 Year 11/12 English Studies

Unit title

The Big Screen – English in Filmmaking

Duration

30-40 hours

Unit rationale

Through study of The Big Screen – English in Filmmaking, students will develop a deeper understanding of and proficiency in the use of language and techniques related to films, exploring the ways in which language is used in the production, promotion, reception and criticism of films. They will investigate and research from a variety of sources the complex nature of meaning in visual texts and how these texts are constructed. In this unit, students have the opportunity to engage with, critique and enjoy a range of texts, including feature length and short films, that employ language and other cinematic techniques imaginatively and directly to convey meaning. The unit is designed to invite students to consider the power of films to engage and influence thoughts, feelings, behaviour and attitudes and the techniques used by filmmakers to achieve this impact with their audiences. The unit also allows the opportunity for students to explore the world of films and filmmakers through the study of longer texts, for example biographies, autobiographies, novels or plays that have been adapted as films, and storyboards or film scripts used in the production of films.

Focus question(s)

* How do filmmakers deliberately work to create a particular viewer response?

Teacher’s note

This unit focuses on students becoming critical viewers/consumers of film. They will develop an understanding of the impact film has on their lives and how filmmakers deliberately work to create a particular viewer response. The unit has been organised with four weeks of introductory core content. This gives teachers the opportunity to revise the language of film from Stage 5 and to choose texts that help to illustrate these techniques. The core content should include shot composition, editing, lighting, diegetic and non-diegetic sound. The flexibility of this program allows for alternate approaches to be taken after the introductory core content. More specific focus on a particular strand is necessary for students to gain deeper knowledge and understanding of English in filmmaking. The choice of a particular strand may depend on the level of interest within the class. Each strand builds on the introduction in the core content and would include both responding and composing.

Some suggestions of strands to choose for deeper study include:

1. exploring a concept through studying various films/extracts – for example, the representation of Aboriginal males in Australian films – Yolgnu boy, Lonely boy Richard, Tracker, Australian Rules, and so on, or of Aboriginal youth – Samson and Delilah, Beneath clouds, and so on
2. choosing a genre and specifically examining how the composer uses the conventions of that genre – for example, horror, war, action, science fiction
3. choosing a technical aspect and gaining further specialised knowledge – for example, special effects, editing, storyboarding, animation
4. examining the concept of blockbusters versus small budget movies - for example, Die Hard versus Phonebooth
5. marketing film – creating a festival program, researching existing promotional material or designing a marketing program and promotional material for a film created in another KLA or year group
6. exploring an adaptation of a text from print to film – this is the focus of the second half of this unit.

Outcomes

| Year 11 | Year 12 |
| --- | --- |
| * ES11-1 A student comprehends and responds to a range of texts, including short and extended texts, literary texts and texts from academic, community, workplace and social contexts for a variety of purposes.
* ES11-2 A student identifies and uses strategies to comprehend written, spoken, visual, multimodal and digital texts that have been composed for different purposes and contexts.
* ES11-5 A student develops knowledge, understanding and appreciation of how language is used, identifying specific language forms and features that convey meaning in texts.
* ES11-8 A student identifies and describes relationships between texts.
 | * ES12-1 A student comprehends and responds analytically and imaginatively to a range of texts, including short and extended texts, literary texts and texts from academic, community, workplace and social contexts for a variety of purposes.
* ES12-2 A student identifies, uses and assesses strategies to comprehend increasingly complex and sustained written, spoken, visual, multimodal and digital texts that have been composed for different purposes and contexts.
* ES12-5 A student develops knowledge, understanding and appreciation of how language is used, identifying and explaining specific language forms and features in texts that convey meaning to different audiences.
* ES12-8 A student understands and explains the relationships between texts.
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Assessment outline

Task is to write, direct, edit and reflect upon the development of a two-minute pocket film (a film made on a mobile phone – “that thing in your pocket!”). The topic of the film is to be drawn from students’ favourite short texts. They might choose a picture book, a poem, some song lyrics, or a short story. Class time will be provided to work on the development and editing phases. Part of the assessment involves writing a reflection on the process and complex production of a film.

