuasion:

Questions

A tagline or quote

A play on words or pun

Empathy

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 6 - 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?)

SEQUENCE (how are the shots sequenced and why are they in that order?)

S2: SEQUELS

Trailers

Frozen II; Toy Story 4; The Secret Life of Pets 2; Shaun the Sheep: Farmageddon

Teaching Notes

Children will create a mind map featuring knowledge of the original movie and facts learnt about the sequel having watched the trailers. to add their thoughts to the wall with screen grabs, key words and notes. They will be creating a new character for the sequel.

Objectives

Pupils will:

Understand that film trailers are persuasive texts and that trailers of sequels rely on previous knowledge of the original film(s)

Use this understanding to create a new character for the sequel

Engagement

Pupils will watch four trailers of sequels. They will work on mind maps and character descriptions.

Stickability

Children will reinforce existing knowledge about the Trailer Trio of film language. They will create imaginative new characters for well known films having been inspired by the trailer

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

Sequel; trailer; persuasion; criteria; humour; questions; imagery; tagline; empathy; character; film language

Differentiation

Pupils must: be able to understand that trailers of sequels use previous knowledge of the original films to persuade the audience to see the film

Pupils should: create a detailed mind map showing knowledge of the original film and clues about the sequel

Pupils could: use these clues to create new characters

Learning episodes

Session 1 - teacher led starter

Explain that the pupils will be creating a mind map showing information about the sequels and their originals based on information given in the trailers and using the Trailer Trio of film language (shot, sound and sequence).

Watch trailers.

Discuss initial reactions. What do children know about the original films? What can they predict from the trailer for the sequel?

Session 2 - group work

Ask children to create a mind map for each film which shows all of their knowledge about the original film or films.

Session 3 - whole class sharing and evaluating

Gather pupils together, share ideas from mind maps.

Watch the trailers again.

Now children will add information to their mind maps showing their understanding of new characters, settings and themes. How has the story developed?

Session 4 - Plenary

Children share and evaluate their new character descriptions, showing how they have thought about how their creation will help to develop the narrative of the sequel.

S3: LANGUAGE

Trailers

The Queen's Corgi; Shaun the Sheep: Farmageddon; Spies in Disguise; Playmobil the Movie

Teaching Notes

The Big Picture

Children will learn about the key features of comedies and explore how trailers make use of those features to persuade audiences to see the film.

Objectives

Pupils will:

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

Identify the main features and discuss the effect.

Engagement

Pupils will watch the trailers, talk about how comedies use comedic heroes; disorder; exaggeration; genre and language to create humour. They will fill in a spreadsheet to show their understanding of how each trailer displays these features.

Stickability

Children will enjoy watching the trailers and filling in the missing information on the corresponding spreadsheet, having discussed themes of comedy.

Assessment

Can pupils:

Listen and respond appropriately?

Interrogate texts and ask questions showing a deeper understanding? Articulate & justify opinions?

Describe the features used in comedy trailers? Communicate this information effectively?

Key Words

Trailer; comedy; persuasion; exaggeration; hero; disorder; genre; language; humour.

Differentiation

Pupils must: be able to understand that trailers of comedies use comic heroes; disorder; exaggeration; genre and language to persuade

Pupils should: identify puns

Pupils could: identify the funniest trailer and articulate why

Learning episodes

Session 1 - teacher led starter

Explain that the pupils will be annotating a comedy trailer spreadsheet to identify the different features that are used in comedy trailers.

Watch the trailers

Share the spreadsheet, highlighting how children should fill in the missing information. Watch the trailers again.

Session 2 - group work

Ask the children to work in pairs to fill in the missing information.

Session 3 - whole class sharing and evaluating

Gather pupils together in order to share examples of good practice. Talk about the features of comedy trailers.

Session 4 - Plenary

Discuss the trailers and decide on the funniest and why.

S4: WORLD CREATION

Trailers

Artemis Fowl; Lion King; Wonder Park; Toy Story 4; Playmobil: the Movie

Teaching Notes

The Big Picture

Pupils will create their own location maps and/or character backstories in order to explore the level of detail involved in creating worlds on screen.

Objectives

Pupils will:

Analyse the trailers in terms of shot; sound and sequence

Explore the detailed mise en scene of each trailer

Be inspired to create location maps and or character backstories in keeping with the look and feel of the film

Engagement

Pupils will watch the trailers and choose their favourite to develop their ideas further.

Stickability

Children will be closely examining their chosen trailer to work out what they need to include in their location map or character backstory - always thinking about the details of the world created on screen as shown in the trailer.

Assessment

Can pupils:

Create an effective and convincing location map or character backstory? Present it to the group effectively?

Key Words

Trailer; persuasion; criteria; humour; questions; imagery; tagline; empathy; character; film language; settings; histories; geographies; ecologies.

Differentiation

Pupils must: show their understanding of how films create worlds and how trailers include information about settings; histories; geographies and ecologies.

Pupils should: create a convincing location map or character backstory based on their understanding of the world created in their favourite trailer

Pupils could: present their work to their peers and articulate their choices

Learning episodes

Session 1 - teacher led starter

Explain that the pupils will be creating their own location maps or character backstories for their favourite trailer. Discuss the fact that these trailers are from films that have created worlds on film and talk about the settings; histories; geographies and ecologies depicted.

Session 2 - group work

After watching the trailers, explain that children will choose their favourite trailer and create a location map or character backstory to show their understanding of the level of detail involved in creating worlds on film.

Session 3 - whole class sharing and evaluating

Pupils are to share their work and describe the details of their maps / character backstories to demonstrate how they fit into the world created in the trailer.

Session 4 - Plenary

Children to evaluate their own and each other's work.