

TEACHING TRAILERS ONLINE: WINTER 2014 TEACHERS' NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Trailers Winter 2014 returns with a focus on developing students' understanding of the narrative image of trailers and the way in which they encourage viewers to want to see film. We have retained the very successful format of previous versions of the resource from last year so that all activities, along with a selection of new trailers, are now hosted on our website. To ensure regular updates and free resources register at: <http://www.thefilmSPACE.org/contact-us/>

WEBSITE

The activities on the website are designed to build students' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the moving image, with a specific focus on film trailers as a genre in its own right. The HOME page hosts all the trailers in a clip viewer, organised by genre:

Action adventure

American Sniper
Avengers: Age of Ultron
Blackhat
Exodus: Gods and Kings
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1

Biopic

Big Eyes
The Imitation Game
The Theory of Everything

Comedy

Annie
Kingsman: The Secret Service
The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel

Drama

The Good Lie
Trash
Whiplash

Fantasy

Hobbit: Battle of the Armies
Jupiter Ascending

Historical drama

Kon-Tiki
Selma
Unbroken

Memoir

Testament of Youth
Wild

Sci-fi

Ex_Machina

The website can be accessed at <http://www.thefilmSPACE.org/teachingtrailers>

The site is organised into two main sections: THEORY and ANALYSIS. It is expected that teachers will use the on-screen materials for whole-class teaching and the downloadable PDFs to direct individual note-taking. Teachers can use the resource as a structured approach to this topic or select individual sections to target specific learning objectives.

THEORY

This section includes a range of activities to encourage students to consider:

- **What trailers are** – based on the trailer for *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1* and supported by a downloadable PDF worksheet, students consider definitions of a trailer and reflect on how trailers fit within a film distributor's marketing campaign.
- **Why trailers are produced** – based on the trailers for *Jupiter Ascending* and *Avengers: Age of Ultron* and *Whiplash*, an activity designed to explore the purpose of trailers in terms of raising audience awareness and interest in a film.
- **Who trailers are aimed at** – based on the trailers for *Trash*, *The Theory of Everything* and *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and supported by a downloadable PDF worksheet, an activity to explore how film distributors produce trailers aimed at specific audiences.
- **How trailers help fill cinemas** – based on the trailers for *Hobbit: Battle of Armies*, *The Imitation Game* and *Testament of Youth*, an activity to learn about the importance of promoting 'unique selling points' (USP) in film marketing campaigns
- **Where trailers are shown** – an activity designed to encourage students to reflect on where trailers are found and how this might impact on audience response - supported by a downloadable PDF worksheet.

- **When trailers are released** – based on trailers for *Annie*, *Exodus: Gods and Kings* and *The Secret Service* an activity for students to consider how the timing of a trailer's release is designed for maximum audience impact.

Specific trailer examples are used to develop students' understanding of the purpose and style of this particular marketing format.

ANALYSIS

This section requires students to analyse different elements of film trailers in detail. Close reading of each trailer will develop students' knowledge and understanding of key areas of study including:

- **Genre** – based on trailers for the action adventure films *Unbroken*, *American Sniper* and *Blackhat*, an activity designed to support students learning to identify specific genre features.
- **Conventions** – an interactive sorting and matching activity to establish some of the key conventions of film trailers.
- **Structure** – based on the trailer for *Big Eyes*, an activity to develop students ability to observe and analyse the structural conventions of a film trailer - supported by a downloadable PDF worksheet
- **Soundtrack** – an active listening task based on the trailer for *The Good Lie* to focus students' attention on the purpose and effect a film trailer's soundtrack.
- **Multimodal texts** – based on the trailers for *Selma*, *Ex_Machina* and *Wild* an activity to consider how meaning is created in trailers through a powerful combination of different modes of communication - supported by a downloadable PDF worksheet for students.

NARRATIVE IMAGE

This short section of the resource offers students an introduction to the concept of narrative image with links to trailers on the website which serve to illustrate the points made. For further reading around this subject, see *Visible Fictions* by John Ellis (ISBN: 978-0415075138).

CLOSE READING

This stand-alone section offers a focused close reading task in which students choose to analyse a trailer from the clip viewer on the HOME page. The accompanying, downloadable PDF worksheet guides students through a close analysis of trailers by bringing together the knowledge and understanding they have gained by working through other sections of the resource. The features focused on here include:

- genre
- narrative
- unique Selling Point
- target audience
- music

- shot types/camera angles
- pace
- dialogue
- voiceover
- special effects
- credits and intertitles

The activity concludes with a 'writing to explain' extension task.

CURRICULUM AREAS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Activities link to National Curriculum guidelines for learning in English; they can also be used as part of a media course at GCSE or equivalent.

KEY TERMS

These basic terms are used throughout the resource so it is worth drawing them your students' attention in order to clarify meaning.

Credits and intertitles: these are words on screen that give information to the audience

Dialogue: any conversations between characters

Genre: a type or category of film e.g. horror, romantic comedy etc.

Music: the choice of music can have a huge impact on the 'mood' of a film

Narrative: the 'story' or plot structure of a film.

Pace: how quickly or slowly the shots within the trailer are edited together.

Shot types/camera angles: for example, close-up, medium shot or long shot

Special effects: includes computer-generated graphics, stunts and explosions

Target audience: the group of people a film or other product is aimed at

Unique selling point: what makes a particular film unique and 'sellable'

Voiceover: a voice recorded over the top of the trailer to give information to the audience

MORE RESOURCES

For examples of shot types, see the SHOT TYPE REFERENCE SHEET in SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS within THINKING ENGLISH here:

<http://www.thefilmSPACE.org/thinking-film/>

For teaching film language in more detail, THINKING FILM please see:

<http://www.thefilmSPACE.org/thinking-film/>