Texts

Teacher to select a variety of film texts based on literary texts. Selected texts in this unit are:

* Short Story – [We Can Remember It For You Wholesale](https://philosophy.as.uky.edu/sites/default/files/We%20Can%20Remember%20It%20for%20You%20Wholesale%20-%20Philip%20K.%20Dick.pdf) (1966) by Philip K. Dick (Resource 3)
* Film – Total Recall (1990)
* Film – Total Recall (2012)
* Sample books/picture books and films:
* Where the wild thing are picture book by Murice Sendak
* Where the wild things are 2009 film by Spike Jonze
* The Raven poem by Edgar Allan Poe
* The Simpsons [Treehouse of Horror](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLiXjaPqSyY) – Edgar Allen Poe: The Raven
* Alice in Wonderland novel and/or Jabberwocky poem
* Alice in Wonderland by Tim Burton 2010
* Danny, the Champion of the World by Roald Dahl
* Danny, the Champion of the World 1989 Film by Gavin Millar
* Excerpts from The Lord of the Rings trilogy and Harry Potter book series into the film franchise(s)

| Outcomes/content | Teaching and learning | Evidence of learning |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year 11ES11-1 integrate new ideas and information with existing understandingES11-5 engage with a range of increasingly complex language forms, features and structures of texts in meaningful, contextualised and authentic waysYear 12ES12-1 integrate prior knowledge with new information to predict, construct or confirm understandingES12-5 interpret a range of texts, including those by and about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people/s, composed for a variety of purposes | Teachers – Please note, if you intend to use Strand 6 in the second half of the unit and your print text is a novel, it is recommended that you issue the novel in week 1 in order to give students the opportunity to read it prior to the week the text activities commence.Give students an overview of the unit. Explain that they will:* view a variety of interesting film texts and other resources
* learn how these film texts use specific techniques to communicate ideas and position an audience to think and feel in particular ways
* complete short written tasks both as a whole class guided by the teacher, as well as independently
* participate in discussions as pairs or in groups, as well as a whole class
* listen to guest speakers who are experts and have the opportunity to speak to the class themselves about their knowledge and ideas (optional)
* enjoy a class excursion linked to their film study (optional)
* use ICT resources in a variety of ways to complete tasks and develop their understanding and skills
* follow one strand of film study in more depth after week 4 (two options are included in this unit).

