

Trailer conventions

Trailers are designed to send particular messages to audiences about a film. You will notice certain conventions recur in most trailers and this activity helps you to analyse the purpose of some of these. Choose a trailer from the Teaching Trailers Winter 2014 website to use as the focus for the following tasks.

1. Watch the trailer once, WITHOUT the sound (either turn the volume to zero or switch off your speakers).
2. Now watch the trailer again, still WITHOUT the volume, pressing pause at points that illustrate the visual features listed on the chart below. Make notes on your chart explaining what you see in the frozen frames.
3. What do you think the sound would add to this trailer? How do you think it would help to establish the genre? Can you easily establish the genre without the sound? If so, how?
4. Now watch the trailer once more, this time with the sound ON.
 - What does the sound add to your enjoyment of the trailer?
 - What does it add to your expectations of the film and its genre?
Explain your answers.

CONVENTIONS	IDEAS
Film title – When does it appear? How many seconds in?	
Credits – Who is credited? Why?	
Stars – Who are they? What else have you seen them in?	
Genre – What type of film does it seem to be? How can you tell this?	
Timing – How long is the trailer? Is it a teaser (10 seconds), a TV spot (30 seconds) or full theatrical trailer (2 minutes)?	