

## Teaching Trailers Primary – Lesson Plans

These teaching notes are to be used in conjunction with the Film Education Teaching Trailers Primary 2011 DVD. Here, teachers can find a set of key questions and activity ideas linked to each trailer featured on the disc. The [Scheme of Work](#) outlines how these can be incorporated into a 'Teaching Trailers' project through Literacy and ICT.

If you are already on Film Education's mailing list, the FREE DVD will be sent to you automatically. If you have yet to sign-up, just enter your details via the [online form](#).

List of trailers featured on the Teaching Trailers Primary 2011 DVD:

1. Zookeeper (Sony Pictures Releasing, Frank Coraci, UK release date: 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011)
2. The Smurfs (Sony Pictures Releasing, Raja Gosnell, UK release date: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011)
3. Diary of a Wimpy Kid – Rodrick Rules (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, David Bowers, UK release date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2011)
4. Cars 2 (Walt Disney Motion Pictures, John Lasseter, UK release date: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011)
5. Puss in Boots (DreamWorks Animation, Chris Miller, UK release date: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011)
6. Mr. Popper's Penguins (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Mark Waters, UK release date: 5<sup>th</sup> August 2011)
7. Arthur Christmas (Sony Pictures Releasing, Sarah Smith; Barry Cook, UK release date: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011)
8. Kung Fu Panda 2 (DreamWorks Animation, Jennifer Yuh, UK release date: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011)
9. The Film Distributors' Association Summer Showreel

### Introduction

Teaching Trailers Primary 2011 uses a selection of trailers linked to activities to help pupils understand how 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, can also be an extremely useful teaching tool for narrative and genre. Its short duration and strong visual content means that it can be used successfully with pupils of all ages and abilities in one sitting.

There are many ways you can use film trailers in your teaching. These downloadable lesson plans incorporate key questions and student worksheets. They can be used exactly as they are, or adapted to meet the needs of your learners.

It is worth using the principal of close-analysis when working with film in the classroom:

## Visual Literacy: Close analysis

These notes provide you with a series of stimulus questions, further to those suggested in the Lesson Plans provided for each trailer, that will help to give each trailer some context, then to take understanding to a deeper level.

When watching a trailer: watch it once without any intervention, then watch the clip again with the finger poised over the pause button, ready to ask your pupils 'Why?'. For example:

- ◇ Why start the trailer with this shot?
- ◇ Why that camera angle?
- ◇ Why choose this shot to follow that one?
- ◇ Why is the set decorated in that way?
- ◇ Why does the music change at that point?
- ◇ Why are the characters in those positions?
- ◇ Why use natural lighting for this scene?
- ◇ Why use those particular colours to set the scene?

Through a dialogic teaching approach, the learning intention is to develop children's understanding of how the different aspects of film language come together to make meaning on screen.

Using *Teaching Trailers Primary* as stimulation for this kind of discussion will help develop higher order thinking skills that will have a positive impact on written work, and on a more general understanding of creating meaning and critically appraising the text.

The trailer questions refer to the Film Language Mind Map which can be found as a separate pdf on the [website](#).

## Trailer Lesson Notes

Each trailer could be examined in detail in one lesson, or you could decide to group two or three together to focus on a particular theme / genre. Use these key questions and activity ideas to stimulate learning.

### Trailer 1: Zookeeper

**Distributor:** Sony Pictures Releasing

**Director:** Frank Coraci

**UK release date:** 29th July 2011

**Synopsis:** In Zookeeper, the animals at the Franklin Park Zoo love their kindhearted caretaker, Griffin Keyes (Kevin James). Finding himself more comfortable with a lion than a lady, Griffin decides the only way to get a girl in his life is to leave the zoo and find a more glamorous job. The animals, in a panic, decide to break their time-honoured code of silence and reveal their biggest secret: they can talk! To keep Griffin from leaving, they decide to teach him the rules of courtship...animal style!

