



MEDIA

RELOADED

Hugh Mason-Jones

Augusta Zeeng



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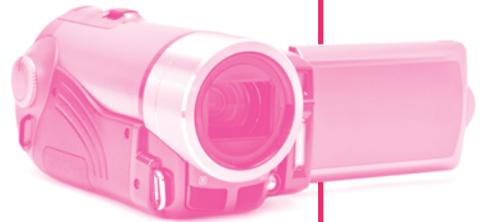
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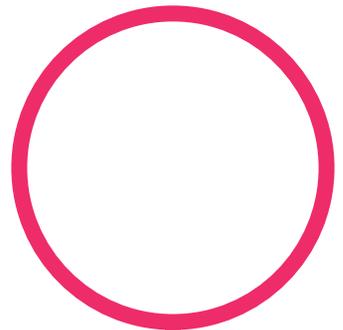
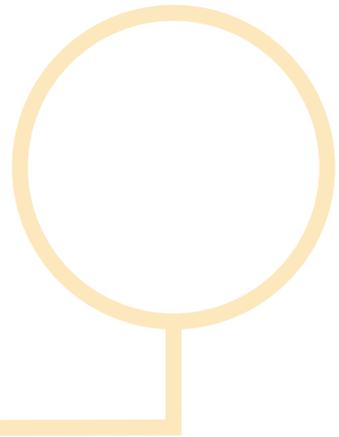
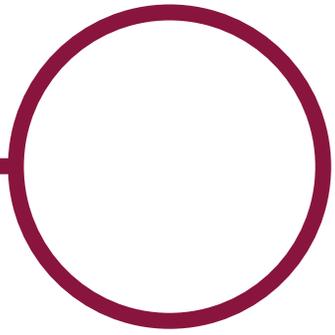
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1

GENRE

'What *kind* of movie is it?' is the first thing most people ask when being told about a new film (the same goes for a new TV show). What they are really asking is 'What *genre* is it?' – and that is what this chapter is all about.

Genre expectations are embedded in how audiences understand texts. Creators of media products often make new genres or sub-genres – for example, combining comedy and romance film conventions to create a romantic comedy (or rom-com) – or subvert genres to create new styles and keep the audience surprised. Subverted genres rely on the fact that the audience has genre expectations; the creator changes or adds to them to keep the audience guessing. Mockumentaries are an example of a subverted genre – the filmmaker uses all the conventions of documentaries with fictional content, often with comedic results.

COMING UP...

Rewind**Using genre to discuss media products****Film genres****Reflecting changing values****Television genres****Internet and new media genres****Up for debate****But wait, there's more ...****Inside the green room with Philippa Hawker****REWIND**

The origins of the word *genre* can be traced to Plato and Aristotle, who used the Ancient Greek word *genos* to classify the literature of the time (classifying plays as tragedies or comedies and so forth). The modern word *gene*, used in biology (e.g. 'Members of a family share many genes'), has similar origins.

Genre has been used to classify all areas of arts, culture and media into groups of similar characteristics/ideas/styles throughout history. The modern term is from the French word *genre* (derived from the Ancient Greek and then the Latin stem) and has been used in its modern form since the early twentieth century, but was not used extensively until the 1970s to describe films for analysis. *Genre* is a term used to categorise and define content. It can be used to discuss any art form but is particularly prevalent in discussing the media and its forms.

The makers of media use genre **conventions** (in the case of film, **story elements** and **production elements**) to create a work that contains a set of expectations for their **audience**. Each genre has its own set of conventions that the audience expects to see and hear to help them understand the content of the work, be it a film, a radio program, a TV show or a website.

A statue of
Aristotle



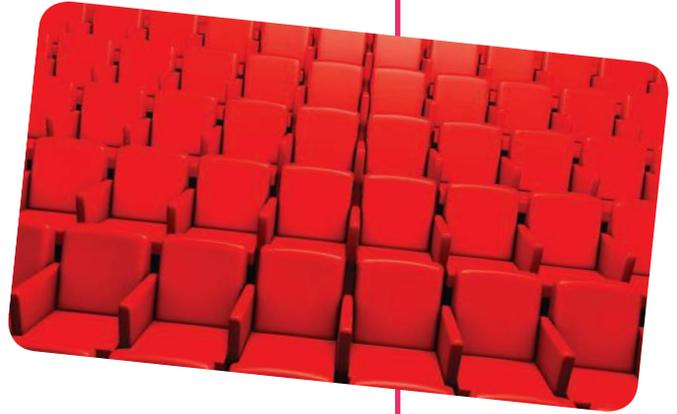
conventions the accepted and understood ways of doing things, or the particular sets of rules that govern the way things are done

story elements the content of a film that relates to storyline, characters and setting

production elements the particular production devices that are used to communicate the story elements

audience consumers or users of media; sometimes referred to as the market

The audience uses their prior understanding of these genre conventions as a way of bringing more information than can be displayed during the viewing or listening time. In this chapter we primarily look at film and TV genres, and very briefly at internet and new media. Then throughout the book we look at other media forms using some of the terms found here.



USING GENRE TO DISCUSS MEDIA PRODUCTS

Genre is the classification of how a story or program is told. A story can be told in many ways; however, how it is told and understood relies heavily upon what kind of genre it is. Music, character, storyline, setting: all these aspects go along with genre. Think of genre as a banana split. When you order a banana split, you expect to have certain things contained within it, such as banana, ice cream, wafers and topping. If you order a banana split and you're given something different, you are usually upset, as you are not receiving exactly what you thought you were. The same goes for movie genre.

Genre can be used to describe setting – where a film or TV show takes place. For example, a Western is set in the American West or Wild West. Genre can also describe the mood, such as comedy, where they hope to make you laugh, or format, such as a musical, where the audience should expect singing and dancing to occur at any time. It can also be used to describe a group of films with similar ideas, concepts or characters, such as science fiction (sci-fi), or superhero stories such as *Batman Begins*.

- 1 What do you expect to see/hear in a horror movie?
- 2 On your own, write down an answer relating to setting, mood, format and characters.
- 3 Share the information with the person next to you. Then share the information with the whole class. Did everyone have the same/similar ideas? Were there ones you hadn't thought of or remembered?



1.1 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

FILM GENRES

Action

Action films contain car chases, fist fights, gunfights and other risk-taking events, all in extreme and dangerous locations. The storyline tends to be straightforward without too many twists. Audiences are often lured along to action films by the movie star who is playing the lead role. The **protagonist** is usually one-dimensional in nature, looking to right a wrong, deliver justice or protect the innocent. The **antagonist** in an action movie is usually a 'bad guy' trying to achieve an outcome that is antisocial, most likely bringing about the deaths of many people. The protagonist saves the day, the innocent are protected and the antagonist is defeated. Just remember, though, if you don't see the baddie die, the chances are they're still alive.

Examples: *Die Hard*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Batman: The Dark Knight*



protagonist the main or central character or hero who drives a story forward

antagonist the opponent or enemy of the protagonist in a story

ACTIVITY 1.2

RESPONDING

- 1 Make a list of big-name movie stars who usually play the protagonist.
- 2 Describe the kind of character that the protagonist usually is.
- 3 What professions do these characters usually have in an action setting?
- 4 Who could play the antagonist?
- 5 Describe the kind of character that the antagonist usually is.
- 6 What profession might the antagonist have?
- 7 What does the protagonist need to do that the antagonist wants to stop from happening?



Documentary/Mockumentary

This genre aims to explore an idea or topic, either non-fiction (documentary) or fiction presented as non-fiction (mockumentary), with the intention to answer a **driving question**. A driving or framing question is posed by the director at the start of a documentary, such as 'What happened to this person?' or 'What would happen if a person only ate and drank orange-coloured food?' This question is then explored throughout the documentary, with an answer presented at the end. An audience becomes engaged with a documentary because they are interested in finding out the answer to the driving question posed at the start.

driving question a question that pushes a documentary forward

This genre can also fit into a number of subcategories. **Character-driven documentaries** profile a specific person, often detailing their origins and how they became film-worthy material. **Expository documentaries** present information upon a particular topic with the aim of explaining a difficult concept in order to construct a discourse. **Persuasive documentaries** seek to present ideas in a specific way in order to alter or strengthen audience opinion. **Observational documentaries** can be thought of as ‘fly on the wall’, with the camera not being seen as altering the outcome of the action being filmed.

Examples: *Nanook of the North*, *Bowling for Columbine*, *Super-Size Me*, *Dogtown and Z-Boys*



Nanook of the North (1922)
directed by Robert J. Flaherty

- 1 Come up with potential topics for each of the four documentary sub-genres above.
- 2 Create five driving questions for each of the topics.



1.3 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Family

Family movies cover modern-day morality tales that involve characters working together to solve injustices in the world, often fighting against scheming and bad antagonists. These movies usually involve young characters learning important life lessons. Films that fall into the family genre often appeal to audiences of many age ranges, such as children and adults.



A scene from *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*
(Universal, 1982)

Family films may function on several levels, with a basic, easy-to-understand storyline, and subtle jokes and popular culture references thrown in. Family films may revolve around a family or have characters of different ages in them. They often have entertaining and comedic content that is suitable for younger audiences. Family films are often criticised for being bland, as they try not to offend or exclude any groups of society, usually for marketing purposes. There is a sub-genre of family films that get released every year right before Christmas – the holiday release. As the holiday season approaches there are films released that the family can go to see together centred on the theme of Christmas. Family films can be live-action or animated.

Examples: *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, *Shrek*, *Happy Feet*, and often with a family holiday theme such as *The Santa Clause* and *Home Alone*

ACTIVITY 1.4

RESPONDING

- 1 Write a list of films that you have seen with your family – you may have to think back a little.
- 2 Who were the main characters in them?
- 3 Were they animated or live-action?
- 4 Name five films that have animals instead of humans as the characters.
- 5 Why do you think filmmakers do this?



Historical

Set in a specific time and place, historical movies seek to recreate a time in order to explore the qualities and beliefs of the era, often to draw parallels with and to explore certain aspects of the present day. Historical films often explore significant figures in specific eras of time, often not letting historical accuracies get in the way of a good story, and often representing characters as far more complex than usually assumed. As the genre demands specific settings and people of the time period to populate the shot, **computer-generated imagery (CGI)** has allowed for a much more cost-effective approach to this genre. For example, the cost and time invested in creating and populating the sets in *Ben-Hur* (Wyler, 1959) was far greater than for *Gladiator* (Scott, 2000), a film that used CGI to create the enormous Roman Colosseum and its people. Historical films often also contain amazing props and costumes, with costume designers able to recreate lavish costumes, sometimes fit for a king.

Examples: *Elizabeth*, *Gladiator*, *Ben-Hur*, *Atonement*, *Mongol*, *Downfall*

ACTIVITY 1.5

RESPONDING

- 1 Research and make a list of interesting events, periods or people from history that could form the basis of a movie.
- 2 Who would you cast in the title role and why?



Horror

Films that can be classified as part of the horror genre use story and production elements extensively. Horror films aim to evoke feelings of terror and fear in the viewer. They do this using many different conventions, particularly the use of sound (including absence of sound). Their storylines often involve a character or supernatural, evil force making the protagonist's (and audience's) worst fears come true. Horror films use low-key lighting (lots of shadows) and music to create scary and suspenseful moods, often followed with macabre, intensely violent and gory scenes. Traditional horror films used many classic gothic/horror books, such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, as the basis for their stories.

More recently the horror genre has often used other elements of the supernatural and religious motives to create the out-of-this-world force. They often involve protagonists being trapped in terrible situations and unable to get out – such as nightmares, coffins or basements. You can see this in films such as the *Saw* series or *Buried*. Due to the fact that they often contain graphic violence and complex, scary ideas, these films often have stronger classification.

Examples: *Carrie*, the *Scream* series, *Dracula*



ACTIVITY 1.6

RESPONDING

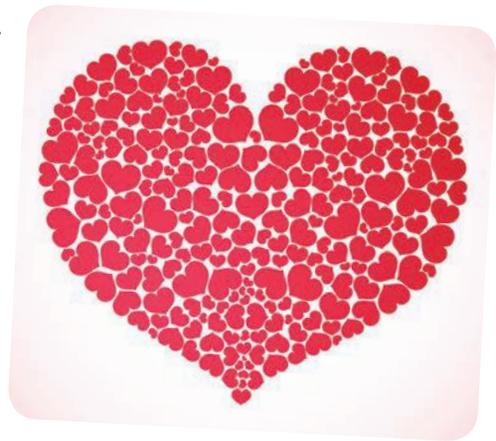
Horror films tend to polarise people (make them have extreme opposite opinions).



- 1 Split the class in two and have one group come up with pros (positives) for horror films and the other group come up with cons (negatives).
- 2 Discuss the pros and cons and see who has more points.

Romantic comedy

The romantic comedy (or 'rom-com') film uses narrative and story elements of comedy films such as physical comedy jokes and comedic actors, and often uses character **stereotypes** to help increase the simplicity of storytelling. Romantic comedies differ slightly from basic comedies by the fact that a romantic relationship is the driving force behind the storyline. They use the typical boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back again of the romance genre and mix it up with the previously mentioned comedy. They usually have naturalistic settings and recognisable characters.



Examples: *There's Something about Mary*, *The Wedding Singer*, *The Wedding Planner*, *Love Actually*

ACTIVITY 1.7

RESPONDING

Come up with three reasons why filmmakers have developed the sub-genre of romantic comedy, thinking about the audience of the two separate genres.

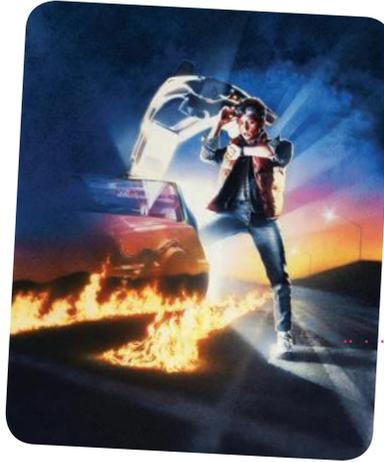


Science fiction (Sci-fi)

Sometimes set in the future or in space, and sometimes set in what seems to be the present day, the science fiction genre involves a piece of speculative/futuristic technology that is used to explore an idea and to advance the storyline. From the earliest films, science fiction has been used to explore ideas that seem beyond the current limits of human ability. When looking back at these films – some of which suggested moon travel as being impossible – it is interesting to see what their vision of the future was. As science fiction explores a reality yet

to come, these films often comment upon present-day issues, sometimes presenting a possible dystopia should humanity not correct its ways. Science fiction has also led to significant improvements in special effects and sound design as filmmakers seek to enhance the illusion that the impossible seems possible.

Examples: *Blade Runner*, *Aliens*, *Back to the Future*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*



Back to the Future
(Amblin/Universal,
1985)

Time travel and long-distance space travel still elude us today, and are still common themes and ideas in sci-fi movies.

- 1 Come up with some sci-fi ideas/technology that have not been thought of yet.
- 2 Write a **synopsis** of the movie you would make.



1.8 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

synopsis a short summary of the plot

The Western

Primarily identified through the use of the harsh and uncompromising setting of the American Wild West, this genre can also be used to identify films dealing with storylines of revenge, justice and the way of the warrior. Westerns were initially influenced by Japanese culture and the way of the samurai, with some of the most famous Westerns being remakes of Japanese films. To add even more cultural confusion, many of the famous 'American' Westerns, complete with big-name Americans, were shot in Spain by the Italian filmmaker Sergio Leone (hence the term 'Spaghetti Western'). Westerns usually feature a troubled yet honourable protagonist looking to bring about justice against a formidable, often ruthless, antagonist. The characters in Westerns follow the warrior's code, understanding that death is an inevitable consequence of their chosen lifestyle.

Examples: *Seven Samurai*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *Once Upon a Time in the West*, *The Proposition*, *Mad Dog Morgan*

- 1 Come up with names for characters (the protagonist and antagonist) and a town for an imaginary Western that you would make as a class.
- 2 What types of things do you need to consider when thinking of names for Westerns?



1.9 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Teen

Teen films usually revolve around the lives of teenagers. Often set in schools, they look at issues that affect teenagers, such as fitting in, relationships (romantic and friends), parties, school, family and rebellion against authority. Teen films have been around since the middle of the twentieth century, when the idea to market to a teen audience became more and more attractive. Teen films may have one or several protagonists and the world within the film is seen through their eyes. Parents are often not central characters and are sometimes entirely absent.

Some modern teen films, such as *Not Another Teen Movie* (2001), subvert the genre and play with the audience's knowledge of other teen movies. There are many sub-genres of teen films, such as teen horror/slasher and teen road trip. There are also some teen films that are loose remakes of Shakespearean plays and classic novels, such as *Ten Things I Hate about You* (1999), loosely from William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Clueless* (1995), from the novel *Emma* by Jane Austen.

Some Australian-made films about teens are *Looking for Alibrandi*, *Two Hands*, *Beneath Clouds*, *The Year My Voice Broke* and its sequel *Flirting, Moving Out*, and more recently *Tomorrow When the War Began*, which could be classified as a teen action film.

Most teen films screened in Australia and New Zealand are made in the American Hollywood system. This means that as viewers of these films we use a set of conventions that relate more to American teen life than our own. Most countries create films that would appeal to a teen audience or have teen characters, but the American Hollywood system makes the most and they screen all over the world.

Examples: *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), *Puberty Blues* (1981) and most films directed by John Hughes during the 1980s, such as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), *The Breakfast Club* (1985) and *Some Kind of Wonderful* (1987)

ACTIVITY 1.10

Why do you think teen films often have an **ensemble cast**? Discuss this with the person next to you and then as a class.



RESPONDING

Thriller/Suspense

Thriller films use elements of suspense and action to create a sense of tension between the audience and the film's story and characters. Often the information relating to the storyline is slowly revealed to the characters and the audience. Sometimes the audience is aware of more information than the characters to increase the sense of drama and thrill. If the audience thinks that something bad

ensemble cast a cast in which all the actors have an equal amount of screen time

is going to happen to the protagonist before the characters know, the audience hopes that something will happen to change it. Common suspense storylines involve detectives trying to discover who the murderer is; as they uncover the clues and suspects and get increasingly closer to the truth, they get into more and more danger.

Examples: *Double Indemnity*, *North by Northwest* and most other films directed by Alfred Hitchcock

- 1 Considering the above genres, which would you nominate as your favourite?
- 2 Provide three reasons as to why.
- 3 Which is your least favourite genre?
- 4 Provide three reasons to justify your response.
- 5 This is not an exhaustive list of film genres. There are other genres that have not been mentioned here. Can you think of any?



1.11 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

REFLECTING CHANGING SOCIAL VALUES

Genres can alter over time for many different reasons. As a genre is further explored, the audience becomes aware of its rules and expects filmmakers to start adapting and changing them.

Social beliefs of the time and what society is most concerned about can also fuel creation or adaptation of a genre. For instance, as the last decade has seen a large social focus on terrorism and climate change, the genre of 'natural disaster movie' has gained a place within the film landscape – films that explore the end of the world from a natural catastrophe or where the Earth is under attack from a large, formidable alien force. These films focus on the everyday person being placed in an extraordinary situation and surviving the ordeal. Disaster movies as a response to environmental changes include *2012* and *The Day After Tomorrow*.

As political alliances alter over time, so too do expectations in genre films, such as action. During the 1970s and 1980s, the enemies consisted of characters with Russian (related event – Cold War), South African (related event – apartheid) or Libyan (related event – Lockerby bombing) nationalities. In the 2000s, this has altered to villains having Middle Eastern (related event – Afghanistan/Iraq wars) backgrounds.

Horror films have also altered. As audiences have become accustomed to certain ideas and concepts of fear, horror filmmakers have pushed the genre to far more horrific content than that of yesteryear. Whether this has something to do with audiences' access to the internet and its unfiltered graphic and often horrific images **desensitising** them, or is due to other social reasons, it is important to note the change.

desensitising the process by which an audience becomes accustomed to content that they would once have found shocking



Near the start of the 1985 movie *Back to the Future*, a group of Libyans are used as the bad guys. They are shown as possessing weaponry and as being ruthless killers.

- 1 Research what was happening in the world in 1985 that contributed to the director and writer, Robert Zemeckis, using this nationality for the bad guys.
- 2 Would a director still use Libyans as the bad guys today?
- 3 Is it acceptable to use another country in this way? Why/Why not?

TELEVISION GENRES

Television shows are mostly categorised by their formats rather than by mood or content.

Reality

Reality shows may contain games and/or competitions and use mostly non-actors as their protagonists. Contrary to popular belief, reality shows do not portray 'reality' and are scripted to some extent. This genre has become very popular over the past 15 years. Some very popular reality TV series have been *Survivor*, *Big Brother* and *MasterChef*.



Situation comedy (Sitcom)

These shows are episodic in nature and usually rely on a cast of recurring characters, be it a family, a group of friends or a group of workers who bounce ideas and conversation off each other. It is called a situation comedy because it is located in a specific time and place (or a few places) created by a set and rarely shot in the real world, and it uses situations from everyday life. They are at their best when they have great writing that looks at the issues of the time and the lines are delivered with great comedic timing. Some of the most famous sitcoms are *I Love Lucy*, *Friends*, *All in the Family*, *Cheers*, *Frasier*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *M*A*S*H*, *Happy Days*, *Hey Dad...!*, *Acropolis Now*, *Kingswood Country*, *Mother and Son* and *The Librarians*.

News

The news is a regularly scheduled program that reports current events both local and global. News shows are characterised by their format and their content. They have one or two presenters known as anchors who present information and short clips reported and compiled by others. News shows are seen to be reporting reality as it has happened without an **agenda**, but some have been accused of reporting with **bias**.



Children's programming

The shows that fall under this genre are primarily for children's viewing and can be live-action or animated. Some of them are game shows and others are fictional stories. The main similarities between all children's shows is that their content must be suitable for children of all ages and therefore they often contain very simplified storylines with minimal or no violence. A lot of the shows are informative or educational. These programs are made under a fairly strict set of standards developed and upheld by the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) that ensures they can be watched by a younger audience, as children are perceived to be more influenced and harmed by certain television content.

Current affairs

Current affairs shows tend to use a news-style format with a lead anchor (or anchors) and reporters providing information on topical issues and current events. While there are many respected current affairs programs that report on a wide range of important and relevant topics, some commercial current affairs programs tend to have a sensationalised view of events, often reporting in a one-sided and inflammatory or fear-provoking way. These current affairs shows will often discuss localised topics such as supermarket prices or information about celebrities.

Talk shows

Talk shows are defined by the content. They have a host who can be a celebrity or become one just by being the host. The host interviews interesting, famous or infamous people about their life and current events, usually to a live studio audience. They often have a band or some form of alternative entertainment such as comedians to keep the audience happy and entertained during the taping of these shows. Famous talk shows have included *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Ellen* and *The Late Show with David Letterman*.

agenda the intention behind a program or institution

bias the tendency towards a particular perspective or belief, which interferes with the ability to be impartial, unprejudiced or objective, evident in the presentation of a one-sided argument

Soap operas

This style of show is an ongoing fictional story in serial format. The stories span decades and the cast often stay on these shows for many years. Soap operas are often shown during the weekday daytime slot so their audiences are predominantly housewives and the content reflects this. They contain dramatic stories about families and their love and hate relationships, and they involve many intertwining relationships. They are mainly set in a domestic and real-world setting shot in television studios. One of their main attractions is that occasionally they branch out into crazy, extreme and supernatural storylines to break up the consistency. Famous soapies have included *The Young and the Restless*, *Days of our Lives*, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*.

Sport

Sport on television is usually shown in a show format with commentators and hosts to add information and personal analysis of the play as it happens. This can take the format of a single sporting event, such as the Olympics, or a grand final, with most of the game shown in its entirety in chronological order. There is another type of sport show that has a montage of clips that wrap up the day/week in sport or looks at sport of a particular genre or type, such as netball or gymnastics only. In each news bulletin there is also some time dedicated to a sports section.



ACTIVITY 1.13

RESPONDING

- 1 Create a questionnaire and research the favourite/most watched TV genres in the class.
- 2 What are the most watched types of programs?
- 3 How much time do people in the class spend watching these shows?
- 4 Why do they watch these programs?
- 5 Create a table or graph displaying the results of your research.



Television networks are often coming up with different programs in an attempt to gain larger audiences. After reading through these television genres and using what you know, combine two or more genres to come up with what you believe would be a popular hybrid television program.

- 1 What would it be called?
- 2 What would happen on the show? Describe an episode.
- 3 How often would the show be aired?
- 4 What kind of people would be on the show?
- 5 Who would be the show's target audience?
- 6 What kind of music would be used for the show's main theme?



1.14 ACTIVITY

MAKING

INTERNET AND NEW MEDIA GENRES

Social networking

An increasingly popular use of the internet, social networking sites allow users to create profiles in order to post information about themselves, communicate likes and dislikes, and interact with other people's profiles. These sites can also be used to share other information, such as photos, links, events, videos, games and applications. Most social networking sites have populations as large as many countries.



As many people in the class will have social networking sites, it is always good to understand what dangers there are online.

- 1 Make a list of all the potential online dangers.
- 2 Next to this list, write down all the precautions that you can take to prevent these dangers from happening.
- 3 As a class, create your own 'Top ten tips of safe social networking'.



1.15 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Wikis

Wikis are collaborative online repositories of information and multimedia content. Categorised into topic, wikis can focus on the specific (TV shows, computer games) or the general (online encyclopaedias). Wikis rely upon content being populated by online users. Wikis contain multiple links to internal pages within the sites and also links to external resources.

Due to their collaborative nature, wikis can have unreliable content, especially if constant fact-checking is not being undertaken by the administrators of the site. Information can also be libellous or defamatory in nature.



When using wikis you must always double-check your information with a credible source – usually one with a scholarly or proven background, such as a textbook, or someone with knowledge and authority on the matter.

Search engines

Search engines are tools used to search the internet for information, sites, images and videos. Different search engines use different methods of searching for data, so try multiple search engines when searching for information, as they may uncover different results. Search engines list their findings in a particular order that could be misleading; the first result is not necessarily the best or most relevant result. Some use the number of **'hits'** that a website has, while others use much more complex combined information. Some sites pay for their link to be listed first or pay people to make their link more popular than others in order to be ranked higher.



Blogs

Short for 'web log', blogs are static personal online journals in which users create a profile and write about specific topics or about the world in general. Other people can create profiles on these online sites and choose to follow these blogs and to write comments about each blog entry.

Video repositories (YouTube)

Populated by online users, both amateur and professional, these sites contain videos ranging from short films to TV and film excerpts, music videos, experimental and instructional videos, documentaries and **mockumentaries**, online video blogs and clips just of random things happening. These sites can be general or specific in nature.

hits the number of visits a website receives in a given time

mockumentary a mock or fake documentary, in which fictitious events are presented in documentary format; can also refer to an individual work within the genre

Image repositories (Flickr/Photobucket)

Similar to video repositories, these sites are used for housing still images.

News

Most easily thought of as online newspapers, with the addition of multimedia and instant reader feedback, these sites contain news written by journalists on local and international events. Either free or accessed by paying a fee, these have begun to control the social agenda in a manner similar to their print **precursor**.

Shops/Auctions sites

These sites allow users to purchase or bid for items online. They also allow users to place items online for sale for others to bid on. Often less expensive than retail shops (it doesn't have the overheads of staff and rent), online shopping has become more utilised in recent times due to its speed, reliability and increased security. Sites also exist that promote items for users to claim and pick up either free of charge or through a bartering process with other goods.

Downloading sites/Torrents

These sites provide users with links to download films, software, TV shows and music. Content placed on these sites often infringes copyright, and record companies and film distributors have started taking individual users to court for the illegal downloading of intellectual property.

- 1 Make a list of the key legal issues involved in downloading material from the internet and write a short sentence to summarise each one.
- 2 Define the term 'legal download' and 'illegal download'.
- 3 What does 'Creative Commons' mean?
- 4 Make a list of the possible consequences of illegally downloading material.
- 5 Do you think that illegal downloading is a problem? Explain your response. Use examples to explain your ideas.
- 6 What do you think might be a solution to illegal downloading?



1.16 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Downloading songs and movies from the internet without paying can often be illegal. Visit the ACMI site and research the information dealing with the legal issues related to the downloading of material from the internet.

Maps/Navigation

These sites provide access to maps and information within a specific geographical area. These sites also allow users to input start and end points to obtain directions and travel times.

Forums and chat rooms

A type of social networking, these sites allow users to discuss specific topics relating to a specific subject, usually designated by the administrator. Forums have

moderators to ensure all content abides by the rules of the forum. Despite chat rooms being more immediate in nature, they are still mostly moderated.

Streaming radio and TV

These sites allow users to view or listen to content from specific sources. While internet radio can podcast or stream with few limitations, TV streaming often has to abide by the copyright laws of the region.

Webisisodes, podcasts and vodcasts

These are programs made specifically for distribution online. Much of this content is free to download.



Augmented reality

Augmented reality works through smartphone applications that use the camera, speaker and video function to place an additional layer of information on the screen. This information changes depending on what the user points the camera at. This can provide information such as reviews and contact details for shops and restaurants, information about what they stock or even links to their websites.

For information on genre in other media forms, refer to the following chapters: Chapter 5: Photography, Chapter 9: Animation and gaming and Chapter 10: Audio.

augmented reality refers to a reality or experience of something that has been made greater or better than it really is

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'There is only one genre worth watching ...'

Consider the following questions as you shape your response:

- 1 Is it more entertaining? Does it have better characters? If so, provide examples.
- 2 Is it better to watch with friends?
- 3 Has it been around for the longest amount of time?
- 4 Does it have many great examples?
- 5 Does it make more money for its producers?
- 6 Is it more popular than other genres?

Don't forget to use information or data such as number of viewers, downloads and box office figures to support your ideas.

After completing this and covering all these elements, there should be no argument as to which genre is the best!

But wait, there's more ...

- You can learn more about films online at the [Internet Movie Database](#).
- You can read the [Children's Television Standards](#) at the [Australian Communication and Media Authority \(ACMA\)](#) website.
- You can learn updated information about Facebook and its users on the [Press](#) pages of the Facebook website.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Philippa Hawker is a film-writer and reviewer for the arts pages of Fairfax newspapers The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age.

What inspired you to become a journalist?

I always loved reading magazines and newspapers, and I think that was a factor – they were something that I wanted to be a part of. And eventually I realised that I really wanted to be able to write for a living.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

Writing for a student newspaper was a beginning, but the first significant step was approaching the editor of the local paper when I heard there was a vacancy for a film reviewer. He gave me a trial, then kept me writing reviews every week. After a year, I applied for a cadetship at a newspaper, and the reviews helped me to get the job.

What does a typical day in the life of Philippa Hawker involve?

It could be any combination of a few or many of the following.

- Seeing a film preview at a theatrette.
- Watching a film on DVD. Writing a short review. Writing a long review. Interviewing someone at 8 am, for 20 minutes.
- Condensing a two-hour interview into 500 words. Discussing a story brief with an editor. Sourcing pictures. Researching an interview subject (could be internet search, talking to people, a library check).
- Researching or making calls for a story. And the day blurs into the after hours, because I do a lot of viewing and work at home.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

I see a lot of interesting films, with a context and a purpose. There is still a sense of discovery for me. When I begin to write, things get clarified, and I find out what I really think. And I often get the chance to talk to people who make films or do creative work in the arts, and that can be really rewarding.

What is your least favourite aspect?

I occasionally get frustrated by the need to focus on what is being currently screened or what is considered newsworthy. Occasionally it would be good to write about something because it's interesting, without having to find a topical hook or angle for it. And there is a small thing that will bother me to the end of my reviewing days – rating films, giving them a mark out of five. I still have not managed to work out a coherent system for this.

Has being a film-writer changed the way you watch movies?

It probably has made some difference, but it's hard to be sure. I still watch for pleasure, and I like to think I watch attentively. If I am at a screening, preparing to interview a filmmaker or an actor, I might try to focus on particular details.

What film genre do you find the most interesting and why?

• Genres shift and change, and one of the things I find most interesting is the phenomenon of mutating genres, • crossovers and mash-ups. I enjoy the way that some directors use the horror genre in a witty, subversive fashion.

• One of my favourite directors, David Cronenberg, stretches genre boundaries in the most inventive and provocative ways. Yet if I were forced to choose a single genre, it would probably be film noir, for its moral ambiguities and the high-contrast, black-and-white intensity of its visual aesthetic.

Why are genre films so successful?

This is a really difficult question to answer succinctly. Genre simplifies: it is in a way a marketing concept, both in the industry and in the academy. It involves fixed terms and expectations, yet it is also about flux, about reinvention, about bringing a new twist to a familiar form. Sometimes the term is used descriptively, but it is employed dismissively – people can occasionally talk about genre films as if they are movies made to a formula, or conceived to appeal to a particular audience. And there are hierarchies in genre too; horror, for example, is probably the least 'respectable' genre. Many films that are successful, in box office terms, can be described as genre movies – but it is a changing business, and the industry has to work out which genres will play, and which are played out. The Western, for example, will probably never occupy the box-office high ground again, although some of its themes and elements turn up in other genres.