Web activity exploring how to construct a film narrative, using a Lesson Bucket web resource on [Filmmaking](http://lessonbucket.com/category/filmmaking).The purpose is to revise or introduce an understanding of the metalanguage of film. (Note that the page is labelled Year 8, but offers excellent and engaging clips and information about all aspects of filmmaking.) | * Students engage with the scope of the program.
* Students develop and expand their ICT skills.
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| Year 11ES11-1 identify the main ideas and purposes of textsES11-1 compose a range of texts in a variety of modes and media using the appropriate language and structuresES11-1 summarise ideas and information presented in textsES11-5 investigate the aesthetic effects of the use of specific language features and techniques in a variety of literary and multimodal textsES11-1 select the most appropriate form of text to communicate information and ideas effectively, for example a memo, dialogue or a poemYear 12ES12-1 engage increasingly with texts where the relationships between concepts and information is not explicit and requires inference and interpretationES12-1 compose more sustained texts that explore the main ideas in textsES12-1 integrate relevant information and ideas from texts to develop and discuss their own interpretationsES12-5 appreciate and apply the power of language to communicate their own ideas, feelings and viewpoints in a variety of literary and multimodal textsES12-1 use a range of communication skills, for example varying voice, tone and pace, to explore an idea and influence and engage an audience | Conduct a class survey to ascertain students preferred film genres and film viewing habits. Brainstorm film genres and ensure students end up with an exhaustive list of possible genres in their books or on their laptops for future use.Students compose a brief and informal review of the last film they watched.Students compose an explanation for any film they have watched more than once. For instance, many students will have a film they go back to regularly, perhaps because they love the action scenes, or perhaps because the more they watch it, the more they feel they know the characters and can relate to them.Optional – Students will develop their knowledge about the process of filmmaking from experts. Invite the CAPA teacher in your school who is experienced in filmmaking, or a local community member, perhaps, to visit and conduct workshops in which they explain ways to create film narratives. This should include explanations of the equipment and the processes used, as well as how they acquired their skills.Portfolio task – Students compose a letter or email thanking the guest speaker and outlining what has been gained from the presentation. This should be a whole class activity, involving students brainstorming ideas for the content of the letter, the writing of which should be guided by the teacher. | * Personal response
* Collaborative brainstorming
* Students demonstrate their prior knowledge.
* Students are exposed to professional expertise.
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| Year 11ES11-2 compose texts with an awareness of varying language to meet the requirements of audience, purpose and contextES11-2 use writing as a tool to identify issues and express ideasES11-2 use and interpret structural and language features, for example visual and aural cues, to identify main ideas, supporting arguments and evidenceES11-1 compose a range of texts in a variety of modes and media using the appropriate language and structuresES11-5 use language with increasing accuracy to communicate own ideas in a variety of contextsES11-5(10) use grammatical features, for example pronouns, conjunctions and connectives, to accurately link ideas and information to ensure meaning when composing textsES11-1 compose a range of texts in a variety of modes and media using the appropriate language and structuresYear 12ES12-2 write for a range of purposes, for example personal communication or social action, to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, using language appropriate to audience, purpose and contextES12-2 use writing as a tool to identify issues and generate new ideasES12-2 interpret and draw inferences from structural and language features as well as the aural and visual cues used in textsES12-1 compose more sustained texts that explore the main ideas in textsES12-5 use language accurately and appropriately to communicate own ideas in a variety of contextsES12-5(10) develop and use appropriate vocabulary and skills in using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammarES12-1 compose more sustained texts that explore the main ideas in texts | In preparation for the Assessment Task for this module, students will need to develop and implement a survey of film watching. The first step is for them to come up with a question and hypothesis. Some examples include:Student’s question: What films do teenagers watch?Student’s hypothesis: I believe boys will watch action films and girls will watch romance films.Explain the difference between qualitative and quantitative data. Ensure student understanding through class discussion.Outline the need for sample-defining questions, such as gender, age, and the like.Students are expected to consider the parameters created by their question and compile a list of questions they can use in their survey. Teacher input will be required to ensure survey questions are not flawed and that the questions will result in the student being able to draw adequate conclusions regarding their questions. Remember, the focus is on the use of appropriate language and structure to ensure students end up with usable data. There is a sample (Resource 1) to assist use as a model.Students draft their surveys and submit printed or neatly hand-written copies of the survey by the end of the week 3 for teachers to copy. Or the surveys could be created using an online tool, such as [Survey Monkey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/).It is recommended that students seek to have at least 20 surveys completed for sound results, although this will depend on the questions they are asking. Teacher discretion will be required.Encourage students to get their surveys completed promptly. Remind them to ensure they are getting surveys completed across the range of ages and other demographics that their question requires.Revise the conventions of Report Writing. Students can begin drafting the elements of the report not reliant upon the survey findings, such as the Introduction and an explanation of their question and hypothesis.Introduce students to the [IMDb](http://www.imdb.com) website and invite them to explore all of the different things they can find out about their favourite films on this site.There are a range of film previews, reviews, biographies, and so forth, that can be viewed on the site. Set tasks appropriate for the class to complete, using the site.Portfolio task – Students are to write a review of the IMDb website, considering its user-friendliness, its content and its relevance.Students are to compile their survey findings in order to start writing their reports. Encourage students to avoid writing simple, repetitive statements. Discuss complex sentences and their effect, and model the ways in which students can incorporate their findings and make assumptions that help consider their question and whether or not their hypothesis has been proven true or false.Portfolio task – Students are to draft, edit and publish their research findings. | * Students revise their understanding of the conventions of text types (and refresh their memory on what good manners look like).
* Personal engagement and response
* Metalanguage and development of an understanding of tools of evaluation
* Completion of survey preparation demonstrates students’ engagement with the requirements of the survey task.
* Text type convention revision
* Exposing students to information gathering and effective use of internet resources.
* Text type convention revision and practice
* Complete reports
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| Year 11ES11-2 predict meaning using text structures and language featuresES11-8 understand the ways connections can be made between ideas in textsES11-8 explore the differing or comparable ways in which a number and variety of texts represent or respond to a topic or themeYear 12ES12-2 select from a broadening range of strategies to maintain focus on making meaning when accessing increasingly complex textsES12-8 analyse text structures and language features of literary texts and make relevant connections with other textsES12-8 account for the similarities and differences in the ways texts represent or respond to a topic or theme | Please note – By now teachers will need to have selected the strand they intend to move on to in the second half of the unit. Carefully consider the class and its strengths. Choose a focus that best meets your students’ needs, interests and abilities.Teacher selection – Select a strand for the class to proceed through the remaining weeks of the module. Following is one example, using strand 6 ‘exploring an adaptation of a text from print to film’.All classes, regardless of which strand you have selected, need to spend some time engaging with revision of their understanding of film genres and their conventions. Refer to the Film Conventions document (Resource 2) or use a resource of your preference.This strand requires three texts:* Short Story – [We Can Remember It For You Wholesale](https://philosophy.as.uky.edu/sites/default/files/We%20Can%20Remember%20It%20for%20You%20Wholesale%20-%20Philip%20K.%20Dick.pdf) (1966) by Philip K. Dick (Resource 3)
* Film – Total Recall (1990)
* Film – Total Recall (2012)