### KEY QUESTIONS

1. Thinking about genre (story type), what type of story do you think is being told from the opening shots of the trailer? (romance, comedy, adventure?)
2. Why do you think the trailer starts with the 'beach sequence'?
3. Explore the footage showing Griffin the zoo keeper with the animals. Describe his actions. Now describe his personality – what type of person is he? Is he kind, larger than life, funny?
4. Why include the scene where Griffin leads the capuchin monkey into the shade?
5. Why does the mood of the trailer change when the animals get together? Think about lighting, music, pace.
6. Why include such an extreme reaction from Griffin when the lion tells him that they 'need to talk'?
7. Make a note of the words spoken by the animals. What do they tell us about each animal?
8. Map the music – what type of music is used at the start and throughout the trailer and why? Where is there silence? Why?
9. How do we see Griffin's character develop throughout the trailer? Give visual examples to support your argument.
10. Who do you think is the target audience for this film? Why?

### ACTIVITY

Create a storyboard for your own trailer about a family pet or animal that starts to talk. Use the same elements from the Zookeeper trailer to help you, for example:

- ◇ kooky voices for the animals
- ◇ fun music
- ◇ slapstick humour
- ◇ a special relationship between the animal and a human

## Trailer 2: The Smurfs

**Distributor:** Sony Pictures Releasing

**Director:** Raja Gosnell

**UK release date:** 10th August 2011

**Synopsis:** The Smurfs make their first 3D trip to the big screen in Columbia Pictures'/Sony Pictures Animation's hybrid live-action and animated family comedy, The Smurfs®. When the evil wizard Gargamel chases the Smurfs out of their village, they're forced through a portal, out of their world and into ours, landing in the middle of New York's Central Park. Just three apples high and stuck in the Big Apple, the Smurfs must find a way to get back to their village before Gargamel tracks them down.

## KEY QUESTIONS

1. The trailer starts with a series of grand-scale location shots. Why?
2. Why include the 'blue light explosion'? What does this suggest about the type of story being told?
3. Listen to the news reporter's words at the start of the trailer. What type of language is he using? Why?
4. How does the scene when the man opens the package from Belgium contrast with the opening shots of the trailer? Why put this scene next to the mysterious shots at the beginning?
5. How do the filmmakers use camera angle and movement to show how small the Smurfs are?
6. What type of shot follows the voiceover artist telling us that the film will be in 3D? High angle? Close-up? Long shot? Why?
7. How is the word 'Smurf' used in the dialogue?
8. Who do you think the target audience for this film is? Why?

## ACTIVITY

Create a poster image for the film as if the Smurfs were visiting your home town. Which landmarks would you turn blue?

### Trailer 3: Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules

**Distributor:** Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

**Director:** David Bowers

**UK release date:** 27th May 2011

**Synopsis:** In this sequel to 2010's surprise hit, Greg Heffley, the kid who made 'wimpy' cool is back in an all-new family comedy based on the best-selling follow-up novel by Jeff Kinney. (Kinney's 'Wimpy Kid' series has thus far sold 42 million books.) As he begins seventh grade, Greg and his older brother – and chief tormenter – Rodrick must deal with their parents' misguided attempts to have them bond.

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Hide the screen so that you can only hear the sound effects. What type of picture do the sounds make? Where is the film set? How can you tell?
2. Why use the dramatic music at the start?
3. Now watch the trailer and match the sound effects to the images. Were you right?!
4. Where is the camera placed when Greg walks into the church wearing his mother's cardigan around his waist? Why?
5. How many cuts are there in the sequence when Greg walks up the church aisle to when the girl shouts 'poop!'? Describe the purpose of each shot in this sequence.
6. How does the editing of this sequence match the music?
7. Describe how each of these characters is introduced: Greg, Rowley, Fregley, Chirag, Patty, Manny, Holly and Rodrick. What does this tell us about their characters?
8. Do you need to have seen the first Wimpy Kid film to enjoy this one? How do you know?
9. Why include the information about the Wimpy Kid books at the end of the trailer?
10. Who is the target audience for this film? Explain your reasons.

### ACTIVITY:

Write a diary entry about a fight that you have had with your brother, sister or friend. Draw 'Wimpy Kid' style doodles to illustrate your work.

## Trailer 4: Cars 2

**Distributor:** Walt Disney Motion Pictures

**Director:** John Lasseter

**UK release date:** 22nd July 2011

**Synopsis:** Star racecar Lightning McQueen (voice of Owen Wilson) and the incomparable tow truck Mater (voice of Larry the Cable Guy) take their friendship to exciting new places in 'Cars 2' when they head overseas to compete in the first-ever World Grand Prix to determine the world's fastest racing car. But the road to the championship is filled with plenty of potholes, detours and hilarious surprises when Mater gets caught up in an intriguing adventure of his own: international espionage.