Top five films that are a great example of their genre and why?

1 *Out of the Past* (1947)

• Directed by Jacques Tourneur, who also made *Cat People* and *I Walked with a Zombie*, this is a classic film noir with all the hallmarks you would expect, visually

with

PHILIPPA HAWKER



and thematically: high-contrast black-and-white photography, a world-weary private detective, a femme fatale, a story of betrayal and corruption, a tale of the past that returns to haunt the present. But the film also has a stark, poetic quality that elevates it beyond the familiar: Robert Mitchum is magnificent as a former private eye forced into a world that he has sought to escape, and Jane Greer gives an utterly compelling performance as the woman he is drawn to, despite all the evidence of the danger she represents.

2 *Blade Runner* (1982)

This is a science fiction film, very loosely based on a Philip K. Dick novel, that presents a cool, dystopian vision of a not-too-distant future in which the difference between human beings and robots might be almost impossible to discern. But Ridley Scott's film is, above all, a hybrid work, something that suits its subject matter; it is a philosophical SF action movie that also has elements of film noir: witness the figure of bounty hunter-cum-private eye Deckard (Harrison Ford) and the character of Rachel (Sean Young), whose first appearance, in high-contrast lighting, smoking a cigarette, is a piece of classic femme fatale styling. One of *Blade Runner's* most memorable features is its production design; it is an early example of a sub-genre, cyberpunk, a literary and cinematic movement that combines futuristic new technology with a downbeat, mean-streets aesthetic.

3 *Pretty In Pink* (1986)

The teen movie has a very specific location in time, emotional place and space: set

in the corridors and lunchrooms of high school, it is an exploration of adolescence and its discontents. And in the 1980s, the John Hughes teen movie almost became a sub-genre in its own right, embraced by reviewers as well as audiences. Hughes created a series of films that brought a new twist to familiar formulas (exclusion, physical transformation, first love, parental pressure, status); he used strong contemporary soundtracks and his own youthful quasi-repertory company, with Molly Ringwald at the apex. *Pretty In Pink*, written by Hughes and directed by Howard Deutch, is a characteristic tale of outsiders, cliques and geeks, with Ringwald as a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who is interested in a rich kid (Andrew McCarthy). *Pretty In Pink* is also fascinating for the way its ending divides viewers. The conclusion was changed in post-production, and the debate still rages: did the right guy get the girl . . .

4 *Singin' in the Rain* (1952)

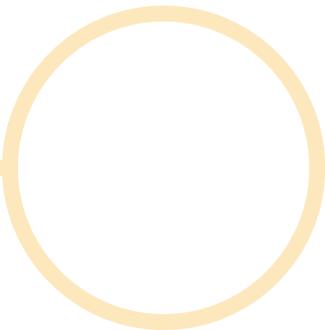
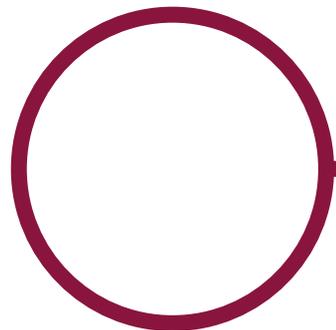
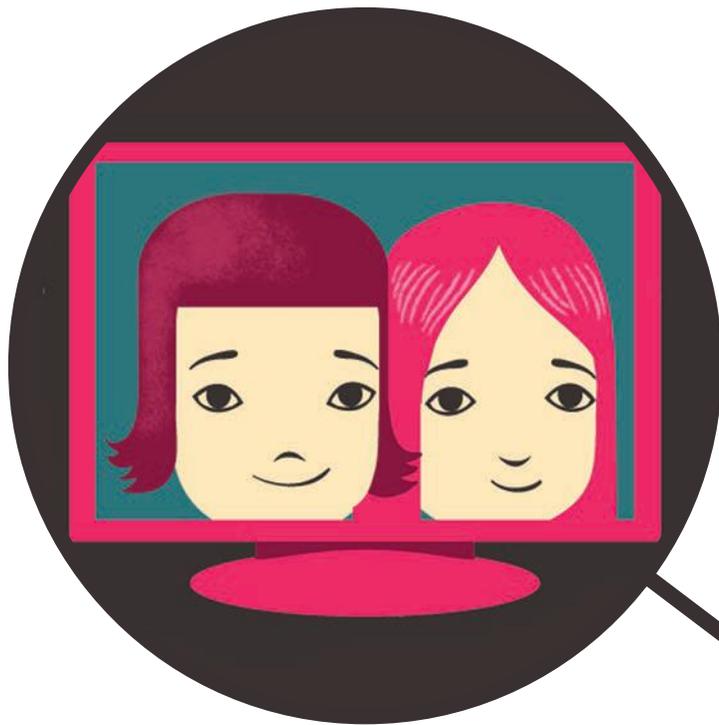
The movie musical is a genre staple, and *Singin' in the Rain* is a buoyant, brilliant, appropriately legendary example whose reputation has grown steadily since its release. It was created in a quite calculated fashion, weaving together a back catalogue of songs from decades past, but there is a wonderful freshness and exuberance about its execution – it is co-directed by its star, Gene Kelly, and Stanley Donen.

The story of silent movie performers making a transition to the sound era, it features bravura performances, and song and dance routines that range from the dynamic solo of the title song to

imaginative big-budget production numbers. Another highlight is a terrific comic performance from Jean Hagen as a vindictive, vocally challenged star. There is a sub-genre known as the backstage musical, in which a movie revolves around the act of 'putting on a show', and in some ways *Singin' in the Rain*, with its focus on the creation of cinematic illusion, falls into that category too.

5 *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000)

Taiwanese director Ang Lee – whose CV also includes *Hulk*, *Ride With the Devil* and *Sense and Sensibility* – took a genre that was extremely popular in Asian cinema, the wu xia film, and made it accessible to wider audiences. In an interview, he suggested that the movie was 'Bruce Lee meets Jane Austen', which was a shrewd if inaccurate marketing ploy: it doesn't capture the tone of the work, but suggests its range and wide appeal. Wu xia is a literary and cinematic category that recounts the deeds of noble warriors. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, based on a novel, is clearly indebted to the 1960s wu xia movies of master director King Hu, and it uses the graceful, gravity-defying martial arts technique of wire work. A deeply romantic, melodramatic, exquisitely shot story of love, renunciation and ambition, it features strong charismatic performances from its cast: Hong Kong leading man Chow Yun-fat, Michelle Yeoh (action star and Bond girl) and Zhang Ziyi. The actress Cheng Pei-pei (a star of King Hu movies) can be seen in a supporting role.



NARRATIVE

Ever since we could communicate, we have been telling stories. Whether to entertain, educate, inform or instruct, stories have constituted a major part of our verbal, written and, more recently, cinematic language. Mediums have always tried to capture ways in which to enhance the stories being told, making them more engaging for the audience. Cinema is one medium where the techniques and methods of storytelling have changed and advanced greatly over the years. What cinema was like when it first began and what it is today are two vastly different things, unified across time by the importance of storytelling.

This chapter explores the ways in which cinematic stories, or narratives, are told. We look at the elements that go into the creation of a narrative and learn the terminology that we can use to describe what we see. We also take the time to explore two quite different narrative texts – *North by Northwest*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1959, and the more recent Australian film *Looking for Alibrandi* by Kate Woods, from 2000. Although we only examine these two films, you will be able to transfer the ideas explored here to any text in order for you to gain a new appreciation of what goes into continuing our great tradition of storytelling.

2

COMING UP...

Rewind**The elements of narrative****Narrative case studies****Up for debate****But wait, there's more ...****Inside the green room with John Richards****REWIND**

Early films were quite different from what we understand as movies today. Not only were they silent, only accompanied by the music being played in the cinema, but due to technological limits, they were also much shorter. The earliest films only averaged about two minutes. They were also quite simple in their content, with audiences still being sufficiently amused by the novelty of the technology.

It wasn't until Georges Méliès created the 14-minute long *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (A Trip to the Moon) in 1902 that the audience's expectation of films was altered forever. The film was based on a novel by Jules Verne and contained ideas that classified it firmly as belonging to the science fiction genre. Méliès, being a theatre actor, was accustomed to utilising the materials at hand to create 'reality' for audiences. Film was no different as he used revolutionary **editing** techniques, such as **superimposing images** and **dissolves**, to create a piece of cinematic history.

Another of the early films in history, and in fact the world's first full-length feature, was made in Australia. *The Story of the Kelly Gang* was released in Australia on 26 December 1906. It depicted the life of Ned Kelly, whose death was still quite relevant, having occurred



Le Voyage dans la Lune
(Georges Méliès, 1902)



The Story of the Kelly Gang
(Charles Tait, 1906)

editing part of the creative post-production process of film and television texts that combines different shots into sequences to create a finished text; editing plays an important role in how a story is told

superimposing images where one frame is put over the top of another to create the illusion that they have been shot together

dissolve a transition between two shots whereby one shot dissolves or disappears into the other

only 26 years earlier in 1880. It was filmed on locations in and around Melbourne. Although today only 17 minutes of the film survive, when first released the film was around an hour in length. It was also one of the first films banned in Australia, as it was seen to glorify outlaws and criminals.

THE ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE

Story elements are the substance and content of a film. They are what make up the story of the movie. These include: opening sequence, character, storyline, setting, cause and effect, structuring of time, point of view and closing sequence. Production elements are the physical construction and are how the story elements are communicated. These include: camera, audio, acting, **mise en scène**, visual composition, lighting and editing. Without story elements, there would be nothing for the production elements to communicate. Likewise, if there were no production elements, there would be no way to communicate the story elements.

Movies also need to be created with specific audiences in mind. Depending on the audience, the director will use production elements in certain ways in order to engage them and gain their interest in the story. If production elements are not suited for an audience, the audience won't be interested and the story elements won't be communicated properly. How a director uses production elements to engage audiences of 50-year-olds differs greatly from how they would aim to engage 16-year-olds.

Consider the following questions:

- 1 How might a film director use music if they were trying to interest an audience of 50-year-olds?
- 2 What about an audience of 16-year-olds?
- 3 Name some songs or styles of music that would suit each group.
- 4 Compare the two. Why would the music suit the 50-year-olds and not the 16-year-olds?
- 5 Why would the music suit the 16-year-olds and not the 50-year-olds?

Where an audience watches a movie is also very important. This is called the **reception context**. Watching a movie in a cinema with big picture and loud audio is quite a different experience from watching the same film on a mobile phone while travelling on a bus. Since



mise en scène literally, 'put in the scene' (French), refers to all the theatrical elements necessary in composing a scene to be filmed: props, sets, lighting, sound effects, costumes, make-up and actors' placement (blocking)

reception context the process of receiving a message and how the location, time and emotions of the audience impact on how it is received and how meaning is made

2.1 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

production elements communicate story elements, interference with production elements could mean that audiences miss out on story elements. Missing out on important details could potentially reduce the audience enjoyment and engagement of films as they may miss out on key pieces of information.

For instance, if you were watching a movie in the classroom and an announcement came over the PA system asking John Smith to go to the office, making you miss dialogue that explains the protagonist's past, then you would not completely understand the motivations driving the character. This in turn may contribute to you not enjoying the film as it wouldn't make sense to you.

ACTIVITY 2.2

RESPONDING

- 1 What are the benefits of watching a movie in the cinema?
- 2 What are the things that increase the experience?
- 3 How could they assist in getting a better understanding of the movie?
- 4 What are the disadvantages of watching a movie in the cinema? What are things that interfere with the experience? How could they inhibit the understanding of the movie?
- 5 How might watching a movie in class be different from watching it in the cinema? Or watching a movie on a mobile device?

Story elements

The opening sequence

The opening sequence is the first part of the movie where the story, characters and setting are being set up and introduced. It is where the reality of the movie is communicated to the audience. It's also where the possible storylines are being set up, and expectations are created by the audience. For instance, if a character will have supernatural abilities later in the movie, they will be suggested in the opening sequence, so the audience has something to look forward to, as they expect to see them being used later in the film.



Character

In most movies, there is a protagonist: the main character on whom the movie is centred. It is this character's actions that push the story along. There is also usually a character attempting to stop the protagonist from achieving their goals. This character is known as the antagonist.

Think of a well-known fairytale.

- 1 Who is the protagonist?
- 2 What do they need to do?
- 3 Who is the antagonist?
- 4 Why do they want to stop the protagonist from succeeding?



2.3 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Storyline

The main storyline is the idea that begins at the start of the movie and continues to the end. There can also be subplots. These are used to give us more information about the main character or to create tension as they interact with the main storyline.

In *Looking for Alibrandi*, the main storyline is whether or not Josie Alibrandi (Pia Miranda) will reconcile the two different aspects of her life in order to find her identity. In *North by Northwest*, the main storyline is whether or not Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) will be able to stay alive.

Setting

The setting refers to the physical location – where the movie is set. This can impact upon the characters and plot, as the setting may prove to be an obstacle that the main character must overcome in order to achieve their goals, or it could be a symbolic reflection of their state of mind. Setting also refers to the time of year a movie is set in. This plays an important part in telling the audience what to expect from the storyline. So, if an Australian movie is set in January, an audience would expect summer holidays and hot temperatures.

The time of day a film or scene is set in can also contribute greatly to not only the audience's expectations, but also to the fortunes of the character. A desert at night time presents different challenges from a desert during the day; likewise for a city street.

This is also true about the period in which a movie is set. If a movie is set in 2012, we expect the character to call for help using their mobile phone. However, if a movie is set in the 1950s, the characters will need to overcome the problem in a different way.

Cause and effect

A movie is a series of causes and effects. It is what pushes the story forward. If there was no cause and effect, no conflict or no problem to solve, the movie would be very dull. This chain reaction can be based on events within a scene, such as cause: the room is dark = effect: the character turns on a light. This of



course can bring about other effects, such as if the light being turned on reveals something unpleasant or scary in the room that the character was otherwise unaware of.

Cause and effect can also underpin the characters' actions over the course of a movie, motivating them to complete a larger goal. In *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Dorothy wants to get home, so that influences everything she does throughout the movie.

ACTIVITY 2.4

RESPONDING

Think of the story of the three little pigs.

- 1 Write down how the process of cause and effect operates in this fairytale.
- 2 How does one event lead to another?



Structuring of time

The magic of movies is that they don't have to follow the normal flow of time. There can be flashbacks and flash-forwards. Time can be **expanded**. Time can also be **contracted**. We also don't need to see unnecessary incidents; we can skip to all the interesting events.

Communicated through the production element of editing, structuring of time allows the director to create a narrative that makes sense and is engaging to the audience.

FLASHBACK

A flashback is a shift in time to an event that occurred prior to the current narrative but that pertains to the unfolding action in some way. It can be used to remind us of key information at a crucial time of the movie.

FLASH-FORWARD

A flash-forward is a shift in time to an event that will occur should the current course be followed by a particular character. This is often used to explore a 'what if?' scenario.

EXPANSION OF TIME

An expansion of time can be used to slow time down. This can be done through the use of slow motion. It can also be achieved by adding cutaways to detail more information. These incidents seem to take a lot longer than usual; for instance, the last ten seconds before a bomb explodes, which actually takes five minutes. Or the scene with Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), in which as the door



expanded time the lengthening of time so it takes more time than it would in reality to pass

contracted time the shortening of time so it takes less time than it would in reality to pass

starts to close, he has about fifteen seconds before he's trapped forever – he not only pulls himself out of the ravine, but it's almost as if he's also able to dust himself down, bake a cake, build an attractive water feature and train a difficult-to-manage Dalmatian, with just enough time to rescue his hat before the door closes.

Point of view

Point of view refers to the **perspective** from which the narrative is told. Another way of thinking of this is by contemplating whose side the audience is on. It can be indicated by a voice-over or by the audience only knowing as much as the main character.

The point of view can change, however, from scene to scene to make the movie more exciting. For example, the protagonist is playing cards with another character, but unbeknownst to the protagonist, under the table is a bomb. If the perspective is restricted, and we only know as much as the protagonist, we won't know that the bomb is about to explode. If it does, we are just as surprised as the main character.

If, on the other hand, the point of view is unrestricted and we are informed both that there is a bomb and that the protagonist is unaware, we, as an audience, will be urging the protagonist to either notice the bomb or leave the room. In both cases we are engaged with the narrative, but for very different reasons.

The closing sequence

The closing sequence is where all the storylines are wrapped up, the main questions are answered and the audience is able to leave the movie with all their main expectations resolved and, to some extent, left wondering what would have occurred if the narrative was to continue. This process is referred to by the French term *dénouement*, which means 'outcome' or 'untangling'. Imagine the storylines and ideas as pieces of string that we're all wrapped up in while watching the movie, that we need untangling from before re-entering reality.

Closing sequences can also leave the audience with storylines that are unresolved, making us question what may happen after the events of the movie. This can be done either to engage us beyond the boundaries of the movie or to suggest the possibility of a sequel.



perspective the person from whose point of view the story is being told



Extreme close-up (ECU)



Close-up (CU)



Medium shot (MS)



Long shot (LS)



Establishing shot



Low-angle shot (looking up)



High-angle shot
(looking down)

Production elements

The production elements of a film narrative include different types of camera shots, camera angles and movements, audio and sound elements, the mise en scène, performance and lighting.

Camera

Obviously this is the piece of technology that records the images onto film or digitally, but how it is used can vary the meaning in the movie. Camera use refers to the size of the shot used, the angle it is on, the depth of focus employed and the movement of the shot. It also refers to the type of camera and method that has been used to record the action.

SHOT SIZES

The shot size used depends upon what the director wants to draw the audience's attention to. The closer the camera is to the action, the closer the audience will be drawn in, and the more intimate the scene will become.

- An **extreme close-up** is used to bring the audience's attention to something very specific; it could be a character's eye reacting to something or an object that has great importance to the plot.
- A **close-up** is also used to bring the audience's attention to a character's facial expression. Obviously with more of the face visible, it allows the audience to gain a better idea of how they are feeling. Close-ups can also be used to bring attention to an object.
- **Medium shots** are used to allow the audience to still see facial expressions, but also get an idea of what the character is wearing and a hint of the environment they are in. Medium shots are often used when characters are speaking within a shot.
- **Long shots** allow us to clearly see what a character is wearing. The audience gets an idea of their body language and a clear understanding of the location that they are in.
- **Establishing shots** are usually used at the beginning of a scene to provide the audience with a clear image of where the character is and where the action will take place. As the character is usually a distance from the camera, we may only get clues of how they are feeling through body language.

CAMERA ANGLES

- **Low angles** are used to communicate a sense of power and authority in a character. The more severe the angle, the more power there is.
- **High angles** are used to communicate a lack of power and inferiority in a character. The more severe the angle, the less power there is.
- **Eye level shots** are used to communicate neutrality in a character. These are used most commonly when two characters of equal standing are in a conversation.

Let's consider shot sizes and when each kind of shot is appropriate.

What type of shot and angle would you use for the introduction of the following characters? Justify your decisions.

- an angry policeman
- a sad toddler
- a happy circus clown
- a businesswoman walking to work
- an artist painting a picture
- a footballer running onto the MCG
- the Prime Minister giving a speech
- a trapped prisoner
- a vicious monster
- an elderly person crossing the road

2.5 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

FOCUS

- **Shallow depth of field** is when the object in the foreground is in focus, but the rest of the shot is out of focus. This is used to draw the audience's attention to the primary object in the shot.
- **Medium depth of field** is when the foreground and mid ground are in focus, but the background is out of focus. This is used to draw the audience's attention to more in the shot than just a shallow depth of field.
- **Deep focus** is when the entire shot is in focus. This is used to communicate depth and distance within a shot.

CAMERA MOVEMENT

- **Pans** are when the camera moves horizontally left or right on a fixed axis.
- A **tilt shot** is when the camera moves vertically up or down on a fixed axis.
- **Dolly or tracking shot** is when the camera moves forward, back, left or right to follow action within a shot.
- **Steady cam** is when the camera moves, simulating that look of being 'hand-held'. This is used to provide a more 'authentic' feel to the footage; however, too much of it can produce an authentic feel of seasickness.



Audio

Audio, also referred to as sound, can refer to dialogue, sound effects and music. Audio can also be defined as being **diegetic** or **non-diegetic**. If both the characters within the movie and the audience can hear it, it is diegetic and is used to further create the reality of the movie.

If only the audience can hear it, it's non-diegetic and is used to communicate information. Usual uses of non-diegetic audio are a voice-over, a narrator or an internal monologue, or to indicate the mood or emotion within a scene through the use of a soundtrack.

diegetic audio elements that exist within the reality or space of the narrative

non-diegetic audio elements that exist outside the reality or space of the narrative

Certain instruments or music are used to indicate certain moods.

- 1 Write down what music you think would be used to create the following emotions within a film: happiness, sadness, love, fear, excitement.
- 2 Describe the genre of music, the type of instruments used and the tempo or speed of the music you've selected.
- 3 Justify your response.

Mise en scène

A French term that literally means 'put in the scene', it refers to all the visual elements within a shot, scene or film. Aspects such as setting, costume, props, lighting and acting are all referred to when discussing mise en scène. This also relates to the colours used within the visual elements, as these can convey further levels of information.

VISUAL COMPOSITION

This is similar to mise en scène, in that it encompasses the visual elements within a shot, scene or film; however, visual composition specifically refers to the placement and relationship of all these elements within a shot. For instance, two characters within the same shot can be shown as being distant in their relationship with each other if there is a large space or object between them. Alternatively, two characters in close proximity to each other within a shot can show a strong relationship. A character can also be shown as being powerful or authoritative if they are sitting at a desk in an office with a wall covered with degrees and awards behind them.

ACTING

Acting refers not only to the actor's performance within a film, but also the expectation that is given to the audience based upon an actor's previous work.

An actor's performance can refer to their use of body language, facial movements and vocal expression to communicate how the character that they are portraying is feeling. For example, the actor smiles to indicate that their character is happy. Remember, it is always the actor who is acting, not the character. The actor may be smiling; it does not mean, however, that they are happy.

LIGHTING

Lighting refers to the lighting used by the director to simulate particular times of day or to indicate specific moods within a scene. Lighting can be naturalistic, imitating lighting found in reality. Lighting can also



be expressive, communicating, in an artistic way, how a character is feeling or the mood of a particular scene.

Lighting can also be high-key or low-key. High-key is when there are multiple lights being used to remove any shadows within a shot. Television sitcoms are usually shot with this lighting technique.

Low-key refers to a low level of light being used, usually in a specific direction in order to create shadows, either in the background or across characters for dramatic effect. Sinister or duplicitous qualities of characters are often identified or suggested through the use of low-key lighting, in particular through shadows being cast across the character's face.

Editing

Editing is the assembling of footage together to construct the film. It can refer to the duration of shots on the screen. If there are many shots in quick succession, a scene is usually fast-paced with lots of action. There is usually a pacing to these shots that corresponds to the actions of the characters on screen, or the music being played.

If there are fewer shots and they remain on the screen for a longer period of time, the scene is usually calmer. Editing can also refer to the order in which shots are shown. This communicates to the audience the way in which time is structured within the film.

Other editing modes include **cutaways** and **reaction shots**. Cutaways are when a character looks in a particular direction out of the shot, which is then followed by a cutaway of the object that the character is looking at. This indicates to the audience what the character is interested in and can emphasise objects of importance to the audience.

Reaction shots are shots, usually close-ups, on the faces of characters immediately after a significant event occurs or another character communicates an important piece of information. Reaction shots inform the audience of how a character is feeling in relation to that occurrence.

For example, if there is an explosion, followed by a reaction shot of a character crying, it is fair to say that they are upset by what has just happened. It would be a completely different piece of information if the same character was rubbing their hands together, smiling after the explosion had occurred.

Editing effects can also be used to communicate additional information. **Slow motion** is used to expand time, in order to bring the audience's attention to a specific piece of information that would otherwise be unable to be observed at normal speed. **Time lapses** are used to contract time, in order to indicate that a specific period of time, usually a day, has passed.

Transitions, such as **fade-ins** and **fade-outs**, are also used to communicate that a period of time has passed; however, this can be a more significant, and sometimes indeterminate, amount of time compared to time lapses.



Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1927)

NARRATIVE CASE STUDIES

North by Northwest,
Alfred Hitchcock, 1959

Film poster for *North by Northwest* (1959)



ACTIVITY 2.7

RESPONDING

Before watching *North by Northwest*, it would be good to have an idea of Hitchcock and his films.

- 1 Begin by writing down any facts that you know about him.
- 2 Share your ideas together as a class – how much is known?
- 3 Go online and research three of his movies.
- 4 Find out their names, genres and basic plots.
- 5 What does this tell you about his style?
- 6 Write a prediction about *North by Northwest*. What do you think will happen? What kinds of characters will there be? Have a look at the movie poster. What predictions can you make from looking at this? Make a prediction about one of the scenes. What do you think might happen? Why do you think this?
- 7 Put your predictions to one side and review them after watching the film. How accurate were you?

Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) is an advertising executive who, after being wrongly identified as a government agent by the name of George Kaplan, finds himself caught up in the middle of high-stakes national espionage (spying). The group of spies, led by Paul Vandamm (James Mason), are keen not only to discover what Thornhill knows, but also to ensure he doesn't report any of what they believe he knows back to the government. As Thornhill attempts to correct this case of mistaken identity and prove his innocence of a murder, he travels across America, hotly pursued by a collection of spies, police and government agents. Along the way, he is aided by Eve Kendall (Eva Marie Saint), who seems almost too eager to assist Thornhill in clearing his name, and the Professor (Leo G. Carroll), a powerful government man who has the answers Thornhill so desperately seeks.

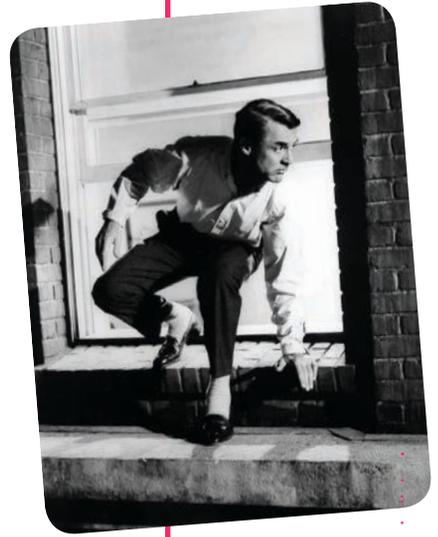
Characters

THE PROTAGONIST – ROGER THORNHILL (CARY GRANT)

Cary Grant plays a quick-witted, charming and well-dressed advertising executive who must use all his resources to outsmart those who want him dead.

Thornhill is introduced exiting a busy elevator as he dictates information to his secretary. Thornhill is at home in this high-paced world. Hitchcock demonstrates this in a number of ways. Not only does Thornhill seamlessly navigate his way through busy city crowds and commandeer a taxi, despite it already being taken by someone else, but it all occurs while Thornhill relays important business decisions and information to his secretary, without missing a beat.

These actions show Thornhill to be a skilled liar and a smooth talker. Through dialogue, it is also revealed that he cares about his body, suggesting he is in good shape for his age. 'You know, that's your trouble, Maggie, you don't eat properly.' This all serves to communicate to the audience that Thornhill is a resourceful protagonist who possesses the characteristics that will enable him to convincingly respond to the many difficult situations he will find himself in.



Cary Grant as
Roger Thornhill

- 1 **Imagine Thornhill had different characteristics and consider how Hitchcock could have communicated this information to the audience. For example, if he was a body builder, how could this have been demonstrated? What about a pickpocket or a racing car driver?**
- 2 **Write an alternative opening scene in which Thornhill's character is completely different.**



2.8 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

THE ANTAGONIST – PAUL VANDAMM (JAMES MASON)

Vandamm, played by James Mason, is a ruthless, smooth businessman and spy, who wants to ensure his secretive schemes are not undone by Thornhill, whom he believes to be George Kaplan.

Initially introduced as Townsend, Vandamm is leader to a group of seedy, merciless henchmen. This immediately communicates that he is someone who has authority and doesn't like to get his hands dirty.

The audience first meet Vandamm situated in an isolated mansion, a further indication of his wealth and power, when Thornhill is brought to him after being abducted by Vandamm's goons. Speaking with a slight accent, Vandamm is constructed by Hitchcock as a highly educated and well-mannered villain, who is clearly successful in his sordid ventures. Lighting is used to indicate Vandamm's dangerous ways. Low-key lighting is used, with shadows falling across his face as the character initially turns on lamps to illuminate the room.



James Mason as
Paul Vandamm
(right)

The camera reveals Vandamm's power through a consistent use of low-angled shots. His loyalty from his men is revealed through Leonard's (Martin Landau) quick response of proffering Vandamm a cigarette after he casually pats his jacket in a failed search for one.

Mason's constant smiling and calm voice indicate an amused and collected character, well experienced in these dealings. This sophistication and good manners are never lost, even when Vandamm threatens Thornhill, as revealed in the dialogue: 'The least I can do is afford you the opportunity of surviving the evening.' This helps to establish Vandamm to the audience as a powerful and dangerous antagonist, prepared to use any means necessary to stop Thornhill.

ACTIVITY 2.9

RESPONDING

In a narrative, the antagonist needs to be of a similar level or greater level of power to the protagonist in order for there to be a challenge. If the antagonist has less power than the protagonist, the audience can lose interest as there is no challenge facing the main character.

- 1 Make a list of movie antagonists.
- 2 Write down the characteristics that made them feared by the protagonist.
- 3 Rate them and come up with a 'Top five' of movie villains.
- 4 As a class compare and negotiate to create a class 'Top five most feared'. You may want to start a class wiki on the topic that you add to as you view more films.

Scene analysis

THE OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

As the Metro Goldwyn Mayer logo and roaring lion appear, presented over an unconventional green background, the commencement of the film is indicated with a crescendo of ominous brass and rapidly bowing violins. The logo then dissolves to leave a completely green screen. Angled and vertical lines move in from the sides of the frame. They are quickly arranged to resemble a high-rise office building, an idea further reinforced through the animation of the titles to resemble elevators. This **visual composition** of the lines references the name of the film (think north-west direction on a compass) and introduces a motif that appears in various forms throughout the film. It also communicates the idea of the city, its hustle and bustle and the chaos a city can bring. This idea is further anchored as a city building fades in under the visual displays of the titles.

The mise en scène then emphasises these ideas, as images of fast-moving traffic making its way through a busy city street interchange with great groups of people dressed in business attire, rushing out of office buildings, down into subways and through train stations, fighting over taxis and to catch buses (or miss them, in the case of Hitchcock's **cameo**). These ideas of desperate, frantic travel are echoed throughout the film, as Thornhill must navigate all of these to prove his innocence.

cameo in a film, the special appearance of a well-known or famous person, often playing themselves



The director,
Alfred Hitchcock

Bernard Herrmann's musical score (non-diegetic audio), with its driving, quick tempo and rapid interchange between sections of the orchestra, further communicates an idea of pursuit and haste.

Consider cause and effect in *North by Northwest*. It doesn't take long for Thornhill to become caught up in all sorts of trouble. This occurs through a series of causes that in turn affect the direction of the narrative.

From the moment Thornhill steps out of the elevator, map out the series of causes and their subsequent effects that lead to Thornhill being arrested by the police for drunk driving.

- 1 Choose one effect and change the outcome from what occurs in the film and predict what may have occurred because of that change.
- 2 Would the events in the movie still occur or would there be a completely different outcome?



2.10 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

ACTIVITY 2.11

RESPONDING

Consider the acting in *North by Northwest*.

When describing acting, it is important to refer to the actor. For instance, just because Thornhill is smiling, it doesn't mean Cary Grant is happy. In the scene when Vandamm's henchmen attempt to create an 'accident' in which a drunken Thornhill drives the car off a cliff, Cary Grant communicates to the audience that Thornhill is drunk. Describe the body language and facial expressions he uses to communicate this.

THE TRAIN TO CHICAGO

The pursuit of Kaplan leads Thornhill to taking a train from New York to Chicago.

The setting of the train is explained by Thornhill to his mother: 'The train, it's safer. There's no place to hide on a plane if anyone recognised me.' This creates a level of tension as although he'll be captive in the carriages of the train, there are more hiding places he can use. The fact that this idea has been mentioned indicates that those hiding places will be needed.



Thornhill and Kendall
(Eva Marie Saint) on
the train to Chicago

moniker a personal name
or nickname

The train's slower method of travel is communicated through editing. Between scenes taking place on the train, periodic cross-dissolves to cutaways of an external shot of the train indicate this structuring of time. As the audience is shown these external shots, the progression from afternoon, to dusk, to night can be noted, clearly indicating the rate at which time is passing and how long the train trip is taking. The use of a cross-dissolve between these shots and between scenes is also used as a convention to indicate a period of time passing.