Introduce students to the idea of books/stories being adapted into films. Ask them to brainstorm the ones they know.Students write a brief description of a book/movie adaptation they know about. What was different? Which did they prefer? Why do they think they preferred one over the other? Teacher should discuss their own experiences. Isn’t the book always better than the film?Differentiated sample books/picture books and films that can be explored:* [Where the wild thing are](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bptuYPvfgk) picture book by Murice Sendak
* Where the wild things are 2009 film by Spike Jonze

Other possible combination of text to film* The Raven poem by Edgar Allan Poe into The Simpsons [Treehouse of Horror](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLiXjaPqSyY) – [Edgar Allen Poe: The Raven](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLiXjaPqSyY)
* Alice in Wonderland and/or Jabberwocky poem into the Tim Burton 2010 film by the same name
* Danny, the Champion of the World by Roald Dahl and the 1989 film by Gavin Millar.

Resource 4 can be applied to any chosen combination. Create a table of the positives and negatives of written versus visual/film texts. For example, written texts can create fantastical alternative worlds, such as those in the Lord of the Rings, and it is up to the reader to imagine them into reality. Film makers are limited by budgets and logistics when trying to recreate these worlds and they can’t possible meet the imaginative expectations of every individual reader. Spend as little or as much time on this aspect as you wish, depending on the ability of your class and their reading/viewing experience. Possible films to explore are excerpts from The Lord of the Rings trilogy and Harry Potter book series into the film franchise(s).  | * Complete reports
* Prior knowledge
* Reflection
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| Year 11ES11-1 identify the main ideas and purposes of textsES11-1 recognise implicit meanings to draw inferencesES11-1 identify and describe elements of literary texts, for example characterisation, narrative, tone, description and settingES11-8 use explicit strategies to organise and make connections between information and ideas in different texts, for example underline main points or draw sequencing diagramsES11-8 explore the differing or comparable ways in which a number and variety of texts represent or respond to a topic or themeES11-1 discuss the ideas, themes and emotions represented in literary textsYear 12ES12-1 explain and discuss the effectiveness of elements of literary texts, for example characterisation, narrative, tone, description and settingES12-1 read, view and listen to texts to connect, interpret, and visualise ideasES12-1 explain and discuss the effectiveness of elements of literary texts, for example characterisation, narrative, tone, description and settingES12-8 create imaginative texts that make relevant connections with other textsES12-8 account for the similarities and differences in the ways texts represent or respond to a topic or themeES12-1 integrate relevant information and ideas from texts to develop their own interpretations | Revise students’ understanding of the conventions of a short story. What are the limitations? What are the general expectations regarding narrative structure, character development, and so forth?Issue the short story ‘We Can Remember It For You Wholesale’ and read the story to the class. Instruct class to listen to their teacher to introduce students to the plot.Discuss the plot with regard to basic comprehension. Are there aspects of the story that did not make sense to the students? Ensure class discussion results in students fully understanding the author’s intentions regarding the plot.Discuss the characters. Have students create character profiles for each character by re-reading the story.What do we learn about each character and what are we left to conclude for ourselves? With ‘We Can Remember It For You Wholesale’, Quail’s wife, Kirsten, is not developed at all as a character. Students should consider why the author of a short story needs to make specific decisions with regard to elements such as the character development of minor characters. The audience is not meant to connect with the wife’s character; therefore the wife’s character is purposely underdeveloped. Teacher note/extension: Ask students to consider if they know other characters that were purposely underdeveloped or perhaps introduce the concept of “caricature” and how it works to position the audience towards a character. Start by completing a prediction activity to have students consider how and in what ways the story and/or characters will be different in a feature film. This might be completed as a writing task, a mind mapping task or in groups. Which parts of the story offer the filmmaker an opportunity to expand on the narrative? For example, the memories of travelling to Mars can actually be expanded to include scenes on Mars. What opportunities and limitations are relevant in this example?In addition to the revision of students’ understanding of conventions of film suggested earlier, discuss the conventions of Science Fiction films in particular. What are the expectations that the students bring to the film as viewers? Conduct class discussion or have students complete written tasks to address the understanding of specific genre conventions.Use Resource 4 to identify key points from the short story and enter them in column on the left, especially those aspects of the plot where students think there will be differences in the film versions. | * Revision of text type conventions
* Engagement
* Comprehension
* Focus on characters ensures student immersion in the story.
* Comparative analysis
* Prediction activities provide students with an opportunity to test their knowledge against evidence.
* Revision of film techniques from earlier in the unit
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| Year 11ES11-8 investigate and start to synthesise ideas and information from a range of source materialES11-8 understand the ways connections can be made between ideas in textsES11-8 investigate the use of media, types of texts, text structures and language features, for example the use of statistics and graphs in advertisements and choice of colour and font style in websitesES11-8 investigate the relationships between context, purpose and audience and the impact on meaning in social, community and workplace textsES11-1 integrate new ideas and information with existing understandingES11-8 compose short structured responses that compare and contrast ways in which a topic or theme is represented in different textsES11-8 develop a personal voice and adopt different points of view to influence audiences in a range of media and digital technologiesYear 12ES12-8 use a range of strategies to synthesise ideas and information from several textsES12-8 analyse text structures and language features of literary texts and make relevant connections with other textsES12-8 recognise the use of media, types of texts, text structures and language features, for example, subjective and objective reporting in feature articles and current affairs programs, appeals to reason and emotion in persuasive texts and juxtaposition of images in websitesES12-8 describe the relationships between context, purpose and audience and the impact on meaning in social, community and workplace textsES12-1 integrate prior knowledge with new information to predict, construct or confirm understandingES12-8 compose more extended written responses that compare and contrast ways in which a topic or theme is represented in different textsES12-8 use personal voice and adopt different points of view to influence audiences in a range of media and digital technologies | Watch the 1990 film, pausing as appropriate, and support students to complete the middle column of shifts in presentation of the selected points. Some examples might include, but are not limited to:* Kirsten leaving Quail and/or Kirsten revealing her true identity to Quail
* The appearance of and activities being conducted by the Receptionist at Rekall
* How the staff at Rekall react to Quail’s memories
* The amount of characters in each version