Torn between assisting Lightning McQueen in the high-profile race and towing the line in a top-secret spy mission, Mater's action-packed journey leads him on an explosive chase through the streets of Japan and Europe, trailed by his friends and watched by the whole world. Adding to the fast-paced fun is a colourful new all-car cast that includes secret agents, menacing villains and international racing champions.

## KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What kinds of expectations do you have for a Disney / Pixar movie?
2. Where is the setting for the opening shots of the trailer? How do you know?
3. If the cars were human, what types of characters would they be? Explain your reasons?
4. How is colour, light and camera movement used to show the action sequences at the start?
5. How are the new car characters introduced? How do they compare to the old car characters that we're used to?
6. When the voiceover artist tells us that the cars are involved in 'a race that will take them around the world', how do the animators show us which countries they visit?
7. Which car parts are used as tools to help tell the story? What about the wing mirrors and the number plates?
8. What type of person do you think will come and see this film? Explain your reasons.

## ACTIVITY:

Draw a picture of the cars 'racing' through your local area – think of one key shot that would sum up where you live that could be included in the trailer on their race 'around the world'.



## Trailer 5: Puss in Boots

**Distributor:** DreamWorks Animation

**Director:** Chris Miller

**UK release date:** 5th August 2011

**Synopsis:** Way before he ever met Shrek, the legendary Puss In Boots goes on a heroic journey, teaming up with mastermind Humpty Dumpty and the street-savvy Kitty Softpaws to steal the famed Goose that lays the Golden Eggs. It's the adventure of nine lifetimes!

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. This is a 'teaser trailer'. It is short in length and it doesn't tell you a great deal about the story of 'Puss in Boots' the movie. What information are we given? What information are we not given?
2. What type of story do you think this film will tell? How can you tell?
3. How do the images and music work together in this trailer?
4. Why focus on Puss walking?
5. What types of camera angles are used whilst we follow Puss on his journey?
6. Puss is clearly a swashbuckler – much admired by those around him. What evidence is there of this in the trailer?
7. Why is he getting rid of his hat, sword, cape and belt?
8. What is the target audience for a film like this? Why?

### ACTIVITY:

Design a poster for the film that focuses on the boots alone.

## **Trailer 6: Mr. Popper's Penguins**

**Distributor:** Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

**Director:** Mark Waters

**UK release date:** 9th December 2011

**Synopsis:** Thomas Popper has spent his entire life working to become the #1 real estate mogul in New York City. He has sacrificed everything...friends, family, and even his own happiness. But on the brink of the biggest deal of his career, he receives a gift – a mysterious crate from Antarctica – from his long missing father. What's inside the crate marks the end of Popper's comfortable and well-ordered existence, and the beginning of his new life as caretaker, landlord and parent figure to six unforgettable penguins, each with a distinct personality.

### **KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of font is used for the title artwork? Why?
2. Why does the trailer start with bird's eye views of the city?
3. What is the effect of the camera pulling away from the man when he finishes his 'prayer'?
4. Watch the trailer again and identify the different situations in which we see the man (at the dinner table, dressed for work, carrying a suitcase). Put these clues together and describe this man's character. What does he do? What type of person is he? Is he pleased to have the penguins in his house?
5. Who else is in the trailer? What are their reactions to the penguins? How does the camera show this?
6. Why end the trailer with the dance 'routine'?
7. What type of movie do you think this is – into which genre does it fit? Explain your reasons.
8. Who is the target audience for this film?

### **ACTIVITY:**

In pairs, work out 12 beats of a street dance routine for a penguin! Remember – your arm and feet movements need to be limited. Teach your routine to another pair in your class, then put all of the routines together. Ask your teacher to choose a suitable piece of music and show the rest of the class your routines. Put them all together to create a class Penguin Street Dance Routine.



## Trailer 7: Arthur Christmas

**Distributor:** Sony Pictures Releasing

**Directors:** Sarah Smith; Barry Cook

**UK release date:** 11th November 2011

**Synopsis:** An Aardman production for Sony Pictures Animation, at last reveals the incredible, never-before seen answer to every child's question: 'So how does Santa deliver all those presents in one night?' The answer: Santa's exhilarating, ultra-high-tech operation hidden beneath the North Pole. But at the heart of the film is a story with the ingredients of a Christmas classic – a family in a state of comic dysfunction and an unlikely hero, Arthur, with an urgent mission that must be completed before Christmas morning dawns.