The time taken on the train also allows Hitchcock to develop one of the romantic subplots of the film as Thornhill has time to become acquainted with Eve Kendall (Eva Marie Saint). Through the interaction between the two characters, the audience learns more about Thornhill, his past and his R.O.T. **moniker** ('The 'O' doesn't stand for anything'), an essential device used later in the film. It also provides tension within the plot, as the motives behind Kendall's allegiances and actions are brought into question, making the audience feel a greater sense of danger for Thornhill.

Whenever a good cinematic romance blooms, it must be accompanied by a rousing love theme. As Thornhill and Kendall sit down at dinner together, the non-diegetic music of soft violins accompanies the dialogue perfectly to indicate the romance quickly growing between the two characters. Grant and Saint's acting reinforces this as smiles emblazon the faces of both actors and the playful and flirtatious tones of voice indicate notions of interest.

This allows for an interesting cause and effect to develop within the film. As both characters fall in love, their ability to trust and rely upon each other grows, a factor that becomes problematic for both characters. Thornhill's love for Kendall

leads to a greater level of trust, accepting any assistance provided by her as genuine. For Kendall, the love causes her to be put in great danger as it threatens to reveal her true identity and motives to her enemies. However, the relationship between the two characters does contribute to the discovery of Vandamm's master scheme and the exact reason why he's been so determined to stop Thornhill at all costs.

THE CROP DUSTING SCENE

One of the most iconic scenes of Hitchcock's career, the famous crop dusting scene presents a stark contrast from the setting and hectic pace set throughout the rest of the film.

When Thornhill follows the directions given by Kendall, he finds himself in a deserted location outside of Indianapolis. The scene begins with a high-angled establishing shot, showing a dusty, dry farmland with a solitary road bisecting the empty fields (running in a north-west direction). Hitchcock leaves this shot on the screen for a long duration, completely slowing the tempo of the film down and emphasising visually the new and confronting scenario facing the protagonist.

A bus drives down the road, stopping in the middle of the shot, at which point Thornhill gets out. The bus drives off and Thornhill is left, standing by himself in the middle of nowhere. Immediately, the audience gets a sense of the isolation facing Thornhill, particularly when compared with the populated locations he's used to. This setting is completely unfamiliar to Thornhill. His abilities, clothing and personality don't suit this kind of environment and therefore put him at a great disadvantage. All Thornhill's qualities and skills that have been established throughout the film have little use in this arid and desolate location. This creates tension as his skills have been diminished. The isolation also adds tension because there is no one there to help him.

Audio further reinforces the isolation. This scene is initially devoid of non-diegetic music. The sound of wind whistling over the dusty plains communicates exactly how empty this scene is, compared with all the noise in prior scenes. This silence is broken by Thornhill's shoes crunching on the dirt of the road, by the roar of cars driving past and by the faint noise of a crop dusting plane in the distance.

Furthermore, long shots dominate this scene. Whether the shots are of Thornhill, completely out of his element (the long shot revealing the bleak landscape, Grant's awkward body language and Thornhill's inappropriate

Soundtrack

Throughout North by Northwest, the non-diegetic audio score by Hitchcock's long-time collaborator, Bernard Herrmann, perfectly encapsulates the mood of each scene. At times, particularly when Thornhill is investigating, it is reminiscent of the music used by Hitchcock a year earlier in Vertigo, when Scottie Ferguson (James Stewart) is investigating the mystery of Madeleine Elster (Kim Novak).



Thornhill runs in the crop dusting scene

clothing), or the perspective shots as Thornhill looks at the desolate environment around him, the camera further delivers to the audience this sense of isolation.

The lighting in the scene also contributes to making this setting one of isolation, hostility and danger for Thornhill. The naturalistic **high-key lighting** is used to simulate a hot, dry environment.

All these production and story elements combine to create an engaging situation in which Hitchcock can test the limits of Thornhill's abilities.

ACTIVITY 2.12

RESPONDING

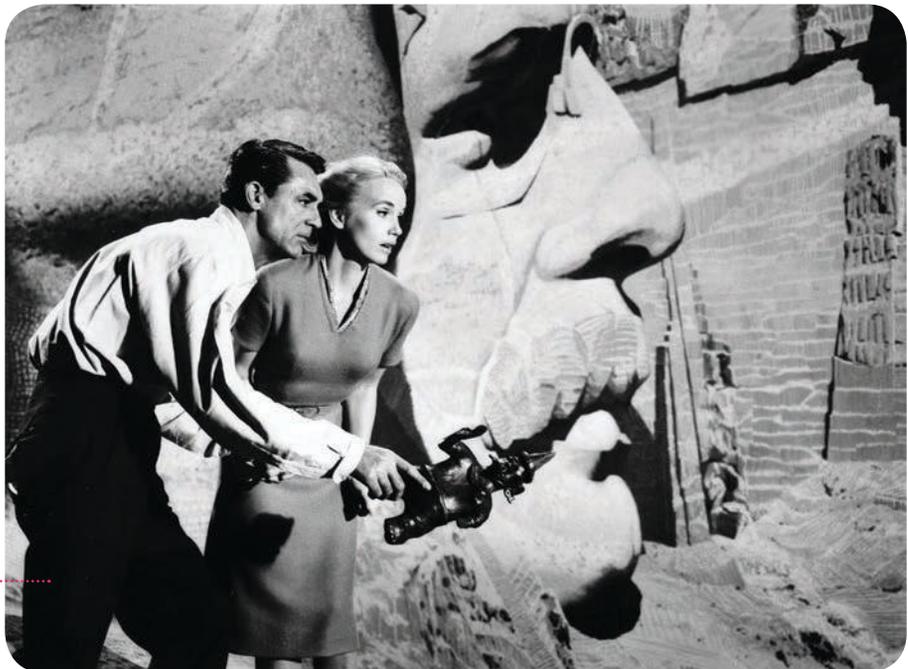
Consider setting in *North by Northwest*.



- 1 What other locations would Thornhill be unaccustomed to?
- 2 Think of a setting. How would you communicate this setting through the use of audio, camera and lighting?
- 3 What other production elements could be used?

THE CLIMAX ON MT RUSHMORE

The climax of the film is set on the faces of the former American presidents who are chiselled into Mt Rushmore – a location, incidentally, that Thornhill has travelled north to on North-West Airlines. Thornhill and Kendall are attempting to escape from Vandamm and his henchmen, and their only escape is onto the giant faces of these historical figures. Following the convention of all good action movies, the scene is set in a dangerous location, thereby increasing the tension felt by the audience as they are greatly concerned about the safety of the protagonist and any other character who they've invested time and emotion



Thornhill and Kendall
on Mt Rushmore

in. Mt Rushmore provides such a location. The faces of the former presidents provide difficult handholds and footholds for the characters to use, increasing the constant threat of a character slipping and falling to their death. This reinforces the high-risk games that have been played throughout the film. Amusingly enough, the former presidents oversee the final confrontation between those seeking to protect America and those who are looking to betray it.

Through the constant looking down by the actors and the wide-eyed, mouth-agape fear displayed on their faces, the threat is clearly communicated by the acting of Grant and Saint. The body language is cautious, with exact and careful body movement used to communicate that any wrong step could mean death.

Herrmann's score builds to a climax; kettle drums pound through the cacophony of a full orchestra. The music softens at times, the violins echoing the romantic theme from earlier as Thornhill and Kendall share moments. However, as the henchmen close in, shrieking instruments played at a fast tempo communicate the danger faced by our heroes. The music builds to a climactic crescendo as the fate of Thornhill and Kendall is decided. Screams and desperate shouts of characters close to falling also remind the audience of the potentially fatal action taking place.

As mentioned, the more dangerous the setting the characters are in, the greater the tension felt by the audience, especially if the characters are undertaking risky actions.

- 1 What are some other dangerous locations in which a climactic scene could be set?
- 2 List the locations and explain what qualities each setting has that makes it so dangerous, thereby engaging to the audience.



2.13 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Looking for *Alibrandi*, Kate Woods, 2000

Josie Alibrandi (Pia Miranda) is the only daughter of single mother Christina (Greta Scacchi). Josie is just starting her final year on a scholarship at a Catholic girls school in suburban Sydney. Josie spends the year getting to know her father Michael Andretti (Anthony LaPaglia) who didn't know she existed, trying to get the captain of the posh boys school (Matthew Newton) to fall for her, falling in love with Jacob Coote (Kick Gurry) and finishing Year 12.

In the opening sequence the credits roll across a black screen and we hear Italian voices chatting and laughing. The song 'La Luna' in Italian begins and the image opens to a plane flying overhead in a blue sky. It firmly sets the story in modern times, but the next image is of a large Italian family making *sugo a casa* – 'tomato pasta sauce at home' – in the backyard of someone's house. The image is filtered to give it a warm appearance and overexposed to make it feel



Josie with her mother and nonna

Josie's mother, Christina (Greta Scacchi), and father, Michael (Anthony LaPaglia)



old-fashioned. Some Italian stereotypes are also present, such as boys wearing handkerchief hats.

The voice-over starts, in stark contrast, with an Australian accent – a teenage girl's inner monologue discusses the 'tomato day' and how she doesn't want to be a part of this history and part of this culture, which she refers to as 'national wog day'. Then she asks herself, 'This might be where I come from but do I really belong here? That's the past and you can't let the past run your life.' The main protagonist, Josie, switches the music to some modern heavy rock and all the other characters complain and ask her to switch it back. The opening sequence leads us to the narrative possibilities: how the past impacts on Josie's life. It sets up the story of the clashing of her modern Australian teenage values and the traditional values of her family's cultural background.

The opening sequence also introduces us to the other main characters: Josie's mother, Christina, and Nonna, her grandmother. A car horn blasts in the background, cutting into the familial setting. Josie moves from the backyard, down the drive, literally away from her traditional family and into a modern car with her friends, all dressed like modern teenagers. They drive away and into the modern future they wish to have. Josie's internal monologue lists all the questions that the film will aim to answer or resolve.

ACTIVITY 2.14

RESPONDING

Explore what *Looking for Alibrandi* has to say about women by responding to the following questions:

- 1 Why are Josie and the Alibrandi women cursed?
- 2 Does she get Nonna off her back?
- 3 Does she blitz her final exams and get into law?
- 4 Does she make the man of her dreams fall in love with her?
- 5 Is she the first Alibrandi woman who makes her own decisions about her life?



**Josie with Nonna
and her mother**

The closing sequence bookends the opening sequence, except there are a few changes. Her previously absent father is there at 'tomato day', her Australian boyfriend arrives (not the boy of her dreams she imagined from the opening sequence, but a resolution of sorts) and is introduced into the family, and Josie draws in her friends from their car as they come to pick her up. There is no longer the warm filter or the overexposure from the opening, so we know that there is not the same separation between the two cultures that existed at the beginning, between the past and future. This time Josie puts on the song 'La Luna' to demonstrate her acceptance of her heritage.

The main storyline in *Looking for Alibrandi* is the character Josie's life during her final year of secondary school – the friends she has, what life is like for a teenager and how she interacts with family. The story is set in Sydney, Australia in current times. This setting allows Josie and her friends to experience problems that will be familiar to the film's main audience. Some of the major storylines connect to being in a big city and going to a Catholic school.

1 How would the storyline be altered if Josie went to a country school or a state school?

2 What about if the story was set in a different time period?

Discuss the possibilities in small groups.



2.15 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

The film is narrated from Josie's point of view; the narrative is told from her perspective. It is Josie's voice that the audience hears on the non-diegetic voice-over and often her imagination is presented as part of the film, allowing the audience to know what is going on inside her head and see the world from her

perspective. When Josie's school nemesis Carly (the antagonist) arrives on the first day, Josie's idea of her as the popular girl is shown like a celebrity arriving on the red carpet. There is the sound of celebrity fans screaming in the non-diegetic soundtrack. The camera is in soft focus, the antagonist is wearing a modified school uniform showing cleavage and she is signing autographs.

ACTIVITY 2.16

RESPONDING

Josie is in almost every scene in the film and the few where she isn't are reactions to her action.



- 1 How do we know that the film is from her point of view? Consider examples where production elements communicate this.
- 2 Imagine a particular scene is from another character's point of view (maybe her mother or father after an argument). How would the director communicate this to the audience using production elements?

Most of the film is shot in naturalistic lighting so that we know it is set within Josie's 'real world', but occasionally there are scenes that have a dreamlike quality. Here the lighting is diffused and the structuring of time of the film changes, usually slowing down to emphasise this. These are usually Josie's imaginings to emphasise how she is feeling in a situation and they add humour to what might otherwise be a very serious story.

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'Production elements are far more important than story elements to engage the audience.'

Consider the following questions in your response and include your favourite films as examples:

- 1 What do you think makes for a good movie? Are you drawn towards the story or how the story is communicated? Is one more important than the other? Or are they equally important?
- 2 Can you have a good movie without a good set of story elements? Do you look for movies with a particular writer or director? Are there any particular story elements that can let a movie down?
- 3 Do you look for a movie with particular production elements? Do you look for a particular actor?
- 4 Think of your favourite films and see if there is something in common. Are they more story-driven, more production-driven or is there a balance between the two?

But wait, there's more ...

- The Internet Movie Database is a great site for information and trivia on every film ever made or about to be made!
- For screen grabs from a great range of films and TV shows, the website *Leave Me the White* has a fantastic collection you can explore.
- For an exploration into the title sequences of great films and TV shows, the site *Art of the Title* explores the titles almost frame by frame and explains the process taken to achieve the effects.
- For movie news, reviews and exclusives, read the UK's *Empire* magazine online.
- For more details on Alfred Hitchcock, his life and great body of work, have a look at *Alfred Hitchcock: The Master of Suspense*, which can be found at: <http://hitchcock.tv>.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

John Richards is the co-writer of the recent ABC1 series Outland.

What inspired you to become a screenwriter?

Strangely enough, it was probably *Doctor Who*. I was obsessed with it as a kid, and back then the special effects were rubbish, so it tended to lean more heavily on the acting and the writing. It was quite a 'literary' show in the 1970s, so the Doctor would quote Shakespeare or poetry, and the stories would reference other books and films. It was a show that celebrated knowledge and the written word, and would lead me to other works (I read both Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* and JG Ballard's *High Rise* because they were paid homage – or ripped off – by Doctor Who). It was probably the first thing that made me aware TV had 'writers' and that those writers had the power to turn bubble wrap and tinfoil into whole other worlds.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

Like a lot of writers I started as a performer, and in particular I was a stand-up comedian. It was a way of writing material and getting it in front of an audience, but I soon realised I wasn't that interested in the performing side of it. That led to a radio sketch comedy called 'The Third Ear' on community radio station RRR, which I'm still very proud of. Then I received funding from Film Victoria to work on a feature script about a community radio station. And *Outland* came out of a short film I funded myself and filmed in my lounge room – there's a tendency for one project to lead into another. I never had any formal

training in writing, but I've watched a lot of television and film and learnt from what works and what doesn't. It's extremely affordable now to make your own short films or internet content and I think that's a brilliant way to learn.

What does a typical day in the life of John Richards involve?

It changes day to day. At the moment we're doing publicity for *Outland* so I've done two interviews, one in person and one on the phone. I've also had a meeting about another possible project, and I'm preparing a talk for the Australian Centre for the Moving Image about sex and violence on television. You spend more time emailing and in meetings than actually writing, I've found.

If I'm actually writing something I tend to take my laptop out to a café and work there for about five hours. I'm pretty old-fashioned, so I write my first drafts by hand, then when I type them up I'll make changes and amendments as I go.

- I like working in cafés because I like the
- movement and energy around me.

I also drink a lot of coffee.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

Well, it's certainly better than working in a call centre! My favourite moments are the 'eureka' moments – usually in the shower – when you suddenly realise how you can make the plot work by connecting two elements in a new way. Or when someone tells you that your writing has moved them in some way – you feel like you've succeeded. I think most writers have some sort of God complex, and we're hoping we'll create something that lives on

after us, so there's a real satisfaction when you hit a nerve.

What is your least favourite aspect?

There are a lot of meetings. There's not a lot of glory. And it's frustratingly unreliable as a source of income.

What makes a good film narrative?

I don't think there's hard and fast rules, and I get annoyed when people try to pretend that there are. Generally I need to have empathy with the characters, and I like to have a plot, but as long as the film keeps me engaged I'm happy. I like to have a beginning, a middle and an end, but they don't necessarily have to be in that order.

What is more important, the story or how it is told?

How it's told – after all, audiences still see Shakespeare without whinging about spoilers. You can tell a story that's been told a million times before but you have to be really good to pull it off. And it's important to know your genre. There's nothing as embarrassing as including what you think is a novel twist to discover the audience is seven steps ahead of you.

What is one narrative film cliché that you believe is overused?

It's not a cliché in narrative but a cliché *about* narrative and it's the phrase 'raising the stakes'. You hear it a lot in production meetings and it drives me nuts because it's incredibly unhelpful. While it's supposed to mean 'what's happening has to be important to the characters' it's somehow become a reason for making a lot of drama totally over the top. So a story about a character who has to achieve something becomes a story about a character who

with

JOHN RICHARDS



has to achieve something *and* her job is at risk *and* her daughter's been kidnapped *and* there's a nuclear bomb in the city. Sometimes small stories can be just as important as saving the world.

Top five film opening sequences and why?

1 *Brazil* (1985)

Terry Gilliam's masterpiece is a highly bureaucratic take on Orwell's *1984* in which evil thrives because good men do paperwork. The film starts with a shop window in which a TV set is showing an advertisement for ducts, before the shopfront explodes in flames. In the following chaos we stay with the TV while a government minister responds to a question about terrorism by quoting sporting clichés. This leads into a seamless sequence in which a computer error leads to the arrest of an innocent man, and in a few minutes we have an understanding of the world this film takes place in, the style of the film, the central themes and the overwhelming bureaucracy. We see the incident that incites the plot and we meet the female lead and one of the antagonists. Curiously, the very last character to be introduced is Sam Lowry, ostensibly the hero of the film, who doesn't appear until some 10 minutes in. And even then we first meet him in a dream sequence, all of which emphasises how little power he has in everyday life. It's an incredible amount of information to convey, yet it's done effortlessly.

2 *Children of Men* (2006)

Like *Brazil*, *Children of Men* is a highly visual take on a near-future dystopia, this one in

a world where no child has been born for 20 years and the world is slowly dying. The opening of the film is a single take that starts simply before building to a dizzying complexity. We start on Theo Faron (Clive Owen) buying a cup of coffee and learning from the television that the world's youngest man has died at the age of 18, which introduces us to both Faron but also the central premise of the film. Leaving the café we now visually – and viscerally – see the crumbling London he lives in before a terrorist bomb destroys the building he just left. It engages the audience first intellectually, then emotionally, but also doesn't condescend to them or feel forced.

3 *Amélie* (aka *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*) (2001)

Voice-overs are normally poison when it comes to narrative, and reek of either desperation or lack of imagination. When narration stops being narrative polyfilla and becomes part of the film's texture, however, it can become engaging. *Sunset Boulevard* is narrated by a dead man, for example, and *Memento* has a narrator who doesn't know anything and is just as confused as the audience. The opening to *Amélie* is great because the unnamed narrator – who is not one of the characters in the film – establishes the whimsical 'storytelling' nature of the film in a sequence that informs later events but mostly establishes the mood and tone. It tells the audience what sort of film it is and sets them up for what is to come.

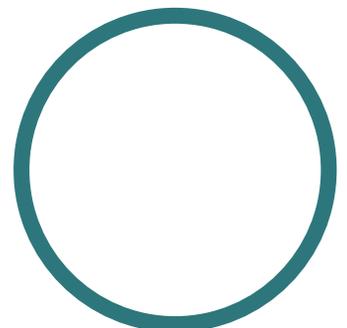
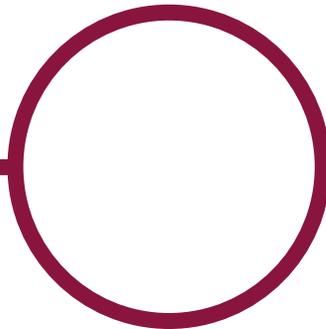
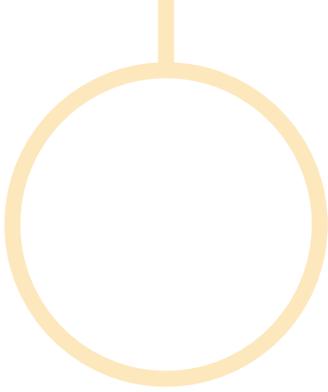
4 *Being John Malkovich* (1999)

Like *Amélie*, the beginning of *Being John Malkovich* doesn't serve a strict narrative

purpose but instead gently leads us into the film while also establishing the themes of the movie. Blue curtains on screen open to reveal a puppet show, where a wooden marionette sees its reflection in a mirror and then in despair destroys the room around it. It's a strong visual opening and immediately sets up the ideas of manipulation, self-image, power and artifice without overtly saying anything, and it casually introduces us to the protagonist Craig Schwartz (John Cusack).

5 *North by Northwest* (1959)

Hitchcock's classic thriller involves advertising exec Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) being mistaken for a man named George Kaplan, and the mistaken identity leads him into a world of danger and intrigue. In order for this to work, the audience needs to know who Cary Grant is, before they find out who he isn't. This could lead to a fairly dry introduction but *North by Northwest* starts with a dynamic Saul Bass credit sequence before moving to the streets of New York where we see crowds of rushing people, including two women fighting for a taxi and Hitchcock missing a bus. Kaplan is dictating letters to his secretary not in the office but out here among the throng. They take a taxi to his club (cutting in line to do so) before his secretary returns to the office and the plot kicks in. What could have been a boring office scene suddenly becomes much more exciting – even the legal disclaimer that the following characters are fictional is made to look strangely suspicious.



VISUAL LITERACY

3

Literacy is the ability to read, understand and respond to a written text. It is also the ability to understand the methods of language construction, such as understanding sentence and paragraph structure, and the ability to understand, or deduce, the meaning of key words. Therefore visual literacy is the ability to read, understand and respond to a visual text; to understand the key aspects of the image that are used to create meaning.

Visual literacy is important. All images, even those taken of 'real life' events, are constructed, as it is impossible to capture all elements of reality. It is because of this careful construction that being able to read an image is such an important ability to have. If an author has constructed an image for a specific purpose, what is their intention and what are they trying to communicate? You will explore the process of construction and meaning further in Chapter 6: Representation.

COMING UP...

Rewind**The process of being visually literate****Breaking down visual literacy****Images for analysis****Up for debate****But wait, there's more ...****Inside the green room with Melanie Dove****REWIND**

From the time of primitive paintings in caves, humans have communicated through images. As written languages alter over time, so too do visual languages. Each culture or time period will have its own set of visual conventions that are followed and understood. A person's, even a society's, visual literacy can be challenged when an image is presented that doesn't follow the conventions of the time.

Cubism and **surrealism**, two art movements that began in the early twentieth century, are both key moments in visual history that challenged the conventional ways in which society reads images. In each instance, artists constructed images that didn't follow social conventions; therefore these movements created much discussion centred on the interpreted meaning of these constructed visual works.

Today, for images to have impact, the author needs to be sure that their meaning is accessible to the reader or audience. If the meaning is too obscure or doesn't make sense, the audience will be confused and most likely lose interest in the image.



An example of cubist art

cubism an avant-garde art movement that represented human forms and objects as geometric shapes, using multiple viewpoints. Pablo Picasso was one of the pioneers of cubism and his 1907 masterpiece, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, one of its first major paintings

surrealism an art movement launched in Paris in 1924 that was based on dreams and the creation of images based on irrational or improbable thought

- 1 Think about a classroom at your school. If you had to take a photo of it, what might you choose to include in order to communicate that it is a classroom? Think of people, clothing, objects, posters, etc.
- 2 What elements might you choose to omit?
- 3 Alternatively, if you wanted to disguise the fact that the room was a classroom, what would you omit from the image?
- 4 These examples that you've thought of form the basis of how we can build an understanding in order to 'read' an image.



3.1 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

THE PROCESS OF BEING VISUALLY LITERATE

When we examine an image, our minds take in the information provided so quickly that it can be difficult to be aware of the process. The more visually literate we are, the more information we can understand and the faster we can do it. To get a sense of what occurs, it is important to break it down into stages.

We firstly see an object. In this case, let's say, it's a wooden or metal structure with four legs and a large panel affixed to the top. This description or 'definition' is known as **denotation**, or the *denotative content*. We then give what we see a name. So, we'd say 'table'.

After naming objects, we then attach additional meanings and ideas to them. This is called **connotation**. In the case of a table, we might think of a kitchen table and associate ideas of family, such as parents, brothers and sisters, or the sharing of meals, such as breakfast, lunch or dinner.

We connect images with names and meanings to make communicating and referring to objects much easier. It would be far too difficult to constantly describe objects, rather than just calling them by their known name.

denotation the description or definition of a person, object or place

connotation the additional meaning that we associate with something that has been named

In pairs, discuss the objects around you in the room. When speaking about these objects, don't use their names; simply refer to them by their denotative content.

- 1 What did you find?
- 2 Was it difficult to do?
- 3 How long would conversations take if you had to consistently describe objects rather than calling them by their names?



3.2 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

The kind of meaning we associate with a table will depend on the kind of table it is. For instance, for a large wooden table with wooden chairs around it, we may think dinner table. For a metal table with a plastic top, with two plastic chairs both facing the same way, we may think school table. For a heavy, wooden table that is low to the ground, we may think coffee table. Based upon how we attach meaning, we will also associate other objects, actions and activities with that object.

A table is more
than a table



Denotation usually creates little disagreement: a large, wooden, four-legged structure is a large, wooden, four-legged structure. However, from state to state and country to country, we often have different names for things. Doona/duvet, thongs/flip-flops, potato cake/potato scallop and face washer/flannel are just a few examples. Can you think of any others?

ACTIVITY 3.3

RESPONDING

- 1 Make a list of objects that we have different names for.
- 2 Next to each one, see if you can write down the place that uses that name.

Here are some to start you off (you just need to find the alternative name):

- chillybin
- Xmas
- jelly
- crisps.
- cracker

- 3 How many more can you find and where do they come from?

This process of denotation and connotation is used all the time; we just don't realise we are doing it. For instance, if we see a person lifting the corners of their mouth (denotation), we name it as a 'smile' and interpret this as meaning they are happy (connotation). If we hear a dog making a low, guttural noise (denotation), we name it as a 'growl' and interpret this as meaning it is a warning (connotation).

BREAKING DOWN VISUAL LITERACY

When reading a visual image, we take into account many key elements. To examine this process, it's best to break the elements down and examine them individually:

- setting
- people (including body language and facial expressions)
- colours
- props and objects
- text.

Setting

The location of an image can guide and assist us to interpret the other elements, as it provides a context and can influence the other meanings we read into it. When examining setting, we are interested in understanding the location, the

time of day, the time of the year and the time period in which it is set. To determine the location, we can examine many physical aspects within the shot. What information do the buildings provide? What kind of plants and trees does it contain? Who are the people within the shot? How might we describe the landscape? Is it urban or suburban or something else? Which country is the shot set in?

Being able to determine the country or region the image is set in can be vital to correctly reading the other elements. Determining the time of day can provide us with information about the action that occurs within the frame. Examine the lighting and the length of the shadows. Does it appear to be morning? Midday? Afternoon? Dusk? Night? To figure out the time of the year, what signs of weather are there? What does the sky look like? Do the trees have their leaves? Is there snow? What are people wearing?

The time period can be a little harder to figure out; however, you should be able to determine a time period. What technology can you see? What are people wearing? Are there any advertisements?

Even if it is difficult to gain an exact understanding of all these aspects of setting, obtaining some idea will help in informing you with reading the other elements.

People

If there are any people in the shot, they usually communicate a lot about themselves to the reader or audience simply from their emotions and their clothing.

Body language and facial expressions

How a person is standing, sitting or looking can provide us with information about how they're feeling about the current situation they are in. If they are standing tall, with their head held high, they could be feeling good. Alternatively, if they have their shoulders down, looking at the ground, it could indicate that they are not feeling so good.

The expression on their face can also provide information about them to the reader or audience.

Clothing

The clothing that people are wearing can also provide a huge level of information about the person and the situation in the shot. Clothing can reflect many aspects of a person's life. It can indicate if they belong to a certain group or organisation within society. It can indicate their socioeconomic status (upper class, middle class or lower class). It can communicate their profession. It can even indicate their attitude to life or to the event/situation that is happening, depending on whether they are dressed up or dressed down.



ACTIVITY 3.4

RESPONDING

Think about the different clothes that you wear and the different occasions for which you wear them.

- 1 Are there events for which society expects us to wear specific clothing?
- 2 Now write down clothing that we wouldn't wear to these events as it would be considered improper or disrespectful.



Colours

Reading the colours within the image can provide you with further information. We use colours to associate many different **symbolic meanings**. What are the colours that people are wearing? What are the colours of signs and buildings that are in the background?

Colour meanings can alter dramatically between time period and culture. For instance, in today's society, green is the colour used to communicate recycling; however, going back 50 years, there wasn't such a large social focus, so the idea wasn't associated. In other cultures, too, colours can carry a significantly different meaning.

ACTIVITY 3.5

RESPONDING

For each of the following five colours – black, white, red, blue and green – write down as many things, ideas and objects as you can that come to mind when you think about that colour.



Cultural colours

The meaning of colours can differ greatly between cultures, so it is important to remember that colours may have additional meaning that you may not be aware of because they are specific to the culture. Even if you're not sure, it is always good to assume that the colour being worn by someone may contain additional meaning and to research it. Here are some examples of alternative colour meanings from different countries.

Sri Lanka

- Red – Hindi brides wear a red sari at their wedding.
- Orange – from the country's flag, represents the Tamils.
- Green – also from the country's flag, represents the Muslim faith.

Poland

- Red – featuring on the country's flag, represents freedom and national pride.



CASE STUDY:**The Australian and Aboriginal flags**

The Australian and Aboriginal flags both have a great deal of significance contained within them. The Australian national flag was selected in a competition during Federation in 1901. It has three main symbols – the Union Jack, the Southern Cross and the Commonwealth Star – that are present on a royal blue background.

The Union Jack, which is the flag of the United Kingdom, is symbolic of three of the four countries within the United Kingdom. It is made up of St George's Cross, which represents England, St Andrew's Cross, which represents Scotland, and St Patrick's Cross, which represents (Northern) Ireland. The Union Jack features on the Australian flag because we are part of the Commonwealth and a former British colony.



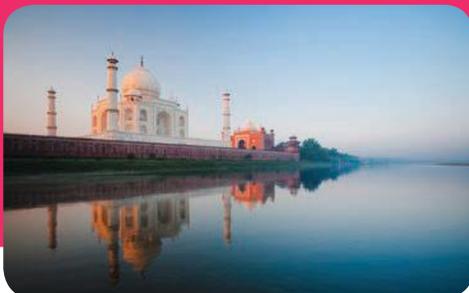
The Southern Cross is one of the constellations easily seen in the Southern Hemisphere. Although it appears on other countries' flags (New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Brazil), it has



The edition of the *Review of Reviews* front cover signed by Egbert Nuttall, after the winning designers of the 1901 Federal Flag design competition were announced.

India

- *White* – is the colour of mourning.
- *Red* – is associated with weddings.
- *Orange* – represents Hinduism.
- *Green* – represents Islam.
- *White* – represents Christianity.

**Japan**

- *White* – is the colour of mourning. Sumo wrestlers receive a white star to symbolise victory.
- *Black* – sumo wrestlers receive a black star to symbolise defeat.
- *Blue* – used to symbolise youth. Blue is also used to describe a piece of fruit or a vegetable that is not yet ripe.

Spain

- *Yellow* – has traditionally been associated with mourning.



come to represent Australia more than any other country. According to one of the flag's designers, Ivor Evans, the four main stars also represent the virtues of fortitude, justice, temperance and prudence.

The Commonwealth Star has seven points and symbolises the six states and the territories that make up Australia.

As for the colours, the blue can mean justice and loyalty, the white can mean peace and the red can mean valour or bravery.

The Aboriginal flag was designed in 1971, originally for the land rights movement; however, it has since become the national symbol for Australian Aborigines. The flag has three distinct parts. The black top section represents the Aboriginal people of Australia, the yellow sun is seen as being the bringer of life and protector, and the red lower part is symbolic of the red earth of Australia and the spiritual connection that the Aboriginal peoples have with the land.

ACTIVITY 3.6
MAKING & RESPONDING

Research another country's flag or a coat of arms and consider the following.

- 1 What symbolic meaning do the colours have?
- 2 What meaning does the arrangement of the flag have?
- 3 Design your own flag. What colours would you include to represent your beliefs? How would you arrange the components of your flag to also have significance?


Props and objects

Props and objects within a shot can also influence how we read an image. An object can provide further information about a person: their profession, their interests or hobbies or what they're doing. For instance, there would be quite a significant difference between someone carrying a flower and someone carrying a gun. Or between a briefcase and a guitar case.

Objects in the background can also indicate the event or situation that is going on. It can also reveal further information about setting.