Portfolio task – Ask students to write an extended response, outlining the similarities and differences between the short story and the 1990 film.Watch the 2012 film, pausing as appropriate, and support students to complete the right column of shifts in presentation of the selected points from both the short story and the 1990 film version.Portfolio task – Ask students to write an extended response, outlining the similarities and differences between the short story, the 1990 film and the 2012 film.Read, then re-watch key scenes, to examine the ideas suggested above or other ideas identified by the class. Examine the ways in which film techniques have been used to highlight the ideas.Optional – For a capable class, you might like to spend some time considering context. What kind of world was Dick living in when he wrote the short story in 1966? How can we identify changing attitudes in society through key elements, such as the clothing being worn by the receptionist in the two different film versions? What assumptions can be made about the notion of future space travel, based on the ‘other’ location, the workplace, the role of Quail’s wife, and so on, in each version of the story?Portfolio task – Students write a film review for inclusion in a school or teenage magazine of the 2012 version.Bring it all together with a class debate about which version of the story was best and why. Students could take the affirmative and negative to the statement, ‘The book was better’.Assessment task - That thing in your pocket!Students decide on a short text type and begin the process of creating a short film. The film can be shot using their mobile phone. Process of creating a film is outlined in the web activity exploring how to construct a film narrative, using a Lesson Bucket web resource on [Filmmaking](http://lessonbucket.com/category/filmmaking).Teacher might have to guide students in creating, editing and finalising their two minute film. Students are expected to engage in creating a 500 word reflection, discussing the following questions:* How the film is different to the written text
* The message conveyed in the film and was it different from the original text and why?
* Challenges faced in creating the film
* What can students do better the next time they engage in making a film.
 | * Immersion in the text
* Textual analysis
* Comparative analysis
* Extended response
* Engagement
* Developing students understanding of contextual relevance
* Meaningful engagement
* Effective contributions to the debate
* Engage in the creative process of making a film making: script making, story boarding, acting, filming, editing, adding music, directing and finally uploading the titled film
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Reflection and evaluation

Invite students to complete the student reflection (Resource 5), then complete your own unit evaluation to support improved delivery next time (Resource 6).