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Which logos appear at the start of the trailer? Why are they there? What do they represent? What do they tell you about the film's genre?
2. Write down what the voiceover artist says at the beginning of the trailer. Why include this introduction?
3. This trailer is unusual in that it is all one shot. How does this make it different to the other trailers that you've watched?
4. Watch the trailer, focusing your attention on 'Arthur Christmas'. Describe his appearance, demeanour, tone and body language. Now do the same with the 'elf'. How do they compare? Why have these two characters in the trailer for this film?
5. To whom is the elf talking? What effect does this approach have on you as the viewer?
6. What sound effects can you hear in this trailer? How would it be different if there were a musical soundtrack?
7. What do we see of the 'gigantic flying sleigh'? How would it affect our understanding and enjoyment of the film if we could see the sleigh from above?
8. Who is the target audience for this film? Explain your reasons.

### ACTIVITY:

Design a Christmas card using the Arthur Christmas movie look and feel. Use the characters Arthur and the elf to illustrate your card.

## Trailer 8: Kung Fu Panda 2

**Distributor:** DreamWorks Animation

**Director:** Jennifer Yuh

**UK release date:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011

**Synopsis:** In KUNG FU PANDA 2, Po is now living his dream as The Dragon Warrior, protecting the Valley of Peace alongside his friends and fellow kung fu masters, The Furious Five. But Po's new life of awesomeness is threatened by the emergence of a formidable villain, who plans to use a secret, unstoppable weapon to conquer China and destroy kung fu. Po must look to his past and uncover the secrets of his mysterious origins; only then will he be able to unlock the strength he needs to succeed.

## KEY QUESTIONS

1. What visual story clues do we get from the opening shot of this trailer?
2. Where is it set? What kind of mood is being created?
3. How is the music significant? How are the sound effects integrated (mixed in?) with the music? What effect does this have?
4. How is the panda's character introduced?
5. How many shots does it take before we see his face?
6. List the types of shots that you see. Why use these shot types?
7. How long does the 'staring contest' last?!
8. This is a teaser trailer – it's a very short 'taster' of the film. How is it different to a normal trailer? What is missing?

## ACTIVITY

Storyboard a 'staring contest' between you and a friend, Kung Fu movie style! Think about using dramatic camera angles and sound effects to build tension. Who will win? Make it the contest of the century...

## Trailer 9: The Film Distributors' Association Summer Show Reel

This show reel was made to be shown in cinemas in the build up to the summer season of releases.

Watch the show reel then answer the following questions:

1. a) When you have watched the show reel once, try and think of the one thing that you remember most. It might be:

- the name of a film
- a particular image or line
- the stars...

Think about why you remembered this particular piece of information.

- b) Compare what you remembered with others in your group. Did you all remember similar aspects? Or were they all very different?

- c) How do you think the information you remember relates to you and your friends?

2. The show reel is just over a minute long, yet there are over a hundred individual shots from different movies. Why do you think this much is packed into such a short time?

3. What do you think are the reasons for producing this summer show reel?

Here is the transcript of the voiceover:

***"This year, visit the summer's hottest destinations.***

***It's a place to find adventure.***

***Fall in love.***

***Follow your dreams.***

***Strange customs.***

***Exotic thrills.***

***And experience amazing sights.***

***They're inspirational.***

***Unmissable.***

***Unforgettable.***

***Take the journey and live it all.***

***On the big screen.***

***Escape... to an incredible summer of cinema.***

***And visit the place that's like no place on earth."***

Read this transcript through a few times. With a partner, work out how it attempts to persuade viewers to go to the cinema this summer. Use different colours to underline words that are:

- ◇ Adjectives (describing words)
- ◇ Alliteration (words that begin with the same letter)
- ◇ Questions
- ◇ Rhymes
- ◇ Imperative verbs (commands)
  
- ◇ Emotive words (powerful words that make you feel an emotion)
- ◇ Repeated
- ◇ Puns (word play)
- ◇ Slogans (catchy phrases)
- ◇ Exaggerations (over the top vocabulary)

Re-write the trailer voiceover so that it literally describes what you can see on the screen. How does this change the way the trailer works?!