Text

Text within an image or placed over an image can provide further information about all the previously mentioned aspects of the image. This occurs through the process of **anchoring**. Imagine a boat in the water. If it is not attached to anything, the wind can carry it anywhere. If it is anchored, it can only move within the range of the anchor. This is the same with an image. For instance, if you were to make a really bad drawing of a dog, it may not be clear that it is a dog. People might think it was a cat, horse or, if it's really bad, a wounded giraffe. However, if the image also has the writing 'this is a dog' next to it, it has anchored the meaning, removing the need for people to attempt to figure out the bad drawing. Text within a shot can provide information on location, businesses or ideas.

Text used as a **caption** accompanying an image can work to provide further context or commentary about the events or actions that are taking place. This form of text can dramatically alter the way that an audience reads an image.

anchoring the process of attaching a meaning to an image through the use of text

caption the explanatory text that accompanies an image



Images often accompany an article to provoke thought within the audience and to provide a visual depiction of the situation. An image such as the one above can communicate a range of different meanings and could be used for many different articles. The caption or headline used with this image could communicate a positive meaning or a negative one. For instance, if the caption 'More jobs' was used, it could be seen as positive, as more people have been employed. However, if it had the caption 'Pollution rising', it could be seen in a negative way, as nobody likes pollution.

- 1 What other captions can you think of to make this a positive image?
- 2 What captions can you think of to make this a negative image?
- 3 Share the captions with the person next to you and with the class.
- 4 Select the top five and write a sentence as to what the story would be about.
- 5 If we used the captions below, what would the story be about?
 - Historic end in sight
 - Climate change
 - Koalas dying
 - Mining boom

3.7 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

IMAGES FOR ANALYSIS

So what now? Now that you have all the components broken down, you can use these analysis tools to read and construct meaning from a visual text. After examining each aspect, you can begin to construct a probable reading (or story) as to what is occurring within an image and determine why it is significant. It

is often hard to separate our reading of an image into sections, because as experienced, visually literate people we take most or all of the information in simultaneously. When we look at clothing we will also think about colour. We look at the image as a whole, but for the purpose of close analysis try to separate the parts that create the whole.



Image 1

ACTIVITY 3.8

RESPONDING

The image above is taken from the news. It depicts an event that will be revealed later in this chapter. Before that, it's time for you to start using what you have learnt so far to read the image and make some meaning from what you can see.



- Using the following as headings, write down your observations:
 - setting – country, time of day, season
 - people – body language, facial expressions
 - clothing – have a close look at all the different styles
 - colours – clothing, land, sky, background
 - composition – balance, direction, lines of interest.
- Share these observations with the person next to you. Was there anything that you missed? Make sure you've looked closely.
- Now, make a suggestion as to what might be going on. What is happening that would make people wait in line? What would be happening that would make people wear these clothes? What are people lining up for? What mood are the people in? Can you see anything in the background? What are some reasons that we line up in our society?
- Share your ideas with the person next to you. Did they match? What about the rest of the class?
- Choose one of your ideas and write a story about the events leading up to the moment when the image was taken.

The image on the previous page was taken during the South Sudanese referendum, when the citizens were voting to create a new country. Captions such as 'Sudanese vote for freedom' or 'Democracy alive in the Sudan' could be used to anchor the meaning. Having this information immediately provides a context. This would explain the male and female segregation, as there are specific gender roles in the Sudan that differ greatly from those in Australia or New Zealand. Once we are informed that the people are voting for their country's independence, their formal clothing then provides an explanation of the importance they place on the event.

Composition

The image has a central focus because both the queues lead to centre of the image. The balance of sky to ground is almost even and suggests that they have equal weight within the image and therefore within the scene portrayed. The image does not focus on an individual, so as viewers/audience we can make some assumptions; for example, this image represents many people and ideas; a broader community rather than an individual's ideas. If the photographer wanted to personalise the event/scene/situation, they probably would have chosen to focus on a single person or a few people and their facial expressions for greater effect.

Setting

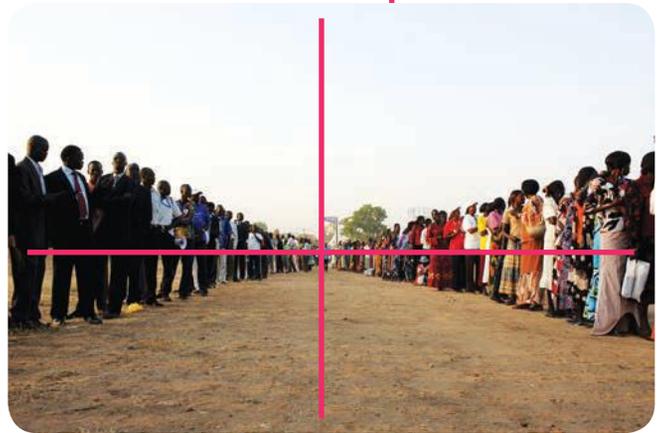
We can tell by the washed blue sky and sunlight that the image was taken outside in natural daylight. The image was probably taken in the early morning, as the light suggests a cooler sunlight than is usually seen in the afternoon. There are no big tall buildings, so it is not a big city. The ground is dusty and not paved, and this also suggests it is a rural setting.

People

This image shows two rows of people queuing for something. The row of people on the right all appear to be women. They are dressed in bright colours and big prints and all have dark skin. The row on the left all appear to be men. They are wearing suits or pants and short sleeves and are well dressed. They also all have dark skin.

What is this telling us about the image? This separation of genders suggests to us that at the time and place in which this image was taken, women and men, for some occasions at least, are segregated. In the country that you live in is this how queues are formed?

The people are all standing up despite the obvious hot weather. They are waiting for something in an orderly fashion. Many of them are formally dressed, which indicates the formality/importance of the situation. We may assume that





foreground the section in a photograph or film shot that is closest to the lens

socioeconomic status an individual's social and economic position in society; e.g. upper class, middle class, working class

background the section in a photograph or film shot that is furthest away from the camera

this image is taken somewhere in Africa, based on our knowledge of skin colour, but we can't be certain where in Africa because there is not enough information just in this image.

Colours

The colours in this are stunning and communicate a great deal of information. The formal black and white suits and coloured ties of the men on the left communicate the status of these men in society.

It also suggests that they consider this event to be worthy of such clothing. Looking further down the line, there are other men dressed in other clothing. There are a number of men dressed in a less formal manner than those in the **foreground** of the shot. While it may not suggest that they are taking the event any less seriously, it could certainly indicate their status in society, particularly when compared with the men in suits.

Similarly, with the women we can see a range of different clothing. The women in the foreground are dressed in formal dresses, skirts and tops of bright yet sophisticated colours. It could be assumed that these women are of an equal standing in society to the men opposite to them. If we look further down the line, there are women wearing pants, T-shirts and hats. Again, their clothing is clean, suggesting that they place a high level of importance on the event; yet when compared to the other clothes, it suggests a lower **socioeconomic status**.

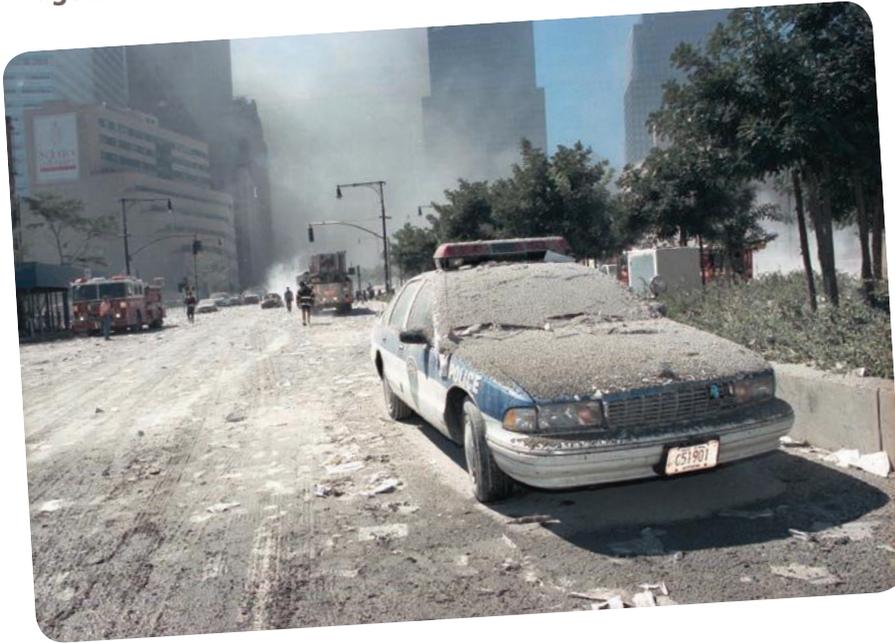
The billboard in the **background** of the shot, in the centre where the two lines converge, has a royal blue edge to it. This colour of blue is usually used in conjunction with official or formal advertising. It could indicate that this poster is from either the government or some other organisation assisting in the voting process. It is also the standard colour of ink

found in most ballpoint pens. Due to this association, it could also signify the democracy that is being exercised through the use of a pen to register a vote on a voting card.

The sandy-coloured dirt, with a distinct lack of green, except for the tree in the background, informs us of the dry, arid conditions that are usually experienced in the area. This would also be reinforced by the lack of distinct contrasts of colour in the sky, suggesting that the time of the year in which this shot has been taken is consistently without rain.



Image 2



Here is an image from a significant world event. It depicts a day that will remain in the minds of many people around the world as one of the most historical events of the recent era. You might know what the event is, but let's have a close look at the image and see what we can figure out.

- 1 Using the following as headings, write down your observations:
 - setting – country, time of day, time of year
 - people – body language, physical appearance
 - clothing – can you identify any special uniforms?
 - objects/props – what's normal/unusual?
 - colours – what stands out?
 - composition – how are all the elements positioned?
 - text – is there anything that can be read?
- 2 Share your observations with the person next to you. Was there anything that you missed? Make sure you've looked closely.
- 3 Now, make a suggestion as to what might be going on and what has just happened. Where was the photo taken? What is happening? Who are the people? Who do they represent? What about the props and objects in the shot? What do they tell us? What about the colours? What do they tell us about the shot? What about the vehicles? What do they tell us?
- 4 Share your ideas with the person next to you. Did they match? What about the rest of the class?
- 5 You might know, or have figured out, what has just occurred in this photo. Why might this image be appropriate to symbolise the event?



3.9 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

The image on the previous page was taken on 11 September, 2001. It was taken a few blocks away from a location now known as Ground Zero, where the World Trade Center in New York City had collapsed after being struck by two hijacked commercial aeroplanes. The image hints at the devastation caused that resulted in over 2500 deaths.

Setting

An almost empty city street covered in ash and dust. Large buildings in the background tell us that this is a big city. There are not many indicators that this city is New York City; if the viewer didn't know about the preceding event, this photo could have been taken in any number of cities around the world. The ash adds to this uncertainty – some of the elements that might be used by a viewer to determine where the image was taken (such as details on the police vehicle) have been covered over. The bright sunshine and the blue sky in the background lead the viewer to assume that the time the image was taken was closer to the middle of the day than evening or dawn. The clearing smoke and ash cloud in the background suggest that the image was taken after the event rather than right in the middle of it.

Text

This is a great example of how text can immediately narrow down the setting. On the side of the car we can clearly see the word 'POLICE', identifying the country as being one whose national language is English. This narrows down the location significantly. It also confirms the identity of the emergency vehicle, which informs us that the event is significant enough to involve the police.

Composition

This image uses a few compositional elements. The components juxtaposed lead to an interesting reading: the still police car in the foreground covered with dust, a chaotic street scene behind and the blue sky in the background all in bright sunlight. This juxtaposition asks the viewer to question what is or has been happening in this situation. The devastation of the image is in stark contrast to the bright sunshine and blue sky. The police car is the main feature of the image, and due to the absence of any driver or people the car appears abandoned – left to the chaos – which adds to the desolation in the shot.



People

There are very few people in this photo and they are certainly not the major focus. They appear to be professionals such as fire and police officials. The absence of people in the image is one of the reasons that it is interesting. This would normally be a busy New York City street in the beginning of autumn, and the absence of people really pushes home the effects of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the loss of lives and disruption to everyday life that occurred at the time in one of the busiest cities in the world.

Colour

The blue within this image is one of the most striking colours. We can see the blue of the police car and the blue of the sky. This provides an interesting contrast between the law enforcement officers and what was described by many as being a beautiful autumn's day. When we see police cars, we often assume the worst; they gain our attention and start us speculating about what has happened. The blue of the sky doesn't match the severity of the image, which goes to show that things don't always happen the way they do in the movies.

The red of the fire engines is another significant colour within this shot. As with the blue of the police car, we immediately begin wondering: where is the fire? The presence of two vehicles indicates a large event.

The green of the trees also provides an interesting piece of information. Look at the leaves. They don't appear to have any significant damage done to them. This could signify that the action is quite recent and that it hasn't been prolonged in any way. If they were ripped or damaged in some way, it could suggest that there had been ongoing fighting; however, they appear to be just a little dusty.

This brings us to grey, the most dominant colour within this image. Rather than a traditional city scene, it creates a lunar environment. This other-worldly feel adds to the calm aftermath of the incident. The alien ambience is widespread, due to the level of ash covering the scene. This ash indicates to us the magnitude of the explosion or detonation.

Props/Vehicles

We may not have seen one of these vehicles firsthand; however, they are featured widely on many of the movies and TV shows that we watch. These vehicles might immediately provide us with information as to where this image is set.

There are few other cars in the image, suggesting that the police and fire departments have evacuated all traffic and pedestrians from the area. This provides us with an indication of the duration of the event, given that the dust on the ground is largely free of footprints and tyre marks. Either the evacuation from this area happened before the dust covered the area or the grand scale of the incident has made the prospect of fleeing unlikely.



Image 3



ACTIVITY 3.10

RESPONDING

Here's another image for you to analyse. This time, however, you're completely on your own.

- 1 Begin by focusing on the following elements:
 - setting – location and time of day and year
 - people – body language and facial expressions
 - clothing
 - props and objects
 - colours.
- 2 What information can we gather from this image about what has just happened? How important is the event? Is there any additional significance about the event?
- 3 This image has no caption. Try writing some that capture the event in as few words as possible.
- 4 Now try to write captions that could completely change the meaning of the image.



ACTIVITY 3.11

MAKING & RESPONDING

The internet is full of images.

- 1 Go to a news website or to a newspaper and find an image that depicts a situation.
- 2 Remove all text and give it to another person in the class to see if they can read the image and figure out what is happening.



ACTIVITY 3.12

RESPONDING

- 1 Before we wrap up this chapter, let's investigate 'emojicons'. Where did they come from? Are they universal?
- 2 What are the top 10 most common ones? Smile, frown, heart ...
- 3 Find some more obscure ones and see if everyone knows them. Create some of your own among your friends.
- 4 What about street signs – are these universal? Find some images of street signs from where you live and then compare them with street signs for the same thing in another country. Are they the same or different? What are the similarities and why would they be similar?
- 5 Create some street signs of your own using ideas from current signs.



Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'The ability to read images is just as important as the ability to read text.'

Consider the following questions in your response:

- 1 Do you believe this is true? Is learning to read images just as important as learning to read text?
- 2 How would someone get on in life with the ability to read text and not images?
- 3 What about if someone was completely unable to read images – what would their life be like?
- 4 What information do we receive from images?
- 5 How visual is our society?

But wait, there's more ...

If you are interested in exploring visual literacy in more depth, you can find out more online:

- Search for Pablo Picasso – an artist well known for his cubist works.
- Search for Salvador Dali – an artist well known for his contribution to surrealism.
- You can explore the online Encyclopaedia of Western signs: www.symbols.com.
- Search for more about world flags.
- R. Klanten, S. Ehmann and F. Schulze, 2001, *Visual Storytelling: New Language for the Information Age*, Gestalten. A book dedicated to data visualisation and infographics to engage our visual vocabulary.
- J. Drew and S. Meyer, 2010, *Choosing Color for Logos and Packaging*, RotoVision. A book that features hundreds of designs and explores how designers communicate using colour.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Melanie Dove has been a professional photographer since 2000 and her photographs have been published in books (including cookbooks), newspapers and magazines.

What inspired you to become a photojournalist?

I was inspired to become a photographer, especially working in press because I believed it would be an exciting and challenging way to see new sights and experience new cultures. I hoped the power of the medium would allow me to broadly illuminate important issues, raise awareness, educate and possibly improve the plights of the disadvantaged.

What was your first step towards following this path?

My first step toward following this pathway was completion of a three-year Diploma in Photography at Photography Studies College in 1994–96 after completing Year 12. I majored in Art and found this was a benefit when documenting the ordinary, everyday events in an arty, extraordinary fashion. I travelled around Australia and Asia for two years building a folio which enabled me to land a 12-month contract with *The Age* newspaper in 2002, although in extreme contrast I was no longer photographing Sumatran elephants but rather social events and celebrities five days and nights a week. This job taught me how to develop a quick rapport with my subjects, fast use of flash and proved I could

consistently meet deadlines. From there I went back and finished a BA Photography at RMIT in Melbourne whilst continuing to work at *The Age*.

What does a typical day in the life of Melanie Dove involve?

There is no such thing as a typical day for a press and freelance photographer and that is why I like it – no two days are ever the same.

When I work for *The Age* newspaper I am given specific briefs by one of my news or magazine editors outlining who, when, where and why I am to shoot a particular story and usually a short brief indicating the angle the journalist is taking on the issue. It is then my task to interpret and photographically illustrate that brief. It is important to know if it is going for print or online as that changes the photographic approach and quantity of images required when covering the event. On those days I would average shooting, editing and filing about three to four shoots. You need to be prepared for anything and everything. I always have clothes for every season in the car boot along with my full set of charged photographic gear, food and water.

The content of my work ranges from news, food, photojournalism, documentary and art photography. Increasingly I am making movies combining my still photos, video footage and audio recordings. The skill set evolution of news photographers is driven by the consumer now using the internet, especially the likes of iPhones and

iPads to read their daily news as opposed to the paper. Moving images are a powerful medium which are becoming easier to deliver and view, and I believe have a stronger impact on the viewer.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

My favourite aspect of the job is the excitement and sense of discovery my job offers on a daily basis. I feel privileged to be able to communicate via the artistic avenue of visual language. You cannot explain the feeling 'capturing the moment' to anyone who hasn't experienced it, but it is truly inspiring and a great sense of achievement. It is great to see your work in print too. I love the fast turnover of news and magazines; it gives an almost immediate sense of completion and satisfaction.

What is your least favourite aspect of your job?

My least favourite aspect of the job is the pressure of deadlines and the emotional toll it takes. Many people think we have an easy job. I mean we only have to press the shutter, right? Wrong. Press photography is both emotionally and physically challenging. You not only have to carry a lot of heavy gear and deliver the required outcome within strict deadlines, you are also often dealing with case sensitive stories. These people and issues require compassion and respect; your job starts with finding and gaining the trust of your subject. Clicking the shutter is the easy part, then comes the arduous run back to

with

MELANIE DOVE



the car to file from a laptop before starting all over again.

What makes a powerful media image and why?

The components required to make a powerful media image are clear narrative, strong composition, mood and aesthetics created by lighting, and the secret ingredient, emotion. An injection of emotion in your decisive moment allows the viewer to engage and empathise with the subjects depicted.

With today's level of media saturation, are people more visually literate?

With today's level of media saturation I do believe people are more visually literate but I think there is still a lot more the general public could learn or be aware of. For example, we all know that women's magazines airbrush but did you know the photos are often composites of many different images, so that moment never actually existed.

News photography is different in that it is illegal to digitally add or subtract any content from an image; however, what we choose to include or exclude from the frame to begin with is entirely subjective, remembering our mission is to illustrate a concocted image brief from the news desk. The onus is on the photographer to first photograph as objectively and ethically as possible and then on the editors to choose to publish images which reflect an accurate viewpoint. Whose judgement do we trust? I would encourage everyone to actively

analyse and question their media source.

As colours play a significant part in communicating meaning, what things do you associate with the colour blue?

With the colour blue I associate the feeling of cool, cleanliness, refreshment, relaxation and the blue skies of freedom.

What are your top five visual images of real life events?

1 Nick Ut's Pulitzer Prize-winning picture of Phan Thj Kim Phuc who was a 9-year-old girl running naked and terrified from a napalm attack on the village of Trang Bang during the Vietnam War during 1972. This image communicated so effectively the horrors of war and helped bring about worldwide awareness from the perspective of the innocent Vietnamese people caught in the crossfire. It is a powerful document which has stood the test of time and continues to educate the world.

2 Man on the moon – I mean no one can top that. It was as if the Western world collectively sat down in 1969 in front of their black and white TV to witness the Apollo 11 and Neil Armstrong make history. Even for those of us who didn't see it live, we have that vision etched in our minds.

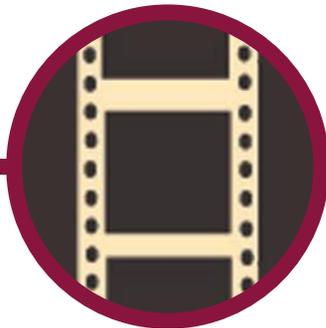
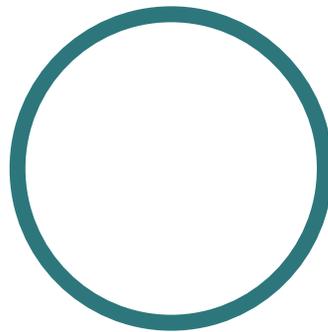
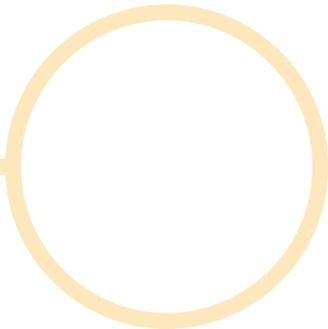
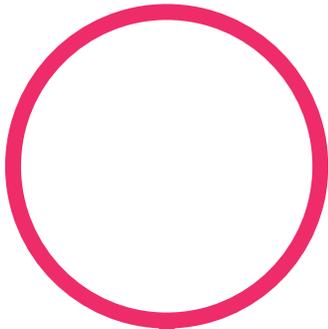
3 Kevin Karter's 1993 image from Sudan's famine featuring a starving toddler with a vulture watching over them. This image attracted worldwide attention and funding for the famine relief but it also threw into question the photographer's motives and ethics. Did he assist the

toddler and why not? It won him a Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography but sadly the photographer eventually committed suicide. Photojournalism is such a strange and subjective career because if he had intervened would he have altered the 'truth' of the image? I found this image terribly sad when I first viewed it and sadder for knowing the broader toll it took on the photographer.

4 2011 video footage of Japan's tsunami and Australia's Queensland floods. Most remarkably this footage was most often shot by amateurs on their phones. It highlights the ever-expanding and evolving employment of user generated content (UGC). It is undoubtedly a powerful, albeit unregulated means of documentation, valuable inside vision that would otherwise go unseen.

5 Australian Dean Sewell's documentary of the 2004 tsunami which devastated Aceh in Sumatra, Indonesia. There is one particular image which made my stomach retch and my heart seize up with sadness. It is of deceased children, fully dressed but their eyes lost, just cavernous holes like damaged dolls. As a mother, that image can never be erased from my memory. It illustrates the power which can be delivered by a single image and the empathy and understanding which can be shared with the viewer.

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FILM AND VIDEO PRODUCTION

4

It's one thing to analyse films but another thing entirely to make one. To go from one side of the screen as the audience to the other as the creator is incredibly empowering. Suddenly, you can start telling stories – stories that have inspired you, stories that no one knows. Or you may simply want to enjoy the creative challenges that filmmaking presents. In any case, it is a process that will change you in many ways.

First, filmmaking will change you as an audience member. When you are watching your favourite film, you will now be thinking 'How did they do that?' or 'I can't wait to give that a try!' You will be critically examining the production and story elements, and be able to assess with greater authority what constitutes a good film.

Second, your ability to work with others will be tested. You may find that some people you first thought had nothing to contribute are incredibly hard working; similarly, those who you believed to be full of great ideas may not have any work ethic. You won't look at people the same way again.

Finally, your outlook on the world will change. Instead of being an observer, you become aware of your ability to comment and incorporate. You will begin looking at locations as future settings and at people as future characters. Filmmaking will also give you a sense of your future plans as you ponder: 'What will I make next?'

Most importantly, enjoy the process. It may be frustrating at times, but it will be well worth the effort.

COMING UP...

- **Rewind**
- **Roles and responsibilities of filmmaking**
- **Concept development or inception**
- **Format**
- **Pre-production stage**
- **Production stage**
- **Post-production stage**
- **Up for debate**
- **But wait, there's more ...**
- **Inside the green room with Vincent Giarrusso**

REWIND

The amateur filmmaking process has come a long way in the past 100 years. Back at the turn of last century, filmmaking was silent except for accompanying records that were played during the screening of the film. **Caption cards** were used to communicate any specific dialogue or narration that the director wanted to include. It wasn't until the 1920s that **synchronous sound** was developed.

In the early 1920s, the amateur or home filmmaking market was also beginning, with the invention of portable, and most importantly affordable, movie cameras, which mostly used 9.5 mm film. The cameras were spring-loaded and

caption cards black cards with white writing on them used during the Silent Era to inform the audience of dialogue or action

synchronous sound included dialogue and sound effects that match up with the footage



Early portable movie cameras

operated by turning a handle on the side of the camera that tightened the spring. The operator would then put the handle away and could film for as long as the spring drove the mechanism.

In the 1960s there was another large boom with the release of Kodak's Super 8mm format, specifically designed for the amateur filmmaker. Quick and easy to use, the Super 8mm format saw an explosion in amateur movie and documentary making.

This dominance existed until the 1980s when analogue video camcorders came onto the market. The cost of the tapes being used was incredible low, thereby making them the option of choice for many amateur filmmakers. Formats such as **MiniDV**, which recorded in analogue, have been replaced over the past few years with digital recording options.

Now amateur video cameras record digital information onto memory cards or direct to the hard drive. This means that the recorded footage can integrate directly with computer editing systems and can be easily shared, by either being burned onto **DVD** or being uploaded onto the internet.

As we are now entering an era where most smartphones allow for high-definition video recording, editing, sharing and uploading, filmmaking has never been more easily accessible. With so many filmmakers out there it is important, now more than ever, to develop your skills and develop your own style to ensure your work will stand out from the crowd.

MiniDV short for Mini Digital Video, the MiniDV format is a type of videocassette used mostly in amateur video making

DVD short for Digital Versatile Disc, DVDs are a digital method of storing information such as movies, music and data

documentary film nonfictional film that aims to depict or document some aspect of reality, often using the dramatic structures of narrative filmmaking

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FILMMAKING

Before beginning the process of filmmaking, it is important to understand the collaborative nature of the process and the many roles that contribute to create the end product. In this chapter we explore these roles and the responsibilities that each role has. Some of these are different if you decide to make a nonfictional or **documentary film**. It does not matter whether each role is completed by a separate person or multiple roles are completed by the one person; at the end of the day, for a successful production to take place, each role needs to be filled.

The following table lists the responsibilities that are explored in this chapter:

Pre-production	Production	Post-production
Producer	Producer	Producer
Director	Director	Director
Scriptwriter	Director of Photography (DOP)	Editor
Storyboard artist	Gaffer (lighting)	Sound effects manager
Location scout	Costume and props manager	Soundtrack composer
Casting agent	Sound coordinator	Promotions director

It is also important to note that while each role has been positioned under a specific production stage, this is simply an indication of when most of their responsibilities take place. It doesn't necessarily mean that they have nothing to do or contribute throughout the other production stages. The making of a film is a collaborative process and there are always people who need to be liaised with.

When filmmaking, you must remember that each stage of production is just as important as each of the other stages. Therefore, you should invest the same amount of time into each stage to ensure that your group members have a sufficient amount of time to complete their roles and responsibilities.

As you can see, the producer and director have been separated above each of the other roles that have been split into the various stages. This is because they have the greatest responsibility for what happens (and say in what happens) throughout the filmmaking process.

The producer is basically in charge of all organisational duties: to make sure all the required work is being completed, to make sure all deadlines are being met and to make sure all the location and actor release forms are completed.

The director is in charge of all creative aspects of the production. It is up to them to make sure that the creative vision is understood by the group and that the work being completed is in line with what was initially agreed upon. This is to ensure that the filmmaking process, which can take a number of weeks, proceeds with as much cohesion and continuity as possible.

Below is a table that provides one example of how the producer's and director's responsibilities can be broken down through the production process.

	Pre-production	Production	Post-production
Producer	Complete a shooting timeline and obtain filming permissions from necessary people	Create a list that details when all group members are required	Ensure the production team meets all required group deadlines
Director	Meet with scriptwriter, storyboard artist, location scout, producer, casting agent to finalise and confirm creative vision	Be present at each shoot, direct the filming, and review and log footage at the end of each filming session	Be present through the editing process to ensure creative vision is being met

ACTIVITY 4.1

RESPONDING

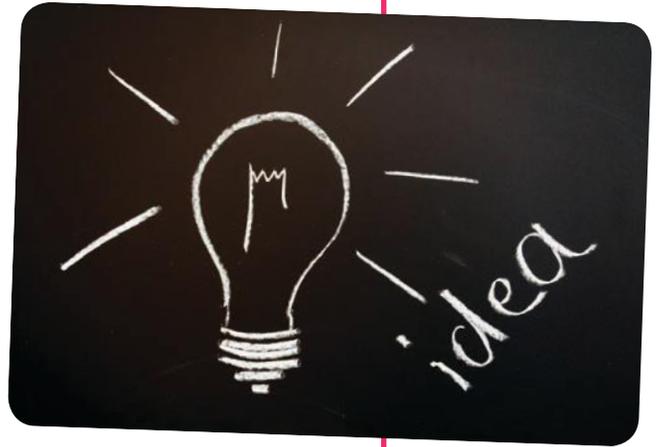
As filmmakers, it is important that we know something about others who have done the job before us.

Visit the Internet Movie Database (online) and complete the following:

- 1 Choose two people who have been directors or producers (or maybe even both).
- 2 Write down the list of films they've directed or produced.
- 3 Have a look at these movies; you may need to research some of them.
- 4 How have their movies changed over time?
- 5 Have there been ideas that the director/producer has continued to explore?
- 6 What does this reveal about them as a director/producer?

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT OR INCEPTION

While not strictly about the process of filmmaking, Christopher Nolan's 2010 film *Inception* was about planting the seed of an idea in a person's mind; in the filmmaking process, this initial idea and its development are essential to a successful production. You need to ensure that what you have in mind has been thought through and that you have certain ideas in place. One way of achieving this is to collect a page of images that relate in some way to what it is you want to create. For instance, it may be a page filled with the colours that you are hoping to create, or it may be a page of shots that you are looking to replicate, or it may just be all the things that you are interested in at the moment and that you hope to draw on in some way.



- 1 Using a search engine on the internet or a trusty pair of scissors and a pile of magazines, create a page of images that communicate one of the following ideas:

- green
- anger
- rules
- success.
- depression
- red
- celebration

- 2 Try to use as many different images as possible from a range of locations. Now look for ideas that could be turned into a film. Find three and write a sentence explaining each idea.



4.2 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is another great way to generate ideas. Leading on from the inception stage, now it is time to extend those ideas further.

- 1 What are you interested in at the moment? Write down or cut and paste as many things as you can. (For example: topics, people, music, stories, TV shows, movies, directors, bands, photographers, books, comics, animations, radio, personalities, tastes, sounds, colours, styles and time periods.)
- 2 Choose five things you've written or pasted and explain what interests you about each topic.



4.3 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

FORMAT

Regardless of what topic you are looking to explore, you need to choose the format in which you are going to present your ideas. Will your film have a fictional narrative? Will it be a nonfiction piece that explores a topic? Will it be a music video? Whatever you choose, it is important to know the conventions involved in each format. In the remainder of this chapter you will find information dedicated to each specific format: narrative, documentary and music video. If your goal is to create a narrative piece, feel free to disregard the information about documentary making.

Narrative

In a short fictional narrative, we usually see a main character involved in some kind of action. As there is limited time, the story is usually quite simple and straightforward. One thing that you must identify is the type of genre it will be.

Genre conventions

There will be a collection of genre conventions that are usual for the kind of movie that you have selected. For instance, if you want to make a romance, you will obviously need to have a story in which two people form an attraction. There will also be some kind of problem preventing them from getting together and, of course, there will be emotional music. Before you begin, it's important that you identify the genre and what conventions fit into it. For a list of film genres and their common features, you can take a closer look at Chapter 1: Genre.

Documentary

In a documentary we usually see the filmmaker exploring a topic and presenting a question that they aim to answer. We call this main idea 'the driving question'. We call it this because it is intended to drive the documentary forward as the filmmaker seeks to find an answer to it. It is essential to have an important driving question; otherwise you run the risk of your documentary being very dull to watch.

Genre conventions

When you've decided upon your topic and driving question, it's important that you decide how to present your documentary. First you will need people to interview. As we discuss in the later 'Casting agent' section, this is very important. When you've chosen them, do you want them talking direct to camera or off to one side? Another consideration is do you want the filmmaker to be a part of the story or do you want them to be faceless?

