

Activity

Episode 15
3rd June 2014

Silent Films

Key Learning

Students will develop a deeper understanding of the features of silent films and create their own short silent film.

The Australian Curriculum

The Arts / Media Arts

Plan, create and present media artworks for specific purposes with awareness of responsible media practice ([ACAMAM060](#)) Year 3 and 5



Plan, produce and present media artworks for specific audiences and purposes using responsible media practice ([ACAMAM064](#)) Year 5 and 6



English/Literacy/Interacting with other

Use interaction skills when discussing and presenting ideas and information, selecting body language, voice qualities and other elements, (for example music and sound) to add interest and meaning ([ACELY1804](#)) Year 7



Discussion Questions

1. Why is Henry's movie called a *silent* film?
2. Why did Henry decide to make a silent film?
3. What kind of films did Henry make before this?
4. When were silent films really popular? Explain why they were silent.
5. In the old days film-makers used music to create mood. How did they do this?
6. When films with sound came along what were they called?
7. What is talking in films called?
8. What genre of music did Henry choose to make his film to? Why did he choose this?
9. Who is the legendary silent film actor mentioned in the BtN story? What are some of his films?
10. Henry has worked hard. How do you think this will help his plans for the future?

Activities

Key words

Ask students to find out the meanings of the following key words that relate to film making.

dialogue	storyboard	soundtrack
plot	gesture	title cards

Class Discussion – What are the features of silent films?

Ask student to brainstorm the features of silent film. These could include:

- No dialogue is spoken
- Using music to create mood
- The acting can be very over-the-top
- The story is simple and straightforward
- Silent films can have “title cards” to help tell the story

Express yourself without words

Silent films are about actors being able to express themselves without speaking. Ask students to brainstorm a list of different moods and feelings, and then discuss how you might convey these through facial expressions, body language and gestures. Students will form pairs and practise acting a range of emotions. Students will take it in turns acting out and then guessing the emotion. Examples to get you started:

- Nervous
- Confused
- Frustrated
- Hopeful
- Excited
- Stern
- Uncertain
- Confident

Making a silent film

Students will work in small groups to create they own short silent film. The International Silent Film Festival website has the winning films <http://www.makesilentfilm.com/> to watch so students can get some ideas. Ask each group to think about a theme for their film. The website has music downloads based on a genre or theme <http://www.makesilentfilm.com/rules.html#music> Each group needs to answer the following questions:

What is the story about?

- What is your story going to be about?
- How is the story going to be told without dialogue?
- Where is the story set?
- Who are the characters in the story?
- What is the problem in the story?
- What is the resolution?

When students have worked out a basic idea for their film, they can create a storyboard. Storyboards look like comic books and have a picture for every shot in the film. Show the following video about storyboarding to help students understand how to do it <http://lessonbucket.com/filmmaking/storyboards/>

Students can create their storyboards using post-it notes (useful when collaborating with others) or using a template <http://lessonbucket.com/media/169storyboards8.pdf>
Explain to students that storyboards should be quick, clear and simple and should show how each shot

Watch the Behind the Scenes video from Henry <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUlfoxCwTb0&feature=youtu.be&a> to get a better understanding of the process Henry went through to create his short film.

The Behind the News website has some tips to help students with the filming process <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/rookie/training.htm>

Share students' films with other classes in the school or have your own Silent Film Festival.

Charlie Chaplin



Charlie Chaplin was one of the most famous actors of the silent era. Ask students to find out some interesting facts about Chaplin and create a short biography of the actor. They can display their biography using the Bio Cube Creator

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/cube_creator/

Related Research Links

International Youth Silent Film Festival
<http://www.makesilentfilm.com/>

Australia's Silent Film Festival – Official website
<http://www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au/index.asp?IntCatId=14>

YouTube – The Girl in the Camera - Behind the Scenes video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUlfoxCwTb0&feature=youtu.be&a>

Australia.gov.au – Film in Australia: The Silent Era
<http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/film-in-australia>

Charlie Chaplin – Biography
<http://www.charliechaplin.com/en/biography/articles>