Regardless of your topic and how you decide to present it, the most important part of a documentary is the research. Without research, the documentary is very unlikely to have any sense of authority. It is important that you find as many facts and figures as you can. These are great to present to the audience in the

documentary. However, even if you don't include them, they are great to assist in forming the questions that you plan to ask. Having well-thought-out and well-researched questions will result in a more informative documentary.

Music video

If you want a mixture of fact and fiction, you might choose to create a music video. Music videos are great to blur the lines between fictional narratives, performance pieces and even documentaries. Once you've selected your music, you can start thinking about what it is you want to communicate.

Genre conventions

Depending on the style of film clip you want to make, there are some basic conventions that should be considered. Music videos fall into two main categories: performance and conceptual. Performance clips are fairly self-explanatory; they feature the band or artist (sometimes an actor) performing their song. A conceptual clip tells a story or displays images that relate to an idea in the song. Often music clips will cross over between the two and have elements of both in them.

- 1 Pick a genre of music. It may be one that you usually listen to or one you don't know much about.

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| • rock | • techno | • future pop |
| • pop | • house | • industrial |
| • R&B | • reggae | • 'scremo' |
| • rap | • classical | • nu-metal |
| • heavy metal | • jazz | • boy/girl band |

- 2 Go online and watch at least three music videos by different bands from your selected genre.
- 3 Write down the names of the bands and the song titles.
- 4 Make notes about the contents of the clips.
- 5 Were the clips performance or conceptual? What colours were used? What kind of people did they have in them?
- 6 How were those people dressed? What happened within the clips? Were there any symbols used?
- 7 Was there any writing? How was the camera used? What types of shots were used?
- 8 Compare your responses for each clip. What were some genre conventions being used?
- 9 Why do you think those conventions were formed? How does it reflect the style of music?



4.4 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

PRE-PRODUCTION STAGE

The pre-production stage is all about the writing and planning. Although all production stages are equally important, the pre-production stage is vital to ensure that your production gets off to a good start. Let's have a look at the responsibilities within this stage.

	1st task	2nd task	3rd task
Scriptwriter	Gain the outline from the group and complete a draft	Read through the draft with production team	Incorporate any changes needed to complete script
Storyboard artist	Meet with director and director of photography to discuss the style	Show the draft storyboards to the production team	Incorporate any changes to complete storyboards
Location scout	Meet with director, producer and scriptwriter to discuss the locations required	Find locations, take photos and have images and locations approved by production group	Find alternative locations if needed, and complete location specification of production plan
Castings agent	Meet with director and scriptwriter to discuss ideas	Manage casting process, which includes actor availability	Cast the production and complete casting specification of production plan

Scriptwriter

It is quite obvious that the scriptwriter's job is to complete the script of the production; however, what is less obvious is how they must communicate information. The main rule of scriptwriting is not to say something that can be communicated with an image. Having the main character say 'I'm tired' is unnecessary, particularly as you can have them yawn and stretch to communicate the same information. Similarly, if you want to show that a character is generous, rather than having them say 'I am going to be generous', you can have them donate to charity or help someone.

Equipment needed: Story or story outline, scriptwriting or word-processing program

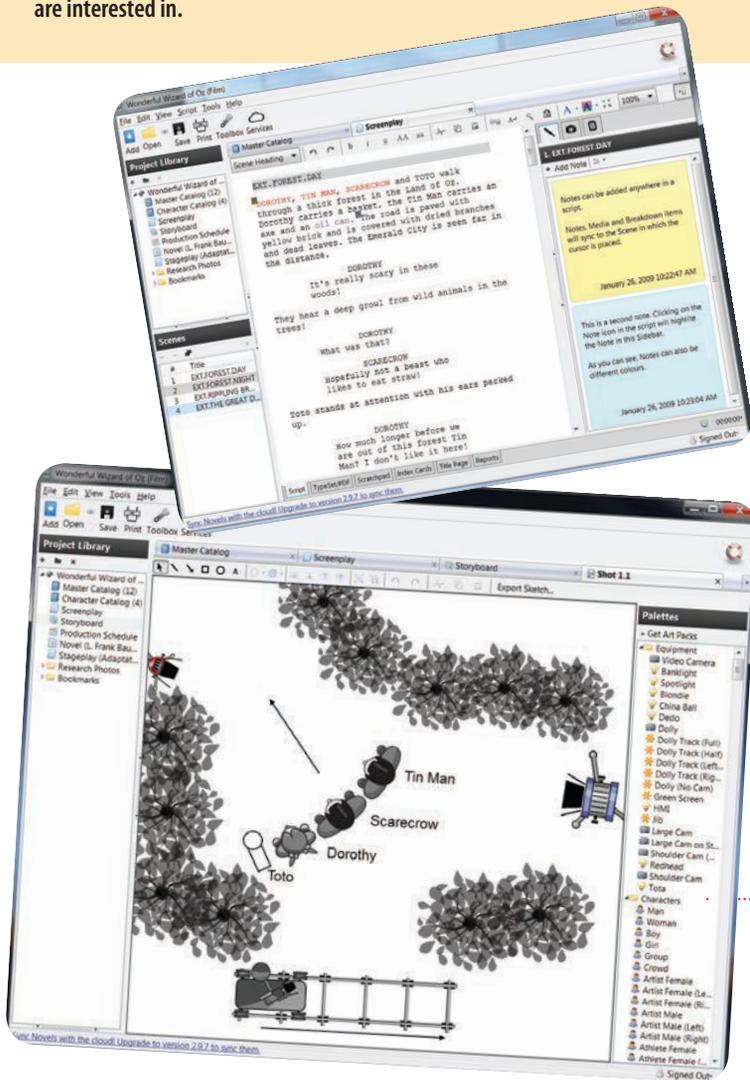


- 1 Download and install the free scriptwriting software Celtx. Don't worry about what kind of computer you're using, as it is cross-platform.
- 2 Write a scene with two people in it.
- 3 Choose a profession and interest for each person.
- 4 Write a script in which the two people are interacting but only one of them is speaking, introducing aspects of themselves and the other character.
- 5 BUT . . . you can't write directly what their professions or interests are.
- 6 Read it to another group and see if they can figure out what your people do and what they are interested in.



4.5 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING



Examples of what Celtx can do for you

Documentary scripts

The style of your documentary will affect the length of your script. Regardless of how much dialogue is to be included, scripts are essential. Scripts should be written in the present tense and follow a consistent format. Here is an example:

1 EXT ST KILDA BEACH AFTERNOON 1

It is a sunny summer's afternoon at the beach.
There are lots of people swimming and sunbaking.
BOB walks across the sand towards the camera.

BOB
(to camera)

Summer is here once again and once again the beaches of St Kilda are full.
But what is it that brings people here? Is it the overpriced food? Is it the overcrowding? It is that lovely smell that only St Kilda water can offer? Let's find out.

BOB approaches random people on the beach and asks them the following questions.

BOB
(vox pop questions)

What brings you to St Kilda beach today?
Why choose St Kilda over other beaches?

Storyboard artist

It is the storyboard artist's job to draw the **storyboard** for the production.

There are a couple of important factors for the storyboard artist to remember.

First, be creative! Your production can be much more than a collection of medium shots. Second, your storyboards don't have to be masterpieces; some of the greatest directors have shocking drawing skills. Third, have fun!

The diagram on the following page is an example of how you might set up your storyboard. You will need to draw one of these cells for each shot you plan.

Equipment needed: Script, storyboard sheets, pencil, eraser, red pen, blue pen, lots of patience

storyboard a graphic representation of the action within the production, indicating the required shot and any actor or camera movement

Storyboard tips

- Draw your storyboards in pencil.
- Select one colour to show actor movement and another to show camera movement.
- Use the colours to show movement within the static frame.
- Don't use stick figures – your actors will have greater dimensions!
- Don't use speech bubbles – it's not a comic.

Equipment needed: List of suitable locations, digital camera

Location scout

The location scout's role, as the name suggests, is to find the locations for the film. While this seems simple, it actually requires a lot more creativity than you might think.

Not only does the location scout have to find the locations, but they also need to determine the suitability of each location for filming. Does it suit the desired setting? Will the producer be able to get permission to film? Is there enough light? Are there noise issues? Will people be using it at a particular time? All of these questions are essential to ask – and if there is an issue, the location scout will need to figure out if it can be resolved; otherwise another location should be found.

Unless you are going to have all of your productions set in a school, you will need to find locations around the school that you can use to simulate different environments. You will also need to consider the restrictions that might be placed upon the use of school locations.



ACTIVITY 4.7

MAKING & RESPONDING

- In groups, have a competition to find the best locations around your school that could be used for the following settings:
 - city office (INT)
 - cemetery (EXT)
 - house (EXT)
 - kitchen (INT)
 - lounge room (INT)
 - hospital (INT)
 - shop (EXT)
 - secret hideout (INT or EXT).
- Take photos of the locations and compile them in a document on the computer.
- As a class, vote for the best locations.

Equipment needed: Script, many contacts, digital camera

Casting agent

It is the casting agent's role to obtain actors to play the necessary roles. While it may seem an easy task, carefully selecting your cast can be the difference between a good and a great film, both during production and in the finished product. It is important for the casting agent to find suitable actors for the roles, as the wrong person can make a role unbelievable and discredit the film. As an example, if there is a part that is an adult, the casting agent should find an adult to play the role. This creates a sense of authenticity that a 14-year-old cannot bring. The casting agent also needs to communicate to

the actors when the filming will take place and gain assurances that they will be available. Agents need to stress the importance of this; otherwise they might find their actors unavailable at the last moment. If this occurs, they may not get the right person for the role.

Documentary

When choosing people to interview in documentaries, it is important that you find interesting people to interview. An interviewee may have amazing things to say; however, if they aren't an interesting character, the documentary may not keep the attention of the audience. This doesn't mean that you need to have interviewees juggling and cracking jokes; you just need to ensure that they are interesting to look at and listen to!

- 1 In groups of four or five, cast each member into one of the following roles: hero, villain, detective, secret agent and sports star.
- 2 Do they suit the role? Why or why not?
- 3 Swap the roles around now – what happens to the believability and authenticity of the characters?
- 4 As a class, cast the most suitable people into those five roles.

Has this exercise helped you to see how important casting is? If you have people in roles that don't suit them, it takes away from the believability of your film.



4.8 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

The production plan

- Intention (What are you doing? Why are you making it?)
- Audience (Who are you targeting? Be specific. What effect will it have on them?)
- Genre (What style of film are you making? How will this affect your decisions?)
- Outline of film/characters/actors (Why is each actor suited for the role?)
- Lighting (What are you using? Why are you using it? What effect will it have?)
- Locations (Where? Why? Effect?)
- Soundtrack (What? Why? Effect?)
- Sound effects (What? Why? Effect?)
- Costumes (What? Why? Effect?)
- Script (Create a complete, properly formatted script – use Celtx.)
- Storyboards (Are they complete for the entire film?)
- Promotions proposal (Decide on the style and content of promotional poster and DVD.)

PRODUCTION STAGE

The production stage is when what has been planned at the pre-production stage begins to be created. As the main focus of this stage is to complete the **principal photography**, the roles are focused around this being achieved.

principal photography

the main phase of filming that occurs during the production stage

shooting schedule

the times and locations at which filming will take place

shot list the list of shots that are needed to be taken within a shoot

Director of Photography	Works with storyboard artist and location scout, director and producer to plan shooting schedule and shot list	Organises and takes responsibility for camera (which includes charging, equipment and so on)	Is present at all film shoots to record action; reviews and logs captured footage
Gaffer	Meets with director, camera operator and location scout to determine mood for each scene and writes a lighting plan	Organises lights and equipment needed for the shoot	Is present at every shoot to ensure all lighting requirements are met
Costume and props manager	Meets with director, scriptwriter and actors to design costume and prop requirements	Sources all costumes and props	Maintains and manages all props and costumes throughout filming
Sound coordinator	Meets with location scout and director to determine sound requirements for each scene	Visits locations and tests sound levels to ensure filming will go smoothly	Is present at every shoot to record all sound (dialogue and atmosphere)

Director of Photography

The Director of Photography, or DOP, is primarily in charge of filming the action. To do this, they follow the storyboards and the director, making sure all shots are captured as they have been planned: shot, angle, movement and focus.

They are also in charge of all the equipment: camera, batteries, tripod and tapes/memory cards. It is the DOP's responsibility to ensure that all the required equipment is present and functional. After the shoot has finished, the DOP, sometimes with the director, reviews the footage and logs it, indicating to the editor which shots match up with those on the

Equipment needed: Camera, tripod, memory card, tapes, storyboards



storyboard. This cuts the editor's job down, as it means they don't have to guess which shots to use. The DOP must then make sure that the footage is safely stored and clearly marked to ensure it doesn't get copied or recorded over.

The white balance setting on a camera can alter the shot dramatically, so locating it is a priority. Setting the white balance tells the camera what colour is white. Not only is this important for matching up shots properly, but it can also create significant mood within the shot. Most cameras have presets for 'overcast', 'sunny', 'tungsten' and 'fluorescent'.

Many cameras also allow you to set it yourself. To do this, choose the custom option and hold a sheet of paper in front of the lens so the viewfinder is all white.

If you use a colour other than white, you will get quite different looks within the shot.

- 1 Try this. Film a scene with a person moving around slowly, looking for something they've lost.
- 2 Try filming the same scene with different white balances. Make a note of which colour was used for each version.
- 3 Return to the classroom and review each version. What impact did the different white balances have on mood and atmosphere? Which one did you like the best? Explain why.

4.9 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

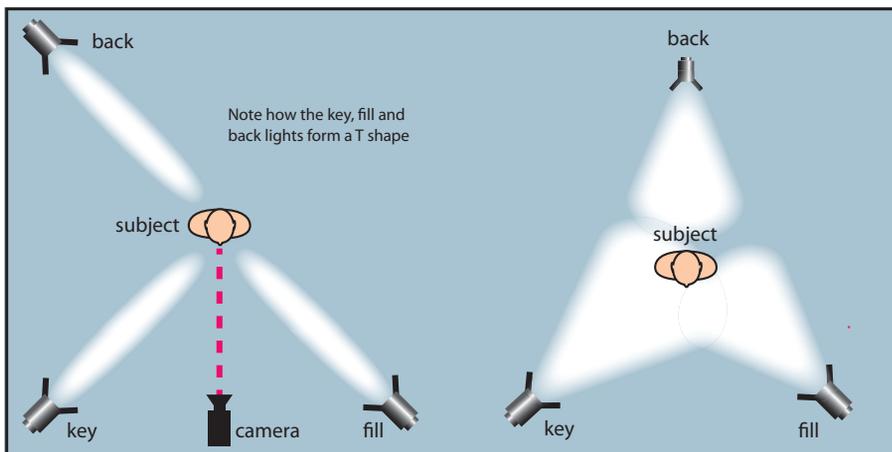
Gaffer

The gaffer is in charge of the lighting in each shot. It is up to them to plan, equip, set up and maintain the lighting for the shoot. The most common form of lighting is the three-point lighting set-up. This consists of the key light (the main and brightest light of the three that is shone on the subject), the fill light (a less bright light that is used to the side of the subject to reduce shadows caused by the key) and the back light (used to highlight the edge of the subject in order to separate them from the background).

The mood that is needed in a shot will determine the intensity, direction and colour of the light used.

Equipment needed:

Storyboards, lights, lighting equipment



Example of three-point lighting

ACTIVITY 4.10

MAKING & RESPONDING

- 1 Set up the three-point lighting on a subject. Interview the subject about a topic.
- 2 Try different combinations with the lights. Try all of them on.
- 3 Now try turning the fill light off – what is the effect?
- 4 Try only using the back light – what is the effect?
- 5 Try only using the key light – what is the effect then?
- 6 Find the best combination for filming a spooky interview.
- 7 What about a sad interview? What can you use?



Equipment needed: Script, storyboard, list of actors (including their measurements)

Costume and props manager

The costume and props manager's role is to ensure that all the required clothing and objects needed for the shoot are ready and are maintained in a usable condition. Taking their cue from initial discussions with the director and consultation with the script, they need to first figure out what each character will need to wear. The manager also needs to make sure that each character's costume will be visible in the location where filming is taking place. Once this is decided, they need to make sure the costumes fit the actors playing the parts. They also need to locate all the props needed for filming. Not only do they need to find them, but they also need to make sure they are ready for each shoot. This also means making sure that the props (and costumes) are in the same condition in each shoot to ensure that continuity is maintained; it is noticeable if an object miraculously changes between shots.



ACTIVITY 4.11

MAKING & RESPONDING

As the manager of costumes and props, it is important to be able to set characters apart from each other. Symbolism can play a big part. Write down one key symbolic piece of clothing or prop for each of the following characters:

- villain
- hero
- lawyer
- teacher
- student
- secret agent
- model
- hairdresser
- nurse
- zoologist
- chef
- scientist.



Sound coordinator

The role of the sound coordinator is to ensure that in each shot the required audio is being recorded and unwanted noise is not. Whether it is the dialogue that the actors are speaking or some of the atmosphere in the background, it is essential that the sound coordinator record clear and useful sounds. Any unwanted noise in a shot will distract the audience and detract from the purpose of the scene. Noises such as aeroplanes flying overhead, dogs barking, traffic driving past, people speaking loudly in the background or wind hitting the microphone are all examples of unwanted sounds.

As the sound coordinator, it is also important to note that the microphone is not as discriminating as our ears, meaning that it will pick up everything in an environment, rather than blocking out certain sounds as our ears do. That's why headphones that cover the ears are essential. Using these to listen to what the microphone picks up gives an appreciation of all the sounds that can detract from a shot (e.g. air conditioner hum or the fan from a computer).

Equipment needed:

Microphone, windsock, headphones, boom



Different sounds belong to different settings. The recording of atmosphere tracks is important to set the scene of the shot. The job of the sound coordinator is to capture this sound.

- 1 Go out into the schoolyard during class and record the sounds. Does it sound like a school?
- 2 What about at recess or lunchtime? Does it sound more like a school now?
- 3 Record a list of sounds that you would need to record to get the atmosphere in the following locations:

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • beach | • office | • birthday party at a restaurant. |
| • park | • football match | |
| • suburban street | • pub | |
| • city street | • nightclub | |

4.12 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

POST-PRODUCTION STAGE

rough cut the quick, first edit of a production to ensure that all the footage has been filmed

final cut the final, 'good copy' of the production

Editor	Meets with director, scriptwriter and storyboard artist to get an idea of where film is headed	Edits together rough cut of the film to then review with the director	Completes final cut and burns movie to DVD
Sound effects manager	Meets with scriptwriter and storyboard artist to determine the sound effects needed and writes specification for production plan	Records all the sound effects for the film	Works with editor to incorporate sound effects into film
Soundtrack composer	Meets with director, scriptwriter and storyboard artist to determine the soundtrack requirements and writes specifications for production plan	Creates soundtrack	Works with editor to incorporate soundtrack into film
Promotions director	Meets with director to determine promotion for the film and writes promotions proposal for the production plan	Shoots required stills with the actors	Completes movie poster and DVD cover

Editor

The editor's job is to upload or capture the footage and, through the use of editing software, assemble it in order according to the storyboard and script.

The editor needs to cut the footage and order it, add filters, colour correct, add transitions, add text and credits, and synchronise the sound effects and soundtrack. After this has been reviewed and approved by the director, they can then export the final cut and burn it to DVD or upload it to the internet.

Equipment needed: Footage, storyboards, script, editing software, sound effects, soundtrack

CASE STUDY:

Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin

Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein revolutionised the way audiences and directors thought about the power of editing. In 1925, Eisenstein directed the silent movie *Battleship Potemkin* (*Bronyenosyets Potyomkin*). This film details the 1905 mutiny of Russian sailors against the ruling tsar and is considered a first-rate piece of propaganda. Eisenstein was experimenting with his use of the montage and juxtaposition of shots. It was his assertion that depending how images were placed in a film, the audience could be made to feel certain ways. For instance, if a terrible event occurred on screen and the shot cut to people crying out in



The baby in a pram falling down the Odessa steps from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)



Battleship Potemkin
original movie poster

anguish, the audience's engagement with the film would increase as they would feel more emotionally connected. Eisenstein used many close-up shots of people in distress to communicate to the audience the brutality of the tsarist forces and increase the audience's sympathy with the 'noble' sailors. This technique is used extensively today in many different ways, but it is always designed to illicit a specific emotional response from the audience.

As Eisenstein's film shows us, the order of shots can dramatically alter how we perceive the footage used. Using filmed footage or still images, try the following activity.

- 1 Using an editing program, import an image or shot of a person smiling.
- 2 In the middle of this shot of the person smiling, try putting in different images or clips, so that it begins with the person, cuts away to the other clip and cuts back to the person.
- 3 The idea is to interpret the emotion that the person is feeling as coming from a variety of sources, thus altering the audience's perception of their character.
- 4 First, try a flower or a kitten; something that people would traditionally smile at.
- 5 Write down how this makes the person appear.
- 6 Now try it with a clip or image of a person falling over. How does this change our perception of that person?
- 7 Try a range of different images. Each time document how it makes the person seem.



4.13 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

Sound effects manager

The role of the sound effects manager is to record all the sound effects needed for the final edit. During the production stage, the audio captured was focused on dialogue rather than incidental sounds; these sounds need to be added in during post-production in order to ensure the authenticity of the film. It is important, for instance, that if a car door closes on screen, it sounds like a car door closing, as the audience will expect. If sounds don't match up, it can break the attention of the audience on the action.

Equipment needed:

Microphone, equipment to create effects, audio editing software

The sound effects manager – or ‘Foley’ as he or she is known in the industry – sometimes must become quite creative to recreate the noises for film. For instance, a gunshot can be replicated by recording a balloon popping, as a horse can be simulated with a couple of coconuts clip-clopped together. If you plan to create a science fiction or fantasy film, you will need to become quite creative in the production and recording of your sounds.

ACTIVITY 4.14

MAKING & RESPONDING

Let's explore the idea that sounds can create the reality of the shot, by examining the effect if we replace an expected sound with a completely unexpected one.



- 1 Film a sequence with a character walking around a room, interacting with different objects. Remove the audio and replace the original sounds with sounds that simply don't belong. For instance, if someone knocks on a door, replace the knocks with the sound of a squeaking toy.
- 2 Try different sound effects and document the outcome.

Soundtrack composer

The soundtrack composer's role is to create or source the music needed for the production. The soundtrack should be appropriate to the mood of the scene and should also suit the action taking place within the scene. The soundtrack composer can either record the music themselves or create it with any one of the many music creation software packages on the market. If they wish to source the music from a composer, they will need to obtain permission from the artist or record company before using it in the production.

Equipment needed:

Instruments, music authoring software, audio editing software

ACTIVITY 4.15

MAKING & RESPONDING

Sound effects can alter the mood of a scene; so too can the soundtrack.



- 1 Record a scene with a character walking down a corridor.
- 2 Remove all the audio and replace it with music of different genres in an attempt to achieve different effects.
- 3 Try at least five different musical genres and document the effect each has on the scene and how the audience reacts to the character. As a class, choose the music that best suits the scene and discuss why.

Promotions director

The promotions director's job is to create the promotional material for the film, which includes the movie poster and DVD cover for the film. The design will need to be approved by the director and fit the genre qualities of the production. The promotions manager will need to coordinate a photo shoot with the actors in order to obtain the images needed. They will then need to import these into photo-editing software in order to create the final product. To create the DVD cover, they can use a desktop publishing package and include stills from the production, sourced by the editor. The DVD cover must include all relevant production details. It may also feature reviews that will entice people to watch the film.

Equipment needed: Camera, actors, desktop publishing software, photo editing software, printer

Choose a film genre. Your task is to create a stereotypical poster for a fictitious film from that genre.

- 1 First, research a genre online and note down the conventions used in posters of that genre.
- 2 Using people in your class, have a photo shoot to obtain the images that you need.
- 3 Now import them into a photo editing program and replicate a genre-based poster.
- 4 Were you able to replicate it?
- 5 Have other people in the class look at it and comment upon what you've created.
- 6 Apply any feedback that they give you in order to create the most genre-specific poster you can.



4.16 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING





How much do we really know or understand about the roles that contribute to the filmmaking industry? Apart from actors and some directors, how many names do we actually recognise and how many jobs do we understand when we see a credit sequence? Do we even watch the credit sequence?

This assignment will broaden your horizons and widen your understanding of the movie making industry by making you explore the people behind the lens, those in the edit studio or those making the sound effects.

Your task will be to find and research *one* director and *one* producer whose films you enjoy.

Things to include:

- a short biography
- a filmography (plus years of release)
- a brief explanation as to why you enjoy their films.

In addition to this, you will be required to research *one* of the following roles:

- best boy
- boom operator
- casting agent
- composer
- continuity
- Director of Photography
- editor
- focus puller
- gaffer
- key grip
- location scout
- publicity promoter
- researcher
- Foley.

Things to include in your research:

- an explanation of the job that they do
- information about one person in that profession
- a filmography (plus years of release).

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'Communication contributes more to the success of a production than good ideas do. Therefore the producer is the most important role.'

Consider the following questions in your response:

- 1 Is this true? Do you agree with it? Consider each role. Is one more important than another?
- 2 What if one job is not completed? What will happen to the production?
- 3 What if all members of a group work independently without a producer coordinating? What would happen then?
- 4 What about the director? Aren't they important to the process?
- 5 What about continuity? What makes good communication?

You should consider these questions and more in your response. No matter what your stance, it is sure to be different from someone else's. Be sure to challenge them and try to foil each other's arguments. Good luck and enjoy the debate!

But wait, there's more ...

- You can download the free scriptwriting and pre-production organising program Celtx online.
- For details on how to gain copyright clearance, explore the Australian Copyright Council website.
- You can explore film posters and get some ideas on how to assemble your own at the Internet Movie Poster Awards website.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Vincent Giarrusso is a filmmaker, writer and composer who also lectures to Film and Television Studies students at Swinburne University of Technology. His first feature film, Mallboy, screened as part of the prestigious Director's Fortnight at Cannes in 2001 and closed the 2001 Melbourne International Film Festival.

What inspired you to become a director?

Directing seemed like a logical progression from the writing process. I have always loved films, especially films that have the power to change your world view and make you question the way the world is.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

Writing always comes first for me. I wrote a script, which was given funding from Screen Australia and with a producer managed to get the money to make the film.

The script was a personal one that reflected my experiences working with underprivileged teenagers and it became evident that I should direct it. So what my producer did was set up a special film school program for me. I had a number of mentors that were working directors in the industry, and did a number of short courses at Melbourne Uni and AFTRS.

I made the film, *Mallboy*, and it went on to be selected for Director's Fortnight at Cannes and played festivals around the world.

What does a typical day in the life of Vincent Giarrusso involve?

As a lecturer at a university my days are filled with teaching, administration and research. I am currently

- midway through a PhD on filmmaking methodology. I try to read at least three hours a day and watch either a film or an episode of TV.

I am also in development for a number of projects, film and TV, so I allocate a few evenings a week for writing.

I am also a musician so I need to fit rehearsals, recording and gigs in there every few months.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

There is an engagement with young creative people that is invigorating and exciting. It is different to the type of engagement you have in industry where the demands of the marketplace and job security hang ominously over all discourse and engagement. There is a freedom in the collaborative filmmaking process with both students and peers in academia.

What is your least favourite aspect?

- The administration elements of convening units in the course. Dealing with the bureaucratic processes that do not have much relevance to the everyday practice of filmmaking and teaching.

How has technology changed the way you work?

- Access to many different modes of filmmaking, from obscure foreign films to wacky home movies on YouTube, is easier through the internet.
- Content that has difficulty finding distribution in the marketplace is finding a place on the internet. With over 400 new FTV [film and TV] students coming through Swinburne each year I get a terrific insight into what young people are looking at and enjoying, and how they are accessing that content.

The technological advances in filmmaking hardware such as cameras, lenses and editing programs are really

with

VINCENT GIARRUSSO

changing the way filmmakers can create content. This is impacting on the form and structure of content. The quality of the digital image is always improving and getting cheaper. Editing software and computers are getting cheaper and more user-friendly, making it easier for filmmakers to bypass the more traditional and bureaucratic processes associated with filmmaking in this country.

What is one piece of advice for directing actors?

As a director you need to know your material and why you are making the film. You need to be able to answer any question an actor throws at you with confidence and assuredness. You also need to trust your actors and work with them in a collaborative and open way.

How has the internet assisted filmmakers?

The internet has opened up access to all types of media, from obscure foreign film to classics from the past. The internet is also invaluable for quick access to research material. The internet is a terrific communication tool allowing access to information in an open and transparent way.

The internet also allows for immediate feedback and response.

Top five tips for directing a shoot?

Before you direct a script, you need to address the following:

1 Answer the following questions:

- What is the plot?
- What is the subtext?
- What is the meaning of the story?
- What (if any) is the genre of the story?
- What is the central conflict in the story?



2 Decide from whose point of view should the story be told.

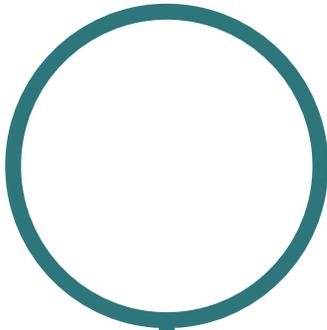
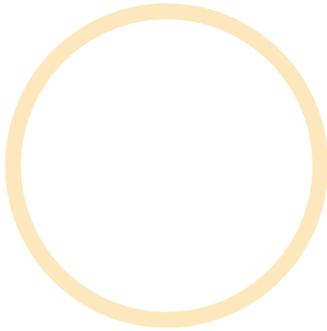
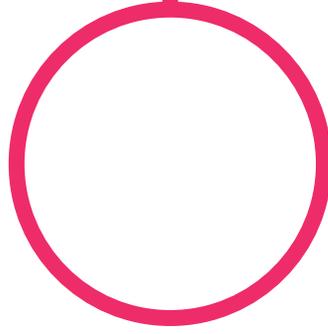
This does not mean literal POV but narrative POV. Whose reactions to events do we care about? Why does paying attention to this character help us to better understand the meaning of the story?

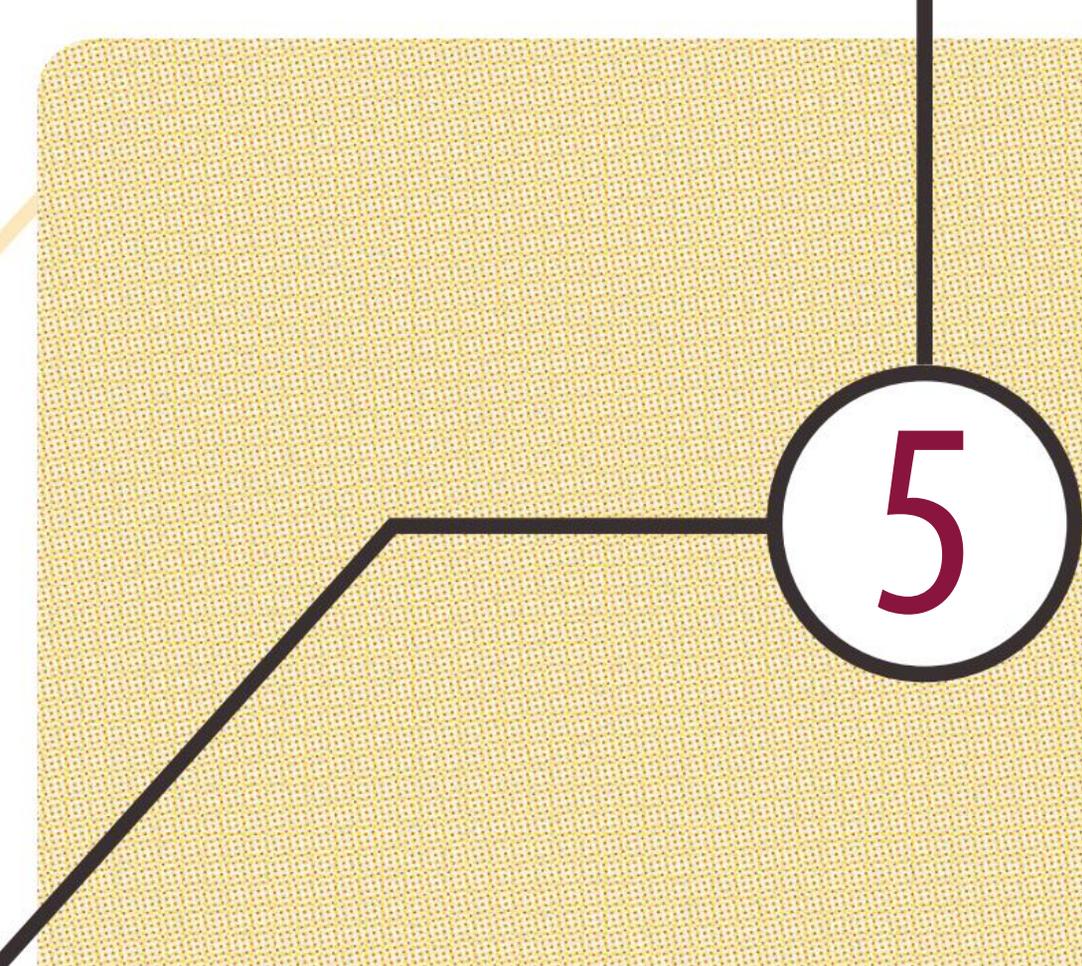
3 Now that you understand the drama, how do you want to communicate that through:

- casting
- performance direction
- cinematography
- production design
- editing and post-production
- music and sound design.

4 And then what effect will it have on the audience?

5 And finally make sure you have a good lawyer to look over contracts and your best interests, especially when dealing with those producer types!





5

PHOTOGRAPHY

What is a photograph? It is the capturing of the play of light on objects. The technology used to capture images has changed over time, but essentially we are doing the same task today that was done when photography began. What really makes for an interesting image is good composition, which can be improved through planning and taking a few conventions into consideration. The more photos you take, the better your photography will become.

The advent of photography heralded changes for society and the world that may not have been guessed at the time. For example, the ability to record events in real time gave rise to people back home having a greater understanding about what a war that was taking place on the other side of the globe was really like.

Currently photography is more popular and pervasive than ever with the prevalence of cameras in everyday devices such as mobile phones. As the digital revolution continues there may be more world changes to come.

COMING UP...

- **Rewind**
- **Early cameras**
- **Types of cameras**
- **Lenses**
- **Manual and automatic functions**
- **Light**
- **Composition**
- **Movement**
- **Subject matter**
- **Basic image analysis**
- **Genre**
- **Photo manipulation**
- **Up for debate**
- **But wait, there's more ...**
- **Inside the green room with Trent Parke**

REWIND

The history of photography is an entire book in itself. It involves many different types of technology and science, from **cyanotypes** and **daguerreotypes** through to silver nitrate darkroom photography and most recently digital technology. Some people believe that ancient Chinese and Greek philosophers described an early camera obscura as far back as the fourth and fifth centuries BC, but what we know as modern photography really has its beginnings a little over 150 years ago. It was not until 1826 that French inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niépce created the first permanent image using a pewter plate and bitumen of Judea. Then there was a long line of inventors from Schultz to Fox Talbot that followed, mastering the techniques and technology.

The history of photography is closely linked with the history of the camera. Advances in technology went hand in hand with advances in practice. When photography was first available it was an expensive and dangerous process using chemicals, more akin to science than art. It was mainly used by the wealthy and there were only a few images made. Now with digital photography one can

cyanotype a process to make images, no longer in use, named for the cyan blue colour it produced during the printing process

daguerreotype the first commercially successful photographic process, no longer in use, invented in 1839 and named for its creator, Louis Daguerre

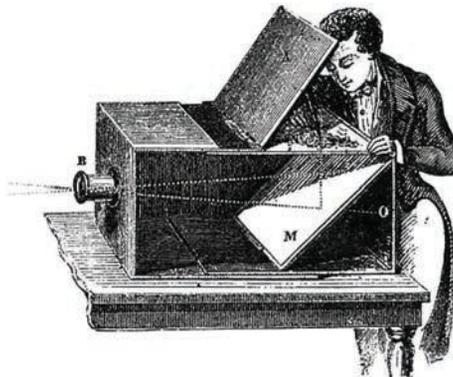


A variety
of cameras

produce an unlimited number of copies from an original image without loss of quality. Cameras and mobile phones with in-built cameras surround us and pervade our everyday life like never before.

EARLY CAMERAS

- **Camera obscura** – A camera obscura ('darkened chamber or room') refers to a particular technique that was formally developed in the late nineteenth century that involved projecting the outside image (upside down and back-to-front) onto the opposite wall of a completely dark room via a small hole. The size of the small hole is directly proportional to the length of the room – from the wall with the hole to the image surface (the back wall). This technique mimics how the eye works and is also the principle behind pinhole cameras.
- **Pinhole camera** – This is a type of photography that mimics the principles of the camera obscura in a smaller,



An example of the
camera obscura
technique



A vintage pinhole
camera

fish-eye image a curved edge to an image with a very wide angle on the shot

ACTIVITY 5.1

MAKING

Turn your classroom into a camera obscura.



Follow these basic steps:

- 1 You will need a completely light-sealed room, preferably not too big if you have to seal it yourself, with a light source to the outside such as a window.
- 2 You need to cover the walls using black plastic or paper and black tape such as gaffer tape. You will need to be able to make a small hole at one end of the room where the window is to create the lens for the light to travel through. The hole will need to be quite small, so you should start small and then progressively make it bigger until the image of the outside is shown on the opposite wall upside down.
- 3 For inspiration you can watch a video on YouTube on how to make a camera obscura.
- 4 You can locate instructions for how to make a make a pinhole camera at the Kodak website if you have darkroom facilities at your school.

TYPES OF CAMERAS

- **Single lens reflex (SLR)** – available in both digital and analogue forms, these cameras have many manual features that can be manipulated to create images of all different sorts under many light conditions. The digital versions of SLRs can be used in manual and automatic modes. (See image a.)
- **Point and shoot** – small, very portable cameras that have minimal features and are often used to take happy snaps. (See image b.)
- **Cameras contained in convergent digital devices** – mobile phones, computers, interactive tablets. These often have few or no manual features, although as technology progresses they are changing rapidly. (See image c.)
- **Instant cameras** – cameras that produce an instant hard copy of a photograph. They have very minimal adjustment features, but their ability to make an instant hard copy makes them very popular. (See image d.)



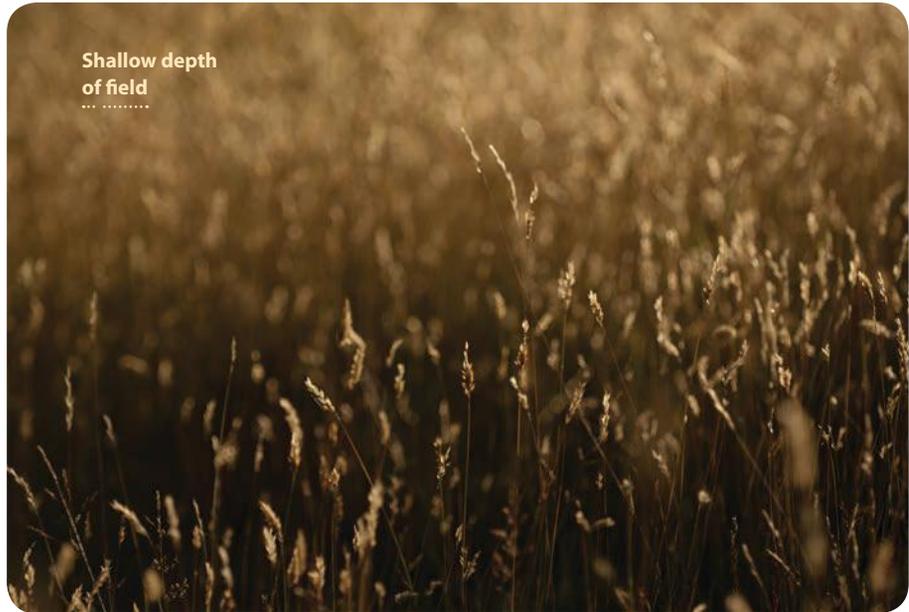
LENSES

All cameras have a lens that opens and closes to let light through to the capture surface. The lens acts like the pupil of an eye, deciding how much light will reach the image-recording surface and for how long. Lenses vary in quality, cost and functionality depending on the photographic device being used.

MANUAL AND AUTOMATIC FUNCTIONS

Many of the functions of your camera will be automatic unless you are using a full SLR camera.

If you are using a camera with manual functions, there are a few main points to take into consideration, but remember that even automatic cameras will require you to think about focus and available light.



Focus – you will need to make sure that what you are trying to capture is in focus (clear and crisp outlines).

Depth of field – you will need to decide whether you will have only one item/ plane of vision in focus or the entire image (objects that are close to the camera and those far away to be clear).

Shutter speed – this determines the length of time the lens stays open to let light through onto the capture surface. (The slower the shutter speed, the longer it stays open and the more light gets in through the lens.)

Aperture – this relates to how wide or small the hole is that lets light through onto the capture surface. (The wider the hole, the more light gets in through the lens.) Finding the right combination of shutter speed and aperture will help determine the depth of field of an image. The slower the shutter speed and the wider the aperture, the more light gets through; more light means more information for the capture surface.

Most of this chapter deals with tasks and ideas that can be created on digital cameras (or analogue cameras) that have more automatic than manual functions, and many of the tasks can be done using mobile phone cameras or any that might be easily available. Feel free to use whatever cameras are available to you.

LIGHT

As photography is the capture of the play of light on objects, different levels or types of light will impact on how your photo turns out. If you take a photo first thing in the morning, and then an image of the same subject matter in the evening, the shot will look different.

Natural light

Natural light refers to light provided by the sun. The amount of sunlight changes depending on what type of day it is (sunny or overcast) and what time of the day or night it is.

- 1 Take a photo of the same exterior location five times over the course of one day (early morning, mid morning, afternoon, evening, etc.).
- 2 Compare the images and discuss the differences in the mood of the images, the quality of the images and what you can see in the images or can't see. What has made the difference?
- 3 Can you improve the image quality by adjusting different settings on the camera or changing the way the image is taken? What time of day was the best image taken?



5.2 ACTIVITY

MAKING &
RESPONDING

Artificial light and using a flash

Artificial light refers to any light that is not sunlight, such as ceiling lights, torches and fishtank lights. But it also refers to formal studio light set-ups and flashes that are within or external to cameras. Different types of artificial light will affect the final image because artificial light produces different colours and intensities.

When taking a photo using artificial light, especially with a flash, you may end up with unwanted highlight and shine on things. Automatic flashes compensate for low light situations in most automatic cameras, but can be turned off. If your camera has a function to turn off the flash, it will be able to adjust the exposure somewhat to compensate for the lack of flash by slowing the shutter speed or providing a wider aperture. You will need to increase the stability of the camera when using a longer exposure to avoid blurring. Use a tripod if one is available so that there is less camera movement. If there is no tripod available, you can use another stable surface such as a table or bench. If surfaces such as these are not available or don't suit your photographic



purpose, then try to hold the camera with two hands close to your body and brace yourself to help ensure stability.

Try to take photos without a flash; you can get some really good atmospheric and interesting results.

ACTIVITY 5.3

MAKING & RESPONDING

Take two photos of the same object/person – one using a flash and one using natural light found in the location.



- 1 What are the differences between the images?
- 2 Which one came out better?
- 3 Which one came out more naturalistically? Why?

Contrast

Another thing to consider as part of how light is working in your images is contrast. Contrast refers to the difference between the highlights and lowlights in your image. Do your images have lots of shadows and bright sections (high contrast) or do your images have a similar light level across the whole picture with not very many shadows (low contrast)? Images with higher contrast tend to be more dramatic than images with lower contrast. If you are capturing a black-and-white image, the contrast becomes more apparent again, with highlights being shown as truer whites and lowlights being shown as truer blacks. A low-contrast black-and-white image contains mostly grey tones.



A low-contrast image

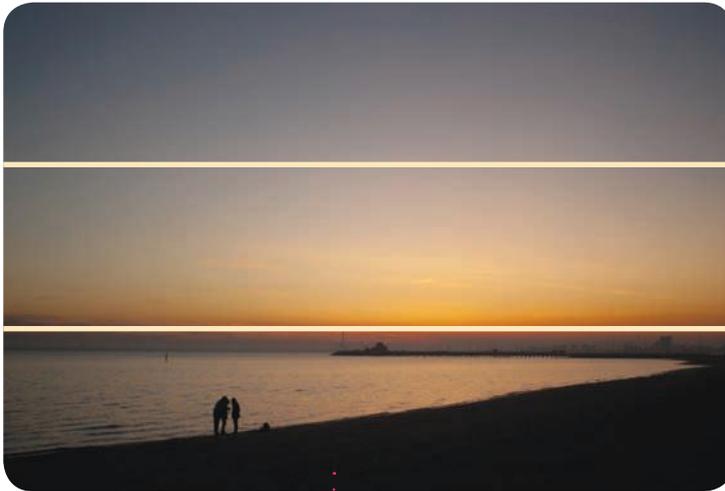
COMPOSITION

Composition refers to the subject matter that is within the image and where it is placed in relation to the rest of the content. It is important to choose the content that will be within or left out of the frame; this is known as selection and omission. This can be done before taking the photo or while taking the photo, and can also be adjusted using digital software after the fact.

- 1 **Observe the scene in front of you. Eyes can take in a lot of information to the side of your body, above and around you. You can see all or most things in focus, from objects that are close to objects that are far away, depending on your personal level of vision.**
- 2 **Now look at the same view through a camera. There is a frame which you are looking through. The image has edges. This is the frame you will use to compose – objects or actions outside this frame will not be captured.**
- 3 **Consider how you make the decision about what will be within the frame.**

Some useful conventions and terms when discussing composition include:

- **Rule of thirds** – the division of the frame into three equal sections. The image can be divided horizontally or vertically and the image itself can be a portrait or landscape image.



Division of horizontal frame

Division of vertical frame

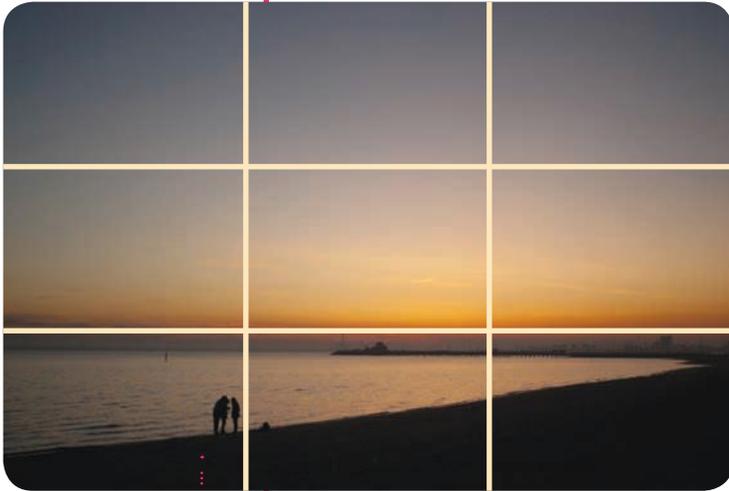


5.4 ACTIVITY

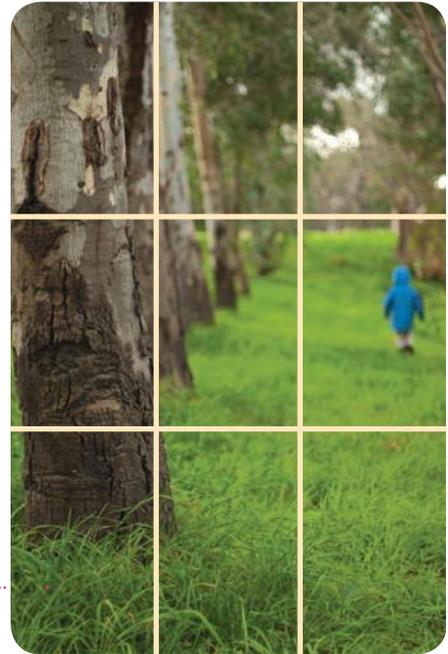
RESPONDING

rule of thirds a convention of composition within photography; by dividing up the shot into thirds vertically and horizontally, four intersecting points are created; placing the points of interest on these intersecting points makes a far more interesting and well-balanced shot

- **Points of interest** – the further division of the image into nine sections. Where the lines cross are points of interest. The audience's eye tends to move towards these parts of the image first and they are a good point to place interesting subject matter or content you want the audience to value.



Landscape points
of interest



Portrait points
of interest

- **Selection or cropping** – where you choose the frame of your image, leaving some elements outside of the frame. This can be done with the camera when you choose what you will photograph or afterwards in the darkroom or using computer software.

A shot with a section
highlighted in a smaller
frame for a better
image



- **Juxtaposition** – putting one element next to another for means of comparison or contrast. This might increase meaning or interest in your images.

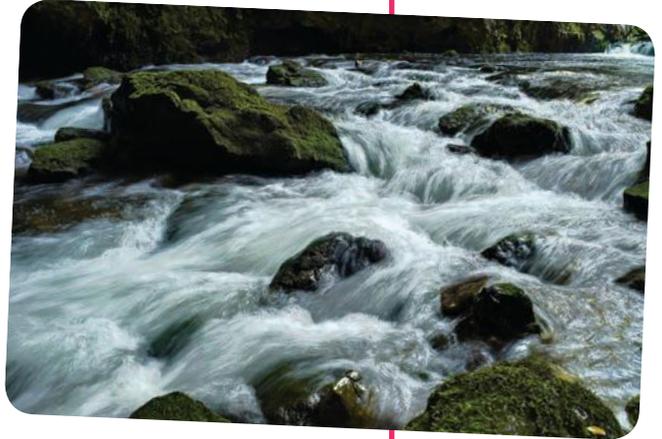
MOVEMENT

There are several ways of capturing the movement that occurs in life in the static images of photography. These can make for very exciting and emotive works.

When you decrease the shutter speed of a camera, after a certain point any movement that occurs during the open times will be 'seen' by the capture surface. This can be used to great effect with water flowing down a river or over rocks, such as is commonly seen in wilderness photography. It gives the water a smoky, wispy flow that adds to the atmosphere of the shot.

In addition, if you take a photograph of something fast as it moves past the lens, with the background still and in focus, the blur of the passing image (such as a racing car or someone running past) will demonstrate its movement and speed.

It is also possible to move the camera to follow the moving subject matter; this will make the background blurred instead of the foreground and keep the fast object in focus. This can be much trickier to achieve as your panning needs to move at a similar speed to the object and be very smooth. The best way to go about this is to experiment and practise. Try first with objects that are not moving very fast and also pan only a small amount.



SUBJECT MATTER

Your first consideration will be who or what you are going to photograph. You will also consider who your audience will be. Who are you going to take the photo for? Think about where the image will be shown and then who will see it. Is it for exhibition in your classroom or around your school? Will it be your desktop image,

a class assignment or to illustrate a book? Is the image for your teacher, your friends or for the world (if you upload it onto the internet)? All of these elements can be taken into consideration when you take a photo.

The simplest photo you take will be a happy snap of family or friends doing their normal tasks at a party or hanging out. Most people try to make sure they get everyone's head in the shot and that people are centrally located. Even this type of photo will have some implications. You may not want to show all of your images to just anyone. The formally posed family portrait from Granny's 70th birthday with you wearing a tie and with your hair all combed might not be the shot you want as your social networking profile image.

ACTIVITY 5.5

RESPONDING

Describe who the audience may be for the following photos.



Things to consider – where would you find this photograph, who is it aimed at and does the image interest you and why?



• Image 1



• Image 2



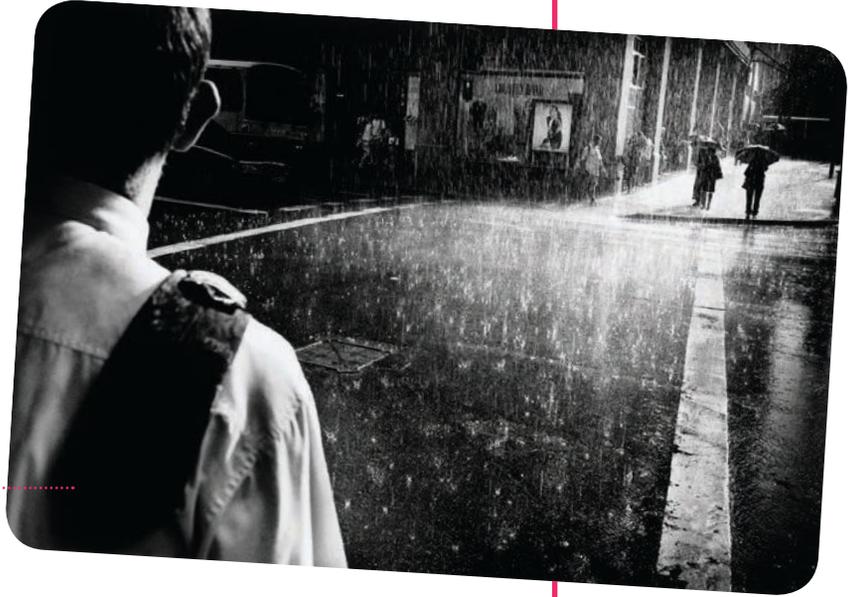
• Image 3



• Image 4

BASIC IMAGE ANALYSIS

When you look at a photo or a group of photos as an audience, you have an opinion about what you see. Do you personally like or dislike the image? What are the positive qualities of the image? Does the image have good contrast or an interesting composition? Using the terms and ideas found in this chapter, you should be able to discuss more than just whether you like the image or not.



Untitled (Cat#3), 2001 from
Dream/Life & Beyond
Gelatin silver print
24 x 36 cm, edition of 25 +2 AP

View this untitled photo by Australian photographer Trent Parke. You can hear more from Trent himself in the 'Inside the green room' section of this chapter.

Write a 500-word analysis of the image, discussing the subject matter, composition, contrast, movement and atmosphere.



5.6 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

GENRE

There are different genres of photography and they refer mainly to the subject matter within the frame. Many photographic terms are derived from traditional terms used in fine arts such as painting, including abstract, surreal, portrait, landscape and still life. They often have the same meaning or an adjusted meaning that directly relates to photography.

Abstract

Abstract images are those that can't be categorised with naturalistic representations. They often use patterns and reflections to create images. Darkroom and digital manipulations are techniques often used to create abstract

An abstract image

images. Abstract images are often close-ups or parts of a whole out of context. You might use words like pattern, line, colour, shape and focus to describe the work.

Analogue

This term refers to pre-digital-era photography that uses film placed into a camera, which needs to be developed in a fully light safe container/room to create negatives. The negatives are then used to create positive images using an enlarger in a safelight room. The process works by using paper coated in chemicals that react to show where and how much light has touched a surface both with the negative and positive process. This process is becoming more and more the medium of artists and was used extensively in schools until it was decided that that cost was too great and the chemicals and processes messy and unsafe.

Digital

Digital photography is the most prevalent now. Instead of light-sensitive film, it uses a series of light-sensitive sensors to capture the images focused by the lens. The information is stored as a digital format to be printed, manipulated, etc. The digital information can be transferred to a computer or other device via cords, blue tooth, email, memory card, etc.

Landscape

A landscape is an image taken in nature, usually of a wide view of a landscape area and often with no people in it. Landscape photography has been around since photography began and is still popular today. As photography is a form that



An urban landscape image

uses the play of light on objects, photographers who take landscape photographs often use the natural light available to help create mood and interest in their images. The photographer Jim Brandenburg takes great natural landscape photographs.

While landscape images are traditionally taken in the natural environment, there is a subset of the genre: images of the urban environment – both industrial scenes and cityscapes.

'Landscape' is also the term given to layout that is wider than it is high.

Portrait

Portraits are images that focus on people and often only one person. They can be formally posed or captured on the fly, and they often provide some kind of window into that person's life, personality, etc. They can be very formal and taken in a studio or more relaxed and taken within a natural and un-posed setting. Check out Annie Leibovitz's photography for interesting formal portraits of celebrities.

'Portrait' is also the term given to layout that is higher than it is wide.

Still life

A still life is a composition of **inanimate** subject matter, usually a small grouping of objects; for example, a bowl of fruit or a vase of flowers.



A still life

inanimate not alive and not able to move independently

Surreal

This term refers to images that are bizarre and dreamlike and comes from the term *surrealism*. Surreal photography involves unusual and dreamlike content that is either manipulated or found and framed during image capture. It can also refer to images that are adjusted afterwards to create a sense of the hyper-real. Man Ray (1890–1976) is a great example of a surrealist photographer.

ACTIVITY 5.7

RESPONDING

Choose from the list of photographers below or research a photographer of your own choosing.

- Trent Parke
- Ansel Adams
- Annie Leibowitz
- Brassai
- Man Ray
- Max Dupain
- Jim Brandenburg
- Diane Arbus
- Joe Rosenthal
- Nick Ut
- Cindy Sherman
- Andy Warhol

Explore the following:

- 1 Biographical information – who, what, when, where and why?
- 2 Choose three to five images and explore the following in detail – subject matter, composition, technical skill, body of work and genre of the images. Make sure you use photographic terms in your response.

CASE STUDY:

War photography

Photography is used extensively in news media to help convey more information and ideas, sway audiences, define moments, encourage allegiances and create impact. During World War I, photography was really only just beginning to come into its own and becoming more and more accessible. As it became cheaper and more portable, cameras went out of the studio and into the field.

When images of the war started appearing back at home, they were seen in juxtaposition to the propaganda encouraging people to join up to fight. It gave a new understanding of what the war meant. It was no longer only about heroics and protecting your country and duty, but danger and death – the realities of war became tangible for the folks back home. There are many reasons a country needs its citizens to go off to war, and when the reality of war is shown to the people, governments need to use devices to convince them. The government can use legislation (such as conscription) or advertising and propaganda to help promote its cause.

When we look back at images that were taken in the past, we are able to develop an understanding about the time in which the image was taken that otherwise might not be possible. This is either explicit (obvious) or implicit (subtle and often not deliberate).

In the following two photos, the victorious aspect of the war is shown to great effect. The first image reflects this at a more personal level, with celebrations



V-J Day in Times Square,
Alfred Eisenstaedt (1945)



Raising the flag
on Iwo Jima, Joe
Rosenthal (1945)

on VJ Day (Victory over Japan Day) in Times Square; the sailor and nurse kissing represent the greater celebration that the war was over held by everyone on an individual basis. It captured a moment and the spirit of the time. The second image, *Raising the flag on Iwo Jima*, also represents a kind of victory, but much more an ownership and military strategic victory for the army and the country as a whole.

This image continues to play an important role in the American story of survival and triumph in the face of adversity. A similar photo was taken by Thomas E. Franklin of a flag raised by three New York City firefighters at Ground Zero in the wake of 11 September. The raising of the flag, in both photos, across two different conflicts, is a recognisable symbol of American patriotism.



PHOTO MANIPULATION

Historically, photographs have always been altered, first in camera, second in the darkroom and now more commonly with digital manipulation using image manipulation software. Digital manipulation software allows you to make simple changes, such as cropping and lightening an image, and more extreme changes, such as combining photos, removing blemishes and even carving off body parts and skin. There are many programs that can be used, including some freeware that can be easily downloaded.

Here are some basic things to know about photo manipulation:

- 1 Image scanning** – If the original image or some part of it is analogue (hard copy), you will need to scan the image using a scanner. This device works a little like a photocopier, copying the image and then recording the data as a digital file to be used or viewed on a computer.
- 2 Saving in different file types (program file, jpg, tiff, etc.)** – If you open an image in a particular image program, the file will automatically become the file type of that program until you choose to save it. At this point you usually get an option to choose different file types. Why choose different file types? Different file types store the images with different amounts of data and information, and can be used in different end products. If you choose to save an image as a PDF it can't be altered by anyone else or accidentally changed when sending/emailing to someone. Some of the file types you may need to know about include jpg, tiff, PDF and Bitmap.
- 3 File size** – As previously mentioned, different file types can contain more or less information and therefore will be different sizes. You can also choose to save the file as different sizes in most image manipulation software. This is worth thinking about when your final product might be a website where you need to have small image files to allow for quicker upload/download times for viewers. In addition, as so much work is now sent to printers via the internet, smaller size is important so that files can be sent via email in a reasonable time. In this case designers often use PDFs. This also means that their work can't be altered either deliberately or accidentally.
- 4 Image size** – File size refers to the amount of information stored in an image in KB, MB, etc. Image size refers to the size of the actual image in centimetres or pixels. It is usually good to be working in an image size close to the end product so that information is not lost when increasing or decreasing the image size.
- 5 Tool bar** – In all image manipulation programs there is a tool bar. These contain similar tools, such as an arrow or a hand for moving data around. A cropping tool (usually looks like a box) is for cropping – cutting information from the outside of the frame. You can also cut information from inside the frame by selecting the inverse or opposite of an outside selection. The cropping tool only works with straight line shapes (squares or rectangles); if you want to cut out/select images that are non-standard shapes, then you will need to use

other tools such as wands or lassos. For more information on these and other tools, you will need to refer to online help or books about the individual digital manipulation programs.

- 6 Layers** – Most programs contain a layering function that allows you to work on different parts of the image separately. This is particularly useful when you are combining photos, adding images or wanting to alter just a small section of an image rather than the entire image. Layering functions work a little differently in each program, so learn how they work in the program you are using. The main image is usually the first layer or ‘background’ layer, unless you choose to place it on another layer.
- 7 Colour/monochrome** – The image you begin with will either be colour or black-and-white. There are ways of changing both the intensity and shade of colour by using tools such as pen or paint bucket and various selection tools. You can choose colours based on a colour wheel or Pantone colour charts, or you can use CMYK colour values to create your own. You can also use an eyedropper tool to collect any colour that already exists in an image to use elsewhere. The best way to learn about colours is to play around with the tools to see how they work.
- 8 Remember** – Good image manipulation requires skill, patience and subtlety. You can make small or large changes to an image, but to make them well you usually need to do a little change at a time. Use the zoom function so that you get right close up into the image to make changes on a pixel level, especially near the edges of altered sections.

- 1 Choose a recent image of yourself. Manipulate it so you look older. Then manipulate it so you look younger. You should end up with three images. Display these as a **trptych**.
- 2 Choose an image of yourself to go on the cover of a magazine. What do you need to do to make it suitable for the magazine?
- 3 Use an image of yourself and make the most extreme changes you can while still making the changes subtle and realistic. How far can you change your look while still making it look ‘real’?
- 4 Use a colour image and make it black-and-white (with true blacks and whites).
- 5 Combine two photos to create a different narrative or image than originally intended.



5.8 ACTIVITY

MAKING

trptych three images displayed together to make a whole

Truth and the photographic image

As we will explore in the following chapter (Chapter 6: Representation), every image that you see has been created and re-presented to the audience in some way. In its early days, photography was thought to be more truthful than painting or other art forms, as it was believed to capture a scene, object or person as a direct representation of real life. As we are now aware, through cropping, selection, composition and juxtaposition a highly subjective image can be created.

With such simple tasks as framing and cropping (selection and omission), a photographer is asking the audience to view an image in a particular way. Photo manipulation with software can also make undetectable changes to an image that are then passed off as 'real'. Questions about the misrepresentation of ideas and people arise in this situation; this is especially true in advertising (see Chapter 7).

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'Digital manipulation of images is ethically wrong unless an audience is advised it has happened.'

Consider the following questions when shaping your response:

- 1 Should the audience be advised that images have been altered?
- 2 Discuss why advertising would use altered images.
- 3 Think about where you might see altered images.
- 4 Was there ever truth in photography?

But wait, there's more...

- You can start a daily photo journal online at the 365 project.
- You can enter the Kodak Salon photography prize via the Centre for Contemporary Photography website.
- You can get technical tips and ideas online at <http://photoworkshop.com>.
- You can download the free image manipulation program GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program) online.
- You can view Trent Parke's images for 'Minutes to Midnight' at the Magnum website.
- You can share your photos with others on Flickr.
- You can enter the international photography competition via PIEA – the Photo Imaging Education Association.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Trent Parke is the first Australian photographer to become a Full Member of the renowned Magnum Photo Agency (since 2007) and he has won numerous awards for his photography.

What inspired you to become a photographer?

I am not sure inspired is the right word. When I was 13 years old I witnessed my mum die of an asthma attack. From that moment on I questioned everything around me, with the inevitable question: why am I here?

Somehow Mum's old Pentax Spotmatic fell into my hands and even though it's a Mamiya 7 now, a camera has never left my hands since.

I think one of the first photographs I took was my own wet footprints on the cement pavement after walking through the downstairs laundry. One minute they were there, the next they were gone.

Ever since I have been searching and recording all that comes my way. My camera has always been an extension of all that I experience in my life.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

Literally the footsteps, but after that and during school I used photography to earn extra money.

I would photograph my fellow students in their groups and sell them a 10x8 inch print for two dollars.

I then progressed to the school formal photographs and sporting teams.

I managed to do work experience in a Kodak lab, selling cameras and processing people's happy snaps.

As a result I was given a part-time job which enabled me to process my own films at cost price which helped in my own projects.

All of this was aimed at being able to generate enough money to buy more black-and-white film to take my own personal photographs. (Not much has changed in the last twenty years. Every cent earned still goes back into buying more film and photography in general.)

After building up a portfolio I applied at *The Newcastle Herald* for a job as a cadet press photographer. I failed several times, but wouldn't go away.

Eventually they caved in and gave me the job.

What does a typical day in the life of Trent Parke involve?

Parenthood and all aspects of the photographic process. Currently we (Narelle Autio, my wife, and two boys) have been on the road for five months living in a tent travelling the country.

This morning I was photographing over 500 giant green turtles mating in the shallows of a white sandy beach.

Right now I am writing to you.

I never know what the next day will bring. Always searching.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

Discovering something new for myself. In photography or through the use of photography in general life.

And that moment when an idea that may have been

with

TRENT PARKE



forming for weeks suddenly materialises and is held forever on a strip of film.

What is your least favourite aspect?

I still process and print all my own work. I have processed every black-and-white roll of film I have ever taken. It's important that I see through the entire process through from taking the pictures to the final print. I still enjoy printing in the darkroom, but I can't stand spotting every dust and scratch when it is scanned into the Magnum digital archive. (Yes there are programs for this, but none are as sharp or accurate as me spotting every single dot by hand.)

What is your favourite photographic image and why?

They are all my favourites for about one day.

I live in the moment of right now. This very second.

Usually by tomorrow they are gone and I am on to the next thing.

Has the rise of digital technology been a good thing for photographers?

Like most things it has advantages and disadvantages.

For the general public it's been great. Everyone is now a photographer and the interest in photography has as a result increased.

With such mass saturation, however, the hard part is finding something original to say with the medium.

What is one piece of advice for young photographers?

Always look behind you. The light is always different.

Top five photographers and why?

Now you're pushing it. It's been five months since I've even looked at a photograph, or photographer. Such is life living in a tent and the outback.

But to narrow it down and place more emphasis on what I am passionate about I would add top photographers books.

Photographers are interesting, single pictures are interesting, but for me the real art and vision is when a set of photographs are placed in book form.

The ones that have had the most influence on my own work are:

1 Robert Frank, *The Americans* (1958)

2 William Eggleston, *Los Alamos*

3 Josef Koudelka, *Exiles* (1997)

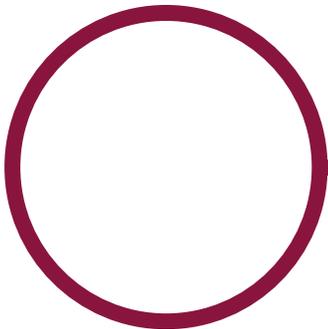
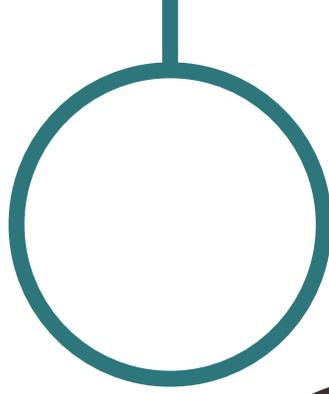
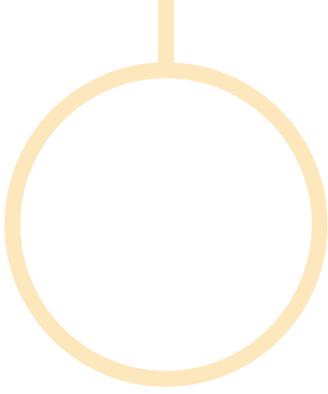
4 Walker Evans, *American Photographs*

5 Stephen Shore, *Uncommon Places* (1982).

The obvious link that they all have in common is the road trip.

And a road trip is what I am currently on.

As mentioned I live in the moment of right now.



6

REPRESENTATION

The way we make sense of the world through the media is based on how we communicate complex ideas and messages. The building blocks of this communication are the way we communicate concepts such as people, places, locations, objects, animals, institutions and organisations. Unless we witness something ourselves, we understand the world through how the media presents it.

As a representation is a media reflection or re-presentation of reality, made for a specific audience to achieve a specific purpose, how we view the world can be quite different from the reality. How a representation is assembled depends on how we understand the world and those depicted in the media. Examining these representations of reality can reveal a society's values and what it believes to be important. We can also find out a lot about ourselves and how we believe we should be depicted.

COMING UP...

Rewind

Purpose of representations

Selection and omission

Audience

Codes and conventions

Stereotypes

Values

Realism

Representations of gender

Up for debate

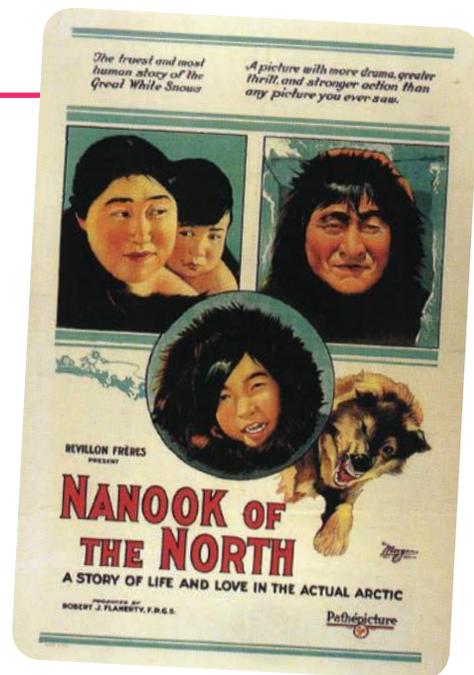
But wait, there's more ...

Inside the green room with Clare Bowditch

REWIND

Ever since people have been creating media products, they have aimed to construct representations in particular ways. One of the first aims was to create a representation that was as realistic as possible. The early cricket radio broadcasts that covered the matches between Australia and England in the 1930s are examples of this attempt at realism. The radio commentator would read the ball-by-ball descriptions that had been sent to them via cable and tap a pencil on the desk near the microphone to simulate the ball being struck. The effect that this had upon the audience was to make them feel like they were listening to the actual match.

Similarly, the early documentary filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty, in his 1922 film *Nanook of the North*, aimed to represent the life of Nanook, an Arctic Inuit man, in the most realistic way possible. This manner of 'fly on the wall' documentary-



making exists today in many formats; however, despite appearing to be revealing simply what is there, it is interesting to realise that whether it is a documentary about an Inuit called Nanook or about lions in Africa, the filmmaker will *represent* the subject in a certain way to the audience. Who the audience feels a connection with and who they support is all due to the way in which the filmmaker has created the representation.

PURPOSE OF REPRESENTATIONS

No matter how credible a representation seems, it is not just a window onto the world; all representations are constructed with a particular purpose or intent in mind. The author creates a product to reveal and reflect certain key pieces of information that they want the audience to understand. Let's go back to the nature documentary example of lions in Africa. There have been many documentaries made about the lives of lions; however, the way the audience views them depends upon how the author wants to construct the representation.



For instance, the filmmaker may focus on the lions being ferocious killing machines through the continual use of footage showing lions attacking other animals, even humans. On the other hand, they may create a documentary that contains many images of the lions bonding together as a family and protecting their young, and even being hunted by humans. Depending upon which documentary they watch, the audience will receive different messages about lions. Both are representations of lions; however, the difference between the two is the purpose of the filmmaker.

SELECTION AND OMISSION

As representations are constructed from reality, it is impossible to include everything that reality has to offer. For instance, if you were representing a school in one shot, it would be impossible to include the whole school in that image. Choices need to be made and information to be included needs to be selected.

selection what has been chosen to be included in a representation

omission what has been chosen to be excluded from a representation

There are certain things that could assist in immediately identifying it as a school. *How* you wanted to portray the school would determine the information that you would include.

Similarly, decisions need to be made about what the author is going to leave out of the representation. As not all information can be included in the one representation, less important information is often left out to ensure the representation is more easily understood. In your school, there may be parts that you are familiar with that don't look like a school at all. In this case, if you were to include them, it may add confusion to the representation, rather than assist its construction.

ACTIVITY 6.1

RESPONDING

You will know by now that it is impossible to include everything in a shot within a particular scene; however, it is still important that the location be identifiable. 

1 For each of the following locations, consider what you would need to include in the shot to make the location easily identifiable:

- office gym
- swimming pool
- library
- nursery
- farm
- footy match
- park
- laboratory
- pub.

2 What could you leave out that isn't important to its identification?



AUDIENCE

As with all media products, representations are made with a specific audience in mind. Understanding the audience is essential for the author to ensure that the representation fulfils its purpose. For example, knowing what the audience likes and what the audience dislikes are two basic things that an author needs to know in order to create a representation for a particular audience. Knowing the level of knowledge an audience has about the media is also important, particularly their understanding of codes and conventions.

CODES AND CONVENTIONS

Codes and conventions are tools used by the author to create (or encode) representations; likewise, the audience uses codes and conventions in order to understand (or decode) representations.

Codes are the building blocks of the construction. Just like the alphabet is the basis of our language, codes are how society goes about constructing and interpreting representations. The more combinations of letters that we can form into words, the better at communicating we are. It is the same with the codes used to construct and deconstruct representations.

While codes don't work in isolation, they can be divided into four categories:

Symbolic



Written



Audio



Technical



Conventions are socially accepted and understood ways of doing things. They can be seen as the customs or the common practices that a society has; for example, shaking hands when meeting someone new rather than the kiss or hug that comes from knowing someone for a period of time. An understanding of conventions dictates how codes are used in order to create meaning. By using conventions, an author ensures that the representation they make is understood by the intended audience because they are used to and expecting certain events or behaviours.

For example, we arrange our letters into recognisable words, sentences and paragraphs to create meaning. If we misspell a word or don't construct a sentence

correctly, meaning can be lost because the way in which we've used the codes isn't accepted or understood. It is the same with representations: if an author doesn't construct them in a conventional way, it can be difficult for audiences to understand what is meant.

Symbolic codes and conventions

Symbolic codes are visual objects or pieces of audio that possess greater meaning than just the literal. Symbolic codes can be broken down into the following categories:

- symbols
- iconic signs
- index signs (connotations).

Symbols carry meaning; the audience needs prior understanding of this in order to interpret symbols, otherwise they are meaningless. Symbols like Mars (male), Venus (female), signs of the zodiac or even symbols for peace or the automotive brand Mercedes-Benz all require prior understanding as the symbols themselves don't carry any suggestion of associated meaning. These symbols rely upon the audience possessing additional information to create meaning.

In this case, when using symbols the author must ensure that their intended audience has an understanding of the symbolic code being used. If they don't, meaning will be lost and the representation will not have been communicated effectively. However, these kinds of symbols can be used strategically to increase the authenticity of the representation.

ACTIVITY 6.2

RESPONDING

- 1 In pairs, research and list a collection of 10 obscure symbols.
- 2 Create two copies; one with the meanings next to them, the other with the meanings removed.
- 3 See which pair can find the most obscure symbols for which no one knows the meaning.
- 4 After you've swapped symbols, as a class negotiate five that you are all going to research the origins of. What meanings do they carry? Why do they carry those meanings? How old are they? Who uses them?



Iconic signs are pictographs that are the most basic representation of the original object. As these don't rely on any additional information being possessed by the audience, they can be interpreted without prior knowledge.

For instance, the little male/female people on toilet doors to indicate the gender designation don't require specialist knowledge to decipher or understand their meaning.

Index signs (connotations) are the most common symbolic codes used in the construction of representations. Index signs refer to prior understanding



of the connotative meaning that society has for things such as objects, colours, expressions or clothing. For example, a red rose is not just a colourful, fragrant flower; it is also Western society's symbol of love and romance. Similarly, a character wearing a baseball cap may be wearing it to keep the sun off, but if it is being worn backwards, additional meaning is added to the character.

The context in which these index symbols are used is also important in creating and interpreting meaning. A photo frame with a picture of a couple on a shelf in a bright, sunny room communicates quite a different meaning from the same photo in a cracked frame on the floor in a dimly lit room. While in both cases there is the literal meaning of a photo frame either being on a shelf or knocked onto the floor at different times of the day, there is also the connotative meaning that can be read into the image about the nature of the relationship or the well-being of the couple.

- 1 Use as many symbolic codes as possible to create a page about one of the following topics: love, hate, death, life, peace, greed, anger, friendship, honesty, childhood and danger.
- 2 Swap pages with another person and classify each of their symbolic codes into 'symbols', 'iconic signs' or 'index signs'.



6.3 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

Written codes and conventions

As we as a society respect the written word, written codes are incredibly powerful in anchoring the meaning of a representation through the use of text within the world of the representation (diegetic) or through a caption outside the world of the representation (non-diegetic). By using written codes, an author can remove any confusion that may be caused through an element of the representation that could produce multiple meanings. In television or movies, text is often used at the beginning of a scene to indicate the time and location. As an audience, we do not question this, thereby demonstrating the power of written codes.

Look at this image. Right now it could be communicating many different things.

- 1 Come up with as many anchors for it as possible to shift the meaning of the image as much as you can.
- 2 Find your own image online and see how you can alter the meaning by applying different captions.



6.4 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Audio codes and conventions

In an audiovisual representation, an audience expects sound to accompany the moving image, as audio codes are used to enhance the realism or emotion within the construction. Audio codes consist of dialogue, sound effects and soundtrack, and can be either diegetic or non-diegetic in nature. When we view a character talk to another character or interact with an object, we expect to hear appropriate voices or noises. If the dialogue or sound effects are not consistent with our expectations, we become distracted and begin to question the authenticity of the representation, with our attention being focused on the construction rather than the intended meaning.

When watching movies, we also expect non-diegetic codes to be used. If a character begins narrating a scene, we understand the convention that the story is being told from their perspective. We also understand that the audio code of the soundtrack is used to indicate the mood of the scene.

For example, when the leading lady and leading man are about to kiss for the first time, we understand that there isn't an actual string orchestra setting up to play the love theme. We understand that the director has used the audio code to communicate to the audience that the two characters are in love.

Likewise, with a television sitcom, the laugh track is used to indicate where there is a joke and where the audience is expected to laugh.



ACTIVITY 6.5

RESPONDING

Fonts are great! There must be a font for every emotion there is.



- 1 Using the fonts on the computer and any you find online, find an appropriate font for each of these emotions: happiness, sadness, anxiety, love, hate, friendship, desire, jealousy and envy.
- 2 After finding a suitable font, write the emotion using the font and explain why you believe that font is the best for that emotion.

Technical codes and conventions

Technical codes are the codes of construction. While each medium has unique technical codes and conventions, there are some which are shared by all. For instance, a close-up is always going to be used to bring the audience's attention to a specific object or expression, just like a low angle is always going to be used to suggest power and significance.

In the construction of audiovisual representations, technical codes include: camera angles; shot sizes; camera movement; editing conventions, including

montages, cutaways and reaction shots; the timing and use of sound; the size, placement and font of credits; subtitles or captions; and the use of filters or effects.

In visual representations (print or photography), technical codes include: cropping; captions; drop caps; columns; size, colour and placement of font; and filters or effects.

The process of cropping involves removing sections of an image to bring the audience's attention to one part of the shot. However, this removes information that could be vital in communicating the complete idea.

Your task is to alter the meaning of an image by cropping part of it.

- 1 Find an image from an online news website or from a newspaper.
- 2 Using either a digital editing program or a piece of white paper, remove or cover sections of the image to alter the meaning.
- 3 When you have removed a section, answer the following:
 - What have you removed from the image?
 - Why did you remove it? What information did it provide?
 - How has the meaning of the image been altered from the initial meaning?

6.6 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

STEREOTYPES

An oversimplified version of a representation is called a stereotype. These can often be quite negative as they don't give a detailed, accurate portrayal of the truth. These representations are mostly used in advertising. Stereotypes operate on many assumptions or assumed beliefs that a society makes towards a certain social group. They can be highly dangerous and cause a significant amount of damage not only to how a group is perceived by others, but also to how a group perceives itself.

Through stereotypes, audiences can gain meanings of social groups that may have a basis in reality, but are not applicable to all the people in that group. If we take the stereotype that all teenagers are lazy and untrustworthy, audiences who are not teenagers could potentially discriminate towards them, based upon an understanding built on stereotypical representations. However, teenagers who are constantly exposed to these stereotypes could begin to perceive themselves in a negative way and believe that the stereotype is what society expects from them. This, too, could have a negative impact on audiences.



VALUES

In the creation of a representation, there are always values embedded within it. These can change depending upon time period and culture. Society is held together by beliefs and ideals. Values are ideas that people hold to be 'true' or 'important', and societies reflect these beliefs. Media products reflect these beliefs as they are created within a particular time and society. Values are expressed as attitudes towards an idea; for example, that having a clean house is important for health and well-being.

REALISM

As noted in the 'Rewind' section, the initial intention of representations was to be as realistic as possible. While realism may now be a secondary consideration, with entertainment taking precedence, the realism of representations is well worth considering. The reality of a representation is influenced by the point of view of the author and the experiences of the audience. The level of knowledge possessed by both the author and the audience will determine the perceived level of realism contained within a representation.

For example, an author may have an understanding of social groups in the western suburbs of Melbourne and use this understanding to create a representation. To her it is realistic, from her point of view. The realism also depends upon the experiences of the audience. If the audience is from the eastern suburbs and has never spent a significant amount of time in the west, the representation may appear realistic to them. However, someone living in the west, with experiences that differ from those of the author, may perceive the same representation as being unrealistic.

ACTIVITY 6.7

RESPONDING

Look at the following image and consider the following questions in response to it:

- 1 How realistic do you think it is?
- 2 Have you seen this happen in real life?
- 3 Are any parts of the image familiar to you?
- 4 What makes you believe that this image properly reflects reality?
- 5 What about this image makes you believe that it is not real?



REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER

The following section goes through popular representations and stereotypes of gender found in the media. What we've included are examples of extreme stereotypes rather than realistic representations. Exploring these and discussing how they are used will allow you to understand the purpose that an author has in using one of these characters.

Representations of men

The way men are represented in the media depends on the medium and the genre that is being constructed. There are some representations that seem to exist only on TV and others that seem to only exist within the world of movies. All representations are created for a specific purpose and for a certain audience. The following are just a few common representations of men, how they are usually characterised, where they are usually found and how they are usually constructed. This is by no means a definitive collection of stereotypes; however, these are the building blocks of many others.

The Tradesman (Tradie)

Aspects of character: The Tradie is usually found on a construction site. He might be the builder, the plumber, the electrician or the gardener. An expert in his profession, he is called upon to help fix a situation and no job is too big. Generally, the Tradie is not fussed by much; there's nothing he enjoys more than finishing a hard day on the job, satisfied with the work he's done, and enjoying a couple of beers.

Usually found: TV – home improvement and renovation shows

Audio: The Tradie can be introduced by (and reflects many of the values within) the music of classic Aussie rock bands, such as AC/DC, Cold Chisel and The Angels. His dialogue is straight to the point, with no unnecessary long speeches, and he uses phrases such as 'no worries', 'fair dinkum' and 'she'll be right' with high frequency.

Symbolic: He is easily identified through his costume, which usually consists of Stubbies shorts or blue overalls, a T-shirt or singlet, a work belt, a pair of Blundstone boots and sunnies. It's an outfit for working hard outside for long periods of time. He will also have a variety of tools for the particular job, demonstrating that he is a capable worker. The Tradie also usually drives a ute, which is practical and manly. His usual lunch (and sometimes breakfast) consists of a meat pie or sausage roll, indicating that he doesn't care too much about his diet and that he likes his food to be manly, and not consist of some kind of rabbit food.

The Hopeless Husband/Boyfriend

Aspects of character: The Hopeless Husband is usually found in or around the home or flat. He is either the husband or the boyfriend of a much smarter



woman. The Hopeless Husband means well; however, his role is to not understand simple, everyday tasks or products, therefore requiring his partner to laugh at him (along with the audience) and come along to save the day. This stereotype perhaps derives from the idea that men never read instructions.

Usually found: TV – product advertisements, sitcoms

Technical: The Hopeless Husband is primarily constructed through acting. This role can be filled by a number of different actors; however, they have to appear non-threatening and well-meaning. His mannerisms consist of interacting with a particular situation or product and becoming confused by it. This can be showed with a furrowed brow or the scratching of the head. Rather than becoming aggressive or agitated, the Hopeless Husband will usually smile, indicating that he's not upset and that his solution, no matter how wrong, is good enough for him.

Symbolic: The settings in which the Hopeless Husband exists are locations previously thought to be the sole domain of women, such as the kitchen, or other areas of the house that require cleaning. He can also be in the garden, perhaps looking after the kids or in the bedroom in order to become confused with cosmetics or other female-specific items.



The kitchen, or other areas of the house that require cleaning. He can also be in the garden, perhaps looking after the kids or in the bedroom in order to become confused with cosmetics or other female-specific items.

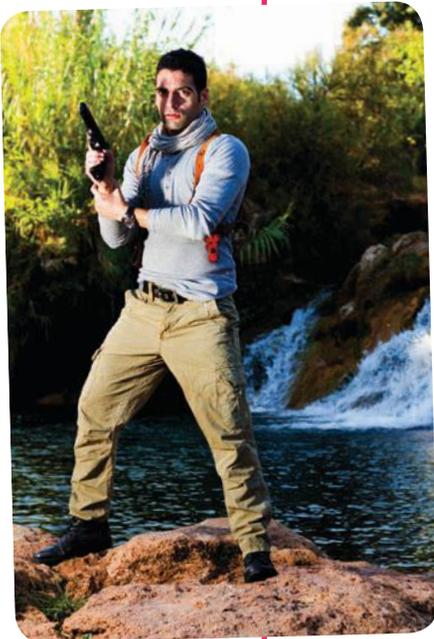
The Action Hero

Aspects of character: When the world is being held to ransom by some Evil Mastermind, this is the type of man you want around. A highly trained and able man, the Action Hero is able to infiltrate any dangerous location in order to save the day. Armed with a gun that has a never-ending supply of bullets, the action hero can survive a multitude of accidents and fights without sustaining more damage than a few scratches.

Usually found: Movies and TV – action/sci-fi narratives

Symbolic: The Action Hero usually has a few key symbolic elements to communicate that he is a tough, no-nonsense character who is able to do the job. Usually quite buff, the Action Hero has muscles that are quite developed and easily shown off through tight tops or ripped shirts. As stated, the endurance of the Action Hero is immense; however, he would not be complete without a few cuts and scratches. To further indicate that he has a rugged, manly side, the Action Hero has stubble which he begins the mission with, or that develops at an alarming rate.

Technical: The power and might of the Action Hero is second to none; therefore, he is constructed to communicate this. First, to show that he is a force to be reckoned with, he is filmed using a



number of low-angled shots, which indicate his dominance in a scene. When the Action Hero is in a life or death situation, slow motion is often used to allow the audience to see the moment in a greater amount of detail. As time is slowed down, the moment is emphasised to the audience.

The Evil Mastermind

Aspects of character: When the world needs the Action Hero, it is usually because the terror is being caused by an Evil Mastermind. This antagonist usually possesses different values and goals from those of normal people; the Evil Mastermind is bent on world domination at any cost. The greater the Action Hero, the more sinister and devious the Evil Mastermind must be. In the relative safety of his secret hideout, the Evil Mastermind is not someone to get angry.

Usually found: Movies and TV – action/sci-fi narratives

Symbolic: The hallmark of any Evil Mastermind is a collection of strange devices and weapons used to kill those in his way. The more fiendish and bizarre the invention is, the more it reveals the sick, inner workings of the Evil Mastermind's imagination. Another key feature of the Evil Mastermind is his foreign accent. Symbolising that we should fear those from other locations, the accent sets the Evil Mastermind aside from those attempting to thwart his evil plans.

Audio: The Evil Mastermind has significant accompanying audio, most notably through the soundtrack and dialogue. The soundtrack accompanying his verbalisation of his evil schemes possesses a great deal of drama, indicating when there's a significant threat in what he is saying. The content of his dialogue also includes many demands and ultimatums. The repetition of 'I'll do this' or 'You have half an hour to do that' shows that the Evil Mastermind has a clear goal with specific thoughts on how it must be done.



The Trusted Expert of Society

Aspects of character: The Trusted Expert of Society is used to present facts and support ideas. He is some kind of high-level, white-collar professional, such as a doctor, a judge, a lawyer, a scientist, a principal or a politician. The Trusted Expert has years of experience in his chosen field and is therefore always seen as telling the truth. Due to his years of study and many qualifications, the Trusted Expert has integrity and is used to add weight to an argument.

Usually found: TV – news and current affairs programs, insurance advertisements, hair care and beauty product advertisements

Symbolic: The Trusted Expert is always found in his professional setting. The location looks like a laboratory/office/practice should, and is clean, neat and tidy, demonstrating the success of the Expert. He will be filmed either hard at work, walking down a hallway, checking an employee's work or flicking



through a book or report. Depending upon the severity of the issues, he will be filmed with either a medium shot or a close-up. When being interviewed using a medium shot, it is to allow the audience to see his professional clothing, which will suit his employment, and the wall behind him, which will have either his qualifications and accolades or professional books and journals. This is to build his level of trust and to emphasise the importance of what he is saying. If a close-up is being used, it is to exaggerate his facial expressions and to emphasise the urgency of the issue.

Audio: The Trusted Expert is always introduced with a non-diegetic voice-over. This is to communicate to the audience what his qualifications are, what his connection to the issue is and why his opinion is important to consider. The Trusted Expert is then interviewed; he says a number of facts or outlines his experience and observations to further build his level of persuasion, and then delivers his opinion upon the topic. The interview is then usually brought to a close by the Trusted Expert telling the audience what needs to happen immediately; this could be directed at the government, a business, a person or a group of people.

The Effeminate Male

Aspects of character: The Effeminate Male has had an interesting history of representation in the media. Initially, the Effeminate Male was used as a comedic device, used to suggest the homosexuality of a character. He was used either as the target of jokes or as the villain, suggesting that there was something wrong with his less-than-masculine nature. Unfortunately, not much has changed. While there is much more acceptance of the Effeminate Male, his characteristics are still often used to suggest his sexuality. He is seen as having characteristics that are opposite to what a masculine man is stereotyped to possess. He has a fantastic understanding of fashion, has many female friends and is incredibly fussy and anxious about everything; a perfectionist at heart.

Usually found: Movies and TV – comedy, romance, drama, sitcoms, reality shows

Audio: The Effeminate Male is often characterised through dialogue. Both the sound of his voice and his dialogue are often used to indicate his effeminate characteristics. Often he has a voice which is high-pitched and whiny, with a slight hint of condescension and superiority. The Effeminate Male's dialogue usually contains comments or complaints about fashion, celebrities and other people or events.

Symbolic: As one of the Effeminate Male's main interests is fashion, the clothing and outfits worn by him are always first-rate.



They consist of either designer labels or a carefully constructed outfit. Either selection of clothing indicates the amount of time and/or money that he has invested in his appearance. The Effeminate Male's mannerisms are also unique. They are often emphasised with fluid hand gestures or one hand holding his elbow; these communicate a high level of anxiety toward a person or situation being perfect. This also communicates that, unlike the masculine male, the Effeminate Male cares significantly about the outcome of the situation.

The Father Figure

Aspects of character: The Father Figure appears in family situations and is used for many purposes. As he is older, he can be called upon to give fatherly advice to his children or those he cares about. This advice usually revolves around life lessons or problems that another character is facing. The Father Figure, however, is also usually quite set in his ways, which can be used to create much tension within a story. Whether it is children who are asking for his approval for something he doesn't support or an issue in society that goes against his values, you can be sure that the Father Figure will always have a strong opinion about it. As children often go to their father for acceptance, his reaction can be quite significant.

Usually found: Movies and TV – family/comedy/sports narratives, sitcoms

Audio: Depending on the topic being discussed, the Father Figure will have two distinctive styles of dialogue. If he is dispensing advice to a loved one, his dialogue and tone will indicate a level of care, support and understanding. Phrases he'll use will consist of things like 'we all make mistakes' or 'in time, you'll understand'. However, if the Father Figure is upset, his voice will be raised and his tone will be quite blunt. Phrases used to indicate his mood will be things like 'over my dead body,' 'not under my roof' or 'I will not let my son/daughter ...'.

Technical: As the Father Figure is seen as being quite a responsible and respected character, he can often be shot at a low angle, to indicate his superiority in a scene. This is particularly the case if he is preventing another character from achieving something. Editing can also be used to communicate how the Father Figure feels about things he is being told. Reaction shots are used to cut from the face of the character delivering the news to the Father Figure listening; depending on the nature of the information, the Father Figure will either smile with pride or smoulder with rage.



The Stud

Aspects of character: Cool, calm, collected and the supreme Casanova, the Stud can have anybody he desires. Characterised as naturally knowing exactly what to say, what to do and what to wear to impress others, he can dominate any situation with a simple click of his fingers. As other characters can look up to the coolness of the Stud, he is often held in high regard with many wanting

to be his friend or something a little more intimate. The Stud can have a range of different professions, but you can be sure that whatever he is doing, he is doing it with an awesome level of carefree style and sophistication.

Usually found: Movies and TV – comedy/romance narratives, sitcoms

Symbolic: No matter what situation the Stud is in, he is always wearing clothing that indicates he is cool. Whether it be a suit and tie, a leather jacket and jeans, or a pair of overalls, the stud has a way of wearing the clothing that indicates his cool and calm attitude to life. The indicating element will be that it is slightly different from normal,

thereby separating him from the rest of those wearing similar outfits. The Stud's hair is also a significant feature, always being striking in some way and sure to enhance his looks and charm.

Technical: The Stud's ability to make any character weak at the knees can be communicated through the use of long shots, close-ups and reaction shots. The initial long shot is needed to emphasise the cool costume and the way in which he can move and enter a scene. This is then followed with a few close-ups on parts of his body or on his face to bring the audience's attention to his striking looks. Throughout these shots, reaction shots of other characters can indicate to the audience that this is someone very cool, through their looks of envy or attraction.

The Nerd

Aspects of character: The Nerd is the man whose interest in scientific, pop culture or computer pursuits borders on an obsession. His mind is a complex and powerful aspect of his character, often allowing him to understand the intricacies of complex ideas and stories. He has an appreciation for all things that are clever, intelligent and non-physical, as the Nerd usually lacks the coordination or the physique, not to mention interest, to participate in contact sports – or any sports for that matter. Another characteristic of the Nerd is his interest in members of the opposite sex, usually those who are really attractive. Unfortunately, his inability to talk to them, or lack of any level of 'cool' that they might find attractive, usually leads to romantic failure.

Usually found: Movies and TV – comedy/romance narratives, sitcoms, reality shows



Audio: Due to his superior intellect, the Nerd's dialogue is usually complicated and reveals his high level of understanding of the particular subject. Through the use of complex vocabulary and precise statements, the dialogue reveals not only a strong respect for intellectualism but also an obsession for the exact – the Nerd knowing that any false statement could lead to other nerds ridiculing his inaccuracy. Due to his lack of confidence or experience with women, when the Nerd is talking to a female his dialogue usually becomes quite stilted and inappropriate, communicating his awkwardness.

Written: As the Nerd celebrates all things intellectual, written codes make a significant contribution to his construction. The Nerd may have many textbooks lying around, all with highly complex subjects written on them, such as *Biochemistry*, *Advance Linux Programming* or *Dungeons and Dragons: Dungeon Master's Guide*. This love of information can be reinforced through complex data being displayed or programmed on a computer. If the Nerd is required to explain something to other characters (or the audience), he often writes a formula or diagram on a blackboard in order to better communicate the complex idea to those lesser beings.



- 1 Find an example for each of the representations of men in the categories listed above. You can choose characters from television shows or from movies.
- 2 Write down how they fit the stereotype.
- 3 Write down how they break the stereotype.
- 4 Are they displayed as a likeable, positive character or a hated, negative character?
- 5 Use evidence to support your responses.
- 6 Are any aspects of their character believable? Explain.



6.8 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Representations of women

When we watch or listen to the media we are constantly faced with portrayals of women. They are 'representations' of the women and not the women themselves.

In advertising, women are used to market products that are perceived to be interesting to them, and certain values and stereotypes are shown in these advertisements.

Cleaning products and cosmetics are an example of such products. In advertisements for these products, we sometimes see a woman depicted as the person who cleans the house or the bathroom, and who feels under pressure to do so as society still values a clean house mostly cleaned and maintained by

women. Can you find a household cleaning product ad for men, using a man as the main character? If so, how does it differ from the ads with women?

Cosmetics advertisements use attractive women to encourage their audience to buy cosmetics, supporting the value that women should be beautiful and young-looking, and if they are not then they are less valued in society. The advertisers imply through their attractive characters (sometimes well-known celebrities, adding another level of authenticity to their statements) that their products will make the people who buy them look and feel this way.

Throughout history the portrayal of women in the media has changed to reflect changing attitudes and social values. The representation of women in the media is different in different cultures and countries, depending on what the particular society's opinions are.

Real women such as celebrities and politicians are also 'represented' in the media. Although these women are not characters (fictional representations), when we see/hear/read about them we are only getting a small part of the information about them. Also we 'see' only what the author of the media product (news editor, camera person, website content manager, etc.) wishes us to see. In a newspaper or magazine we might see an unflattering photograph of a celebrity combined with a caption (text) that implies that she is not as attractive as normal or that her life is out of control because she is not maintaining the facade of beauty.

When we watch the television we see images of important women in positions of power such as the German Chancellor or the US Secretary of State, but where they are positioned in the frame may give us a different perspective on how to view them. To give us meaning, our brains use the information in front of us and combine it with the information we already have from pre-understood codes and conventions of how we feel/understand women to be.

Below are some of the common stereotypical representations of women:

The Housewife

Aspects of character: The Housewife is rarely seen outside of her territory: the home, the supermarket and the school. She spends most of her time cooking, cleaning and maintaining a perfect home environment for her husband and

children. She is always there to solve 'home' problems and provides hugs and support for family members.

She must have dinner on the table for her family every night and puts up with all manner of whingeing and complaining without ever complaining herself about all the hard work.

Usually found: Movies and TV – sitcoms, comedies

Audio: The housewife talks a lot about her kids and her house.

Symbolic: She wears dresses and pale colours, and drives family vehicles such as station wagons and vans. She wears a wedding ring and gets her hair done professionally.



The Single Woman

Aspects of character: The Single Woman is looking for a man to settle down with and her biological clock is ticking so she is also looking for a man to start a family with. Her friends are mostly partnered up and are starting families and look at her with sympathy for her plight. She is often fixed up on blind dates, or her life is a series of false starts with unsuitable suitors.

Usually found: Movies and TV – comedies, sitcoms, romance narratives

Audio: Shown through dialogue, she is happy on the outside when talking to her work colleagues, strangers and dates. When talking with close friends and when she talks to herself in the mirror she is sad that she is being left behind and can't find Mr Right.

Symbolic: She is dressed in business attire appropriate for her job while at work and then has a series of costume changes depending on whether she is at home alone (tracksuit pants) or out on a date (pretty dress).



The Working Mother

Aspects of character: The Working Mother has to balance her home life and work life, and she is constantly torn between the two worlds. Usually she needs to pretend at work that her family life does not exist in order to be taken seriously by male co-workers. She is often challenged by her work for not showing enough commitment and by her family/children/husband for not putting in enough time in the home. She comes in late and is often the opposite character to a stay-at-home father.

Usually found: Movies and TV – romance narratives, comedies, sitcoms

Audio: It is usually shown through dialogue that is appropriate to her workplace when in the workplace and then appropriate to home when she is at home.

Symbolic: She wears suits and high heels and is often caught out with baby vomit on her clothes or baby products/evidence in her bag.

Technical: The Working Mother usually has a computer and a mobile phone connected most of the time. This is symbolic of her costume but also shows that she is technologically savvy and ready to take calls and connect to the business world whenever necessary.



The Powerful Woman

Aspects of character: As opposed to the Working Mother, the Powerful Woman has little or no family to speak of. She dresses for business and means what she says. She often takes on masculine characteristics and is expected to be less emotional than other women. She needs to be twice as good as any man at her job/work/role to get respect. She is often shot with a low angle to demonstrate her power. She is rarely the romantic lead as this would be showing emotion.

Usually found: TV – politics, sitcoms; also in newspapers, online

Audio: She gives speeches and understands politics and business.

Symbolic: She wears suits (usually pant suits), often cut like men's suits, sometimes with shoulder pads to help emphasise her strength.

The Female Superhero

Aspects of character: Like most superheroes she is half a normal member of society with a job/family/life and then spends her time fighting crime/saving the world, etc. Few people know her secret identity and the Female Superhero is usually one of a group of superheroes. She is seen to be fragile and in need of protection in her normal life by her friends/family/boyfriend who don't know who she is. Most superheroes are given one special power above their usual extra strength, speed and agility.

Usually found: Movies and comics – action/superhero

Technical: She has tools of her trade, gadgets and technical equipment as part of her superhero arsenal that increase her power and sense of difference from the ordinary person.

Audio: While being her alter ego she often has clever lines that allude to her role as superhero.

Symbolic: As her superhero persona she wears a very tight-fitting costume that shows off her physique, both strong and female, often in red, blue or black. She usually dons a mask.



The Queen Bee

Aspects of character: The Queen Bee is the leader of her group of popular and wicked friends in a school or workplace setting. She has obtained her position of power through taking other people down. She is usually dating an attractive male character who is also the dominant character in his group. She is superficial and judges people on their outward appearance and economic status. Her 'friends' are close to her because they want to become her or take her place when she falls down the social ladder, or because they are scared of her. She is invited to all the right places and parties, even though most people don't like her.

Usually found: Movies and TV – sitcoms, teen movies, comedies, horror

Audio: Her dialogue consists of putting others down and being rude. She is usually angry and dominates conversation through abuse of others.

Symbolic: The Queen Bee wears expensive designer clothes and very strong feminine clothes such as skirts and heels. She wears jewellery and make-up. Most Queen Bees are blonde-haired and blue-eyed.



The Girl Next Door

Aspects of character: The Girl Next Door has spent her life being 'friends' with people. She is friendly and reliable and helps out with babysitting and homework. She has friendships with boys and girls but is not seen as a love interest. She is usually plain looking and has a transformation into a beauty after taking off her glasses.

Usually found: Movies and TV – comedies, romance narratives, sitcoms

Audio: She is knowledgeable and helpful in her dialogue and characters feel they can trust her and often confide secrets in her. She is supportive but often holds back what she wants to say, particularly if she is romantically interested in someone.

Symbolic: She often wears plain clothes to help her blend in to her environment; she is commonly in glasses and overalls. She is not seen as the romantic lead until she reveals herself to be more attractive through superficial transformation – taking her glasses off and wearing different clothes.





The Damsel in Distress

Aspects of character: The Damsel in Distress is, as her name suggests, constantly getting herself into trouble and needs someone else, usually a man, to help her out. She is very feminine and girly, and inexperienced with the world.

Usually found: Movies – comedies, adventure, stories about knights

Audio: 'Help me' and 'We're never going to make it' are some of her key lines.

Symbolic: Her costume is feminine and inappropriate to the difficult surroundings she gets herself into; for example, long dresses that blow in the wind.

The Femme Fatale

Aspects of character: The Femme Fatale is a sexy, worldly character able to convince men to do 'anything' to gain her love and affection or sex. She uses her womanly characteristics to their full and dangerous advantage. In the past she was always blonde but in more recent times her characteristics have changed. She is a loner with no family or relatives and no female friends.

Usually found: Movies – **film noir**

Audio: The Femme Fatale is accompanied by a soundtrack of slow, sexy music, as a warning to the audience. The Femme Fatale is often caught telling lies, but manages to convince other characters to do her bidding anyway



through talking with a low, sexy, slow voice. She often has long telephone conversations with the people she is trying to convince to do her bidding.

Symbolic: To emphasise her form, she wears clothes that are tight-fitting, yet often with a floaty nature, sometimes slightly risqué and translucent. She is often seen in white (the colour of innocence) to disguise her wicked nature. She is very coiffed and manicured.

The Bimbo

Aspects of character: She is a superficial character who is treated superficially by those around her. She has big blonde hair and is pretty and often on the arm of a large strapping athlete. The Bimbo uses her looks as a way of getting what she wants – either deliberately or subconsciously. She is usually the second in command in the popular group, mainly because she will do what others tell her to do and back up a strong leader. The Bimbo is often seen with vacant

film noir a film genre that was at the height of its popularity in the 1940s, often featuring a detective as the main character and a femme fatale

and bored expressions on her face, particularly when others are planning activities or she is in a classroom.

Usually found: TV – sitcoms as part of an ensemble cast; movies – comedies, teen

Audio: The Bimbo is the character in every scene who doesn't understand what is going on. She is the butt of other people's jokes and often has one-liners that do not make sense.

Symbolic: She mostly wears short skirts and high heels, and her clothing is generally inappropriate for whatever situation she is in. She is often seen talking into a mobile phone.



The Butch Female

Aspects of character: The Butch character is a masculine female. She is a biological female but dresses, often behaves and has interests society associates with men rather than women. She hangs out with men and is friends with them, but doesn't have romantic relationships with them.

Usually found: Movies and TV – comedies, sitcoms, prison shows

Audio: Her speech can be tough and manly. The Butch Female might talk about tools and technical things and have less interest in things that are considered conventionally feminine.

Symbolic: She wears masculine clothes – flannel shirts, jeans and leather workboots. She has short masculine hair and wears little or no make-up.



ACTIVITY 6.9

RESPONDING

- 1 Find at least four representations of different women and then discuss the representations created. You can look at advertising, the news, websites, comic books, movies, etc. For example, you could look for one of the following:
 - a mother
 - a woman in a position of power
 - a female superhero.
- 2 Where did you find the representations? How old are they? What are they saying about women? Compare the images and discuss the shot angles, frame and colour. Are they negative stereotypes? What is your understanding of these women?
- 3 Report back to the class using the images and get the class to provide answers before you give them the information.



Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'There's nothing wrong with how men and women are represented in the media as this reflects reality.'

Consider what you know about representations of men and women and the following questions when shaping your response:

- 1 Do you believe that these representations provide a positive reflection of both genders, or do they seem to focus on the negative stereotypical aspects?
- 2 Do you agree with the stereotypes? Do you believe that the media has enough power over audiences and society for this to matter?
- 3 What is reality? Is it such a problem if we see these representations because viewers understand how they are constructed?
- 4 Do they actually reflect reality and are we just being too sensitive about ourselves?

Use examples from media texts and real life to support your stance on the topic. Whether or not you agree or disagree, you will no doubt be reflecting on the way in which the media reflects our world and whether or not it shapes it more than we believe.

But wait, there's more ...

- You can explore the Multicultural Media Exchange to see the work they do to diversify representations in the media.
- You can explore the Dove advertising campaign for real beauty at their website.
- You can view advertising from all around the world at the Ads of the World website.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Clare Bowditch is an Australian musician based in Melbourne. She has also written articles for Rolling Stone and ABC's The Drum and has worked as a broadcaster on radio.

What inspired you to become a musician?

I became a musician by following the thing I loved most, which was music. Music meant the world to me as a child, as a teenager, as a young adult, as a grown woman: through every life stage, my love of music has been the one constant. I was never bored with it, and it was never bored with me, so I kept going at it. Like most artists, I struggled to work out how I could make a living out of it, but in the end I decided that was the least of my worries, that all of that would come in time, and I kept making music anyway. Eventually, I realised I could do music as my 'day job', without destroying my love of making it. That's when I realised I was a working musician.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

Like most children, I loved making music. My first step to following it with any seriousness was beginning a band when I was sixteen, with my friends, just for fun. From there, the 'pathway' was really about trying to be as brave as I could, because playing with people sometimes scared me and I felt much safer in my bedroom playing or singing on my own. So the first step was having the courage to play around with friends, and then finally playing my own songs to friends, playing live, allowing people to hear what it was I did, then saving up enough money to record my music with my first band, then striking out on my own, and so on . . .

What does a typical day in the life of Clare Bowditch involve?

There are very few constants in my working life – my 'constant' comes from being a mother to my three children, and in my relationships with my partner and friends and from what you could call my 'real life'. My

working life is incredibly varied. Most mornings I wake up early, make breakfasts, drop children at school, come home, clean up, and then find myself wondering over to the piano, play for a while, shower, answer my first phone calls, and then spend most of the day on my computer and the phone.

When I am touring, I sleep in, walk around cities again with my phone attached to my ear taking 'meetings' or working out plans, then I try to find somewhere quiet to sit, write down a few lyrics that have occurred to me whilst I was walking, then go to sound check, play around with sound levels, go get some dinner, go back to the band room, warm up, start putting those lyrics I wrote before to a song, play a gig, sign merchandise after the gig, listen to people's stories, relax with my band, go to sleep late, and fly home early in the morning.

When I am recording, I wake up, do my daily jobs, and then sit in a room with my producer trying to turn straw into gold, which is sometimes fun and sometimes just feels like you're trying to climb Mount Everest.

Some days I just go to my office and file papers, pay bills and have more meetings. Some days I answer several hundred emails. Some days I go on strike and refuse to answer any emails for two days in a row. Some days

I decide I am actually a writer, not a musician, and I start writing books and scripts and articles and other things that interest me. Some days I sit in a library researching this and that. Often I go and listen to other musicians making music. Mostly, I wander around being accountable to my muse: she often arrives at inopportune times, like when I should be sleeping.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

People, music, making music for people, and inspiring them to make their own. I love that I have been able to do the thing I love, even though the actual 'music creation' is only about one-tenth of what I do in my job.

What is your least favourite aspect?

The same as anyone who runs a small business – being too busy too often, worrying about balancing the

with

CLARE BOWDITCH

books, not having 'normal things' like real holidays or a regular pay packet, travelling too much to the point of exhaustion, wondering if I'm on the right track, and the ongoing attempt to balance my most obscure fascinating ideas with the ones that I know will make me the most money.

What is the most inaccurate stereotype you have come across?

That musicians are lazy, addicted, unreliable, unintelligent people who can't hold down real jobs. That creativity is not an important form of intelligence, full stop. That all famous musicians are rich and therefore it's 'fine' to download their songs without paying for them, because 'they don't need the money anyway' (in my books, we should encourage and respect the things that bring us joy). That being a musician is not compatible with having a family. That being creative is not a legitimate contribution to society. That you can't make your living as a musician in Australia without making music that appeals to commercial radio. I believe the opposite is true for all of these things.

How active are you in the creation of your own representations?

I am active in the creation of my own life, and believe that if you remain focused on the things that actually matter, like doing the things you love as often as you can, then you are representing yourself 'just fine'. This means connecting with artists, graphic designers, designers, sound engineers, projects and people who really inspire and move me – clearly, there is always going to be an element of 'representation' going on, because an album cover and a photograph is not 'a real person', it is a representation only. But when all that is said and done, I believe it is a mistake to worry too much about what's going on in other people's minds: people will see you the way they want to see. In the meantime, chop wood carry water.

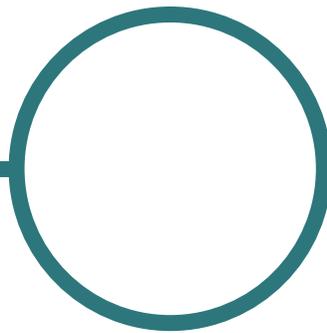
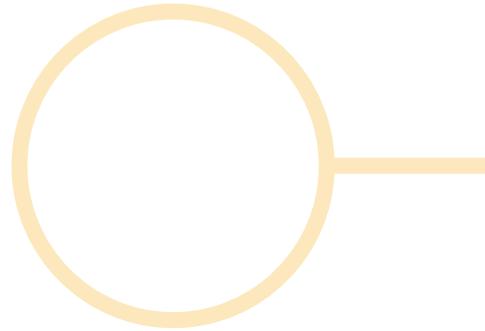
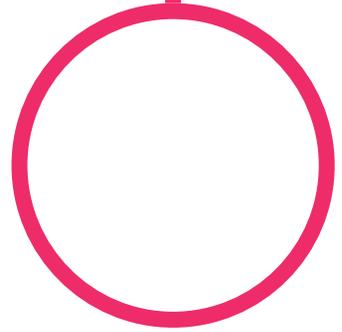
How do you think that new media changed the representations of celebrities?

For some, celebrity is a kind of a sport. Most musicians choose not to engage in the sport of celebrity, not much anyway. Sometimes, the new media's obsession with gossip makes real people (aka 'celebrities') seem like one-dimensional caricatures, which they never are. There is a real difference between a person who is a celebrity and a person who is an artist: there are different motivations at play. Sure, sometimes they overlap, but it usually doesn't last.

Top five musicians whose images have intersected strongly with their creative vision?

- 1 **PJ Harvey** – strength of creative vision, willingness to be unpopular, sound totally unlike anyone else, and rarely play nice.
- 2 **Patti Smith** – uncompromising creative vision, inventiveness, long and developed creative relationship of her image with her closest friend/ex-partner, photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.
- 3 **Lady Gaga** – say what you will, love her or hate her, her energy and confidence in representing herself are absolutely extraordinary and relentless, and I have no idea how she is still standing.
- 4 **Björk** – again, her courage and originality, her willingness to take a risk and sometimes be unpopular, the way she keeps recreating out of the ashes of her last project.
- 5 **Laurie Anderson** – an absolute master storyteller ('O Superman') who uses mixed media (sound, costume, moving image, experimental technology) to create not only music but sharp and brilliant art, provocative art, art which is endlessly inspiring, if you have the time to spend with her work.





Everywhere we look we are surrounded by advertisements: in magazines; on billboards; on the side of buses, trams and trucks; on the radio; on television; at the cinema; on our favourite websites; embedded in our email; and sent direct to our phones. Advertising is impossible to avoid.

But what is advertising? Basically, it's the method used to persuade someone to purchase a particular product or service. But it is also much more. When you have people who only drink one product, wear one product or communicate with one product, it's clear that we now identify who we are by the brands and products we use. Advertising has become an accepted part of our society.

By contrast, propaganda, which is considered a far more negative practice, is the process of presenting one side of an idea in order to change a person's opinion. Hang on ... isn't that the same as advertising? Advertising is all about presenting one side to make people believe that a product or service is the best. So why is advertising seen as acceptable and propaganda seen as misleading and dangerous? This chapter explores both advertising and propaganda, opening up a space for you to think about whether they are the same thing or completely different.

7

ADVERTISING AND PROPAGANDA

COMING UP...

Rewind**The difference between advertising and propaganda****Looking more closely at advertising****Selling Australia****Viral marketing****Product placement****Looking more closely at propaganda****Public education campaigns****Up for debate****But wait, there's more ...****Inside the green room with Prue Newton****REWIND**

Although today we are surrounded by advertising, it hasn't always been like that. Although advertising has been around for quite some time, it has existed in a number of different forms.

In Ancient Roman times, around 50 AD, there was quite a large amount of advertising occurring in the city of Pompeii (before Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD). As the city contained a large number of middle-class citizens in a range of trades (carpenters, bakers, blacksmiths, potters, etc.), they vied for competition with each other to ensure it was their goods that were purchased. Signs and posters with information about prices and quality would have been the information used to attract people; however, the reputation of the person would also have been of significance.

Across Europe in the sixteenth century, the **printing press** assisted the flow of ideas (propaganda) that led to the Reformation (movement away from the Catholic Church). A quick and easy way of replicating printed information, the printing press allowed the **Reformers** to communicate their alternative message and spread the Protestant movement, an activity that was punishable by death in many Catholic countries.

Another form of advertising through the ages was the use of town criers. Present in England in the 1700s, the town criers would walk through the town crying 'Hear ye! Hear ye!', communicating news and information to the mostly illiterate population. Royal proclamations, information about local laws and advertisements were all messages communicated by the town criers.

printing press a machine invented around 1440 by German Johannes Gutenberg that enabled the mass production of printed materials, such as books, for the first time in history

Reformers a group of people who challenged the authority of the Catholic Church



Re-creation of a town crier



The *sans-culottes*, fuelled by ideals, played an important part in the French Revolution

The spread of propaganda helped to bring about the French Revolution in 1789. Through the distribution of pamphlets, again mass produced through the use of printing presses, revolutionaries were able to spread news and rumours about French ruler **King Louis XVI**, his wife Marie Antoinette, and the government in general. This helped to persuade the citizens that the economic ruin that faced France was the fault of the king and that he should be overthrown, which he eventually was.

Despite not being as technologically capable or sophisticated as the forms we have today, the advertising and propaganda of the past still had highly effective outcomes.

King Louis XVI the last king of France, executed on 21 January 1793 after the proclamation of the French Republic on 22 September 1792

- 1 Create a table with each of these historical forms of advertising: signs and posters, town criers and pamphlets. In one column write down the qualities that would make this form persuasive and in another column write down the qualities that would make this form unpersuasive.
- 2 Choose the method that would work the best to communicate and persuade the students at your school. Explain why.
- 3 Choose the method that would work the best to communicate and persuade the teachers at your school. Explain why this is the same as or different from persuading the students.
- 4 Imagine you are a revolutionary. How would you use old forms of advertising to overthrow the school?

7.1 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND PROPAGANDA

As previously mentioned, it seems as though there is a fine line between advertising and propaganda. They both have similar definitions, but one seems to be far more acceptable than the other. So what's the difference? Advertising is a term associated with private companies, the purpose being to prompt a financial transaction. Propaganda is a term associated with political or social ideas, the purpose being to change public opinion. But apart from the commercial aspect and the difference in connotation with the words, there is little difference between the two.



CASE STUDY:

Apple's 1984 'Big Brother' advertisement

An advertisement that crossed the line between advertising and propaganda was Apple's 'Big Brother' advertisement for its new Macintosh computer. In 1984, the personal computer market was dominated by IBM (the platform that is known today as the PC market, largely running Microsoft Windows). To combat this, Apple created an advertisement that would be shown during the Super Bowl.

The advertisement, directed by Ridley Scott (*Alien*, *Blade Runner*, *Gladiator*, *Prometheus*) and inspired by George Orwell's novel *1984*, features a **dystopia** controlled by an oppressive government that is controlling the population using non-Apple products, with a face ('Big Brother') being displayed on a number of screens – some small, some large. These oppressed masses are dressed in plain grey uniforms and shown walking mindlessly in single file and sitting in a group, their blank, expressionless faces staring at the large face on a screen. The voice of Big Brother can be heard telling the people about how wonderful life is. A woman, dressed differently from the other people, in a white singlet and orange running shorts and carrying a large hammer, is being chased by guards. She runs between the rows of sitting people up to the large screen and throws the hammer at the screen. The screen explodes with white light and a voice, accompanied by text, informs the audience of the release of Apple's new Macintosh computer.

dystopia the opposite of a utopia, it is a society in the worst possible condition

This advertisement was only shown on television once; however, it was one of the most memorable ads in history. The reason this crosses over from advertising to propaganda is that while it was attempting to persuade consumers to purchase Apple's product, it also sought to begin building a brand identity through the use of rather emotive imagery. Through the presentation of their rivals as being without any democracy, this advertisement tapped into ideas that existed during the **Cold War** with the Soviet Union.

In the past 10 years, Apple has built its brand with an even greater sense of freedom. The 'i' range of portable music devices and smartphones (characterised by their white headphones) has always sought to make consumers feel simultaneously unique and part of an Apple group. Their iconic Apple logo has not changed and is instantly recognisable within TV and movies, always with a connotation of intelligence and sophistication. Apple's current movement is towards the television market; only time will tell how much further the brand will grow.



Cold War ideological conflict between the USA and former USSR that lasted from the end of World War II (1945) until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991

- 1 View Apple's 1984 Macintosh advertisement online.
- 2 Describe how Apple represented the dystopian world. What colours did they use? What setting? How did the actors communicate how their characters were feeling?
- 3 Do you think the advertisement would still be effective today? Why or why not?
- 4 Now look up other Apple advertisements.
- 5 Choose one and identify what idea it is looking to communicate with the product.
- 6 How does the ad go about communicating this idea?



7.2 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

LOOKING MORE CLOSELY AT ADVERTISING

As previously mentioned, the purpose of advertising is to convince consumers that a particular product or service is so good that they will want to purchase it. This sounds simple enough; however, with all the ads around us, advertisers need to be quite clever to make sure their message is heard



and that it doesn't get lost among all the other ads. This is why advertisers try to persuade us by attaching or associating a specific idea to the product or service. For instance, they might try to attach the idea that their product is the most effective product on the market, or they may try to convince us that their product is the best value for money.

However, they may attach other larger ideas to a product. For example, they may attach the idea that we will immediately become happier after buying their product. They might try to convince us that we will become healthier and have more friends or that our lives will suddenly change for the better. They may even try to persuade us that their product will save us from ever feeling bad again. These ideas are usually part of a much larger advertising campaign and are associated with large brands and the process of branding.

ACTIVITY 7.3

RESPONDING

Regardless of how big or how small an idea advertisers are trying to attach to a product, there are many methods of trying to achieve this. Some work and some don't work. The best judge of this is you, the consumer and audience.



- 1 Make a table with the following columns: ads that work, ads that don't work, ads that are funny and ads that are irritating.
- 2 Write down as many advertisements as you can think of in each column. Compare them with the person next to you. How many match up? How many are different?
- 3 Now explain to them why you decided to place some of the ads where you did. What are your reasons? Are they the same as the other person's?

Branding

Branding is very important in the world of advertising. When employed successfully, it can communicate a large amount of information with very little effort. Think about the idea of cattle being branded with a mark to signify who owns it. Over time, the owners of cattle build a reputation on what kind of cattle



Some well-known
brands in Australia



they breed and what kind of people they are to deal with. It is the same with advertising – a brand is a form of ‘stamp’ to communicate ownership and, more importantly, ideas. Brand recognition is built up over a number of years and is achieved through constantly attaching the same message to a brand or product so that the mere mention of the brand’s name immediately brings many positive ideas to mind.

As you can see, if a product successfully brands itself, it only needs to have its logo seen for all of these ideas to be associated with it. This means its message is clear and people recognise it. A brand needs to first create an identity for itself. The way it does this is through the careful use of language and slogans.

- 1 As an example of how branding works, think of a well-known soft drink brand and write the name at the top of your page.
- 2 Underneath it, write all the ideas that come to mind based on that brand alone.
- 3 How many small ideas are there?
- 4 How many large ideas are there?



7.4 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Persuasive language and slogans

Advertising has always used language to entice people. Over the years this language has developed to become more persuasive and effective. Detergent ads, for example, used to use superlatives or extremes, claiming that their product was the ‘best’ or the ‘finest’ and would result in the ‘brightest’ and ‘whitest’ results. However, when you have all the products on the market claiming that they are the best, it’s hard for any to stand out.

When describing products, companies make sure that they use emotive language in order to describe their product in the best, most exciting way. Take food for example. Words associated with food advertising include: fresh, taste sensation, crispy, juicy, delicious, real, crunchy, mouth-watering, gourmet, low-fat, natural, healthy and golden brown, just to name a few. All of these words are designed to describe the food being advertised, but also to connect with us on a deeper level.



ACTIVITY 7.5

MAKING & RESPONDING

Each product has its own set of persuasive words. Choose five of the following products and make a list of the emotive language that would be used to sell it.

TIP: Always keep in mind the audience that you are selling the product to.

- car
- clothing
- hair-care product
- holiday
- cleaning product
- video game
- movie
- restaurant
- school
- amusement park

Slogans are also an important part of advertising. Slogans are the short phrases that accompany advertisements and are designed to not only reflect an aspect of the image, but also to trigger memories about the product later on. 'Oh!

What a feeling', 'Enjoy', 'The taste of a new generation', 'Just do it', 'Lovin' it' – the chances are that you've been able to identify one or more of the products

associated with these slogans. As you can see, they also carry an associated meaning. 'Just do it', for instance, is a catchy directive associated with being sporty and active. 'Just do it' indicates that there are no excuses for unhealthy living. Slogans can also be used to anchor meaning to an image, indicating that the situation is associated with the product, thereby further increasing the brand recognition.

Culture jamming

Even though brands spend large amounts of time and money crafting positive images, not everyone in society necessarily accepts the images. As a statement against consumerism and large companies in general, the practice of 'culture jamming' was created. Culture jamming is when an immediately recognisable brand or logo is altered slightly. So while it looks the same, it carries a different, more subversive meaning. Done well, it can make a powerful message against the bad practices of large companies; however, it can often be associated with vandalism, particularly if a paid, public advertisement is defaced. One example of a well-known culture jammer is the artist known as Banksy.

ACTIVITY 7.6

MAKING & RESPONDING

1 Pick one of the slogans below and describe a product and idea that could be associated with it.

- 'Like a king'
- 'Life is short'
- 'Always tasty'
- 'Forever yours'
- 'Soft as a cloud'
- 'Best friends forever'
- 'Because you're beautiful'
- 'Spoil yourself'
- 'Dance to the beat'
- 'Be proud'
- 'Think quick'

2 Go online and find a generic image of your product. Now find images that represent your slogan and idea. Assemble them using a desktop publishing or photo editing program.

Logos

A company's logo can carry a lot of power. It is its literal mark on the world; therefore a great deal of time and money must go into designing something that will not only be unique, but also reflect the image and nature of the company. Sometimes the logo can be a recognisable symbol; however, it can also be an abstract pattern that links to the brand identity.

The colours and fonts of a logo are also selected with a great level of care. Both these elements must communicate aspects of the image that the company wants consumers to associate with them. The psychology of colour association and the meaning behind font design are important considerations.



An example of a well-designed and well-known logo

Imagine you are designing a logo for the soft drink company Fizz.

Your job is to communicate the image that your brand's drink is fun, tasty, refreshing and exciting. You need to consider the following:

- 1 What kind of symbol will reflect these ideas?
- 2 What colours are associated with these concepts?
- 3 Which font best represents these messages?
- 4 Once you've brainstormed responses to each of these questions, select one from each and put them together to form a logo. Try adapting and interchanging some of the elements. What effect does this have on your logo?
- 5 In a group of four, decide which person's logo best communicates the ideas of the brand Fizz.



7.7 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

Images

The world of advertising looks like it would be a great place to live. The grass is always green, the weather is always great and everyone is always happy (after they've bought the product, of course). The images that are used in advertising are all designed to make the audience become drawn to the product or service through the use of images that make the product, the world or the results seem 'perfect'. Even though we understand that the images within advertising are designed to make everything seem better than reality, we are still drawn to them and the ideas that they suggest. We are drawn to the fantasy within the ad – the prospect that something can be better than reality!

ACTIVITY 7.8

RESPONDING

Look at the following image of a picnic.



- 1 What are the elements in this image that make it attractive to the audience?
- 2 What ideas are communicated by this image?
- 3 List a range of products that this image could be used to advertise.
- 4 What are some reasons that this image may not be entirely realistic?

Filmmakers primarily use images in order to entice people to go to the cinema or purchase movies on DVD/Blu-ray. Movie posters can use a range of techniques to grab the attention of the audience and communicate certain information, such as genre. We judge movies by their posters all the time. After seeing a poster, we begin building our expectations of aspects of the movie, such as what it is going to be like, what the characters are like, how the actors will act and the overall genre of the film. Often the poster will focus on one aspect of the movie and exaggerate it to encourage moviegoers to see the film. Sometimes the poster will be a faithful representation of what the film will contain; on other occasions, the poster can be quite misleading, being more interested in getting viewers along to see it rather than being truthful to the text.

ACTIVITY 7.9

RESPONDING

There is the famous phrase 'never judge a book by its cover', but how many times do we do this? As mentioned, a movie poster is designed to encourage us to see a particular film. So which posters are accurate and which are not?

Go online to the Internet Movie Poster Awards website. Search for five movies that you are familiar with and respond to the following:

- 1 Identify and describe the elements in the poster that are faithful to the film.
- 2 Identify and describe the elements in the poster that are not faithful to the film.
- 3 What element does the poster focus on the most?
- 4 Do you agree with this decision? Explain why or why not.
- 5 Do you believe the poster is a successful advertisement for the film? Why or why not?

Over time, the images used in ads have varied not only along with the products but also, more importantly, along with the beliefs of society. For example, many millions of dollars have been spent on advertising cigarettes. Many ads from as early as the 1800s into the early 1990s promoted this harmful product. In 1992, the Australian government made it illegal for cigarettes to be advertised anywhere, for any reason. We can't even publish an example in this book because it is against the law. This change in law is because our values and beliefs as a society have changed and what we find acceptable has altered.

Ads from the past also often displayed images of women as housewives. With women dressed in aprons, cooking for the family, smiling as they did the housework, these images and ads matched the expectation that women, once married, became housewives. Of course today we find these images to be humorous or even offensive; this is because our society's expectations about women and gender roles have altered.

Another example of our beliefs changing what is acceptable in advertising concerns fast-food advertising. Currently, fast-food advertising targeting children is being closely watched, with many in society pushing to ban it completely. This would mean an end to fast-food advertising during children's programming and an end to products using marketing strategies designed to encourage kids to want the product; for example, the use of cartoon mascots. This change in attitude comes from the rising rate of obesity within our society. The laws in Australia could therefore be changed in order to protect our children from negative messages, much like the anti-smoking laws were created to protect Australians from the dangers of smoking.



An advertisement
(circa 1957)

Social values in advertising – Advertising Standards Bureau

Should a member of the public feel that an advertisement is inappropriate, they can make a complaint to the Advertising Standards Bureau. The ASB receives complaints from the public about advertising, assesses the ads and their compliance with the law, and makes rulings as to which ads are legal and which ones violate the advertising standards of Australia.

- 1 Go to the Advertising Standards Bureau website and click on 'Case reports' and then click on 'Advertising Standards Board determinations'
- 2 In the 'Search' function type in a brand or advertisement that you are familiar with.
- 3 Read and summarise the complaint against the ad.
- 4 Read and summarise the findings of the ASB.
- 5 Do you agree with the decision made? Why or why not?
- 6 Can you think of any ads that you've seen recently that some may consider reporting to the ASB?



7.10 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

SELLING AUSTRALIA

One of the largest ideas that can be sold by any country is itself. Tourism is the process of selling an idea about a country, its people and its lifestyle to international travellers looking for destinations. Over the years, selling Australia to the rest of the world as a holiday destination has been quite difficult. As many countries around the world also boast golden beaches, scenic mountains and happening nightlife, it is difficult to make Australia stand out. Usually other countries are much closer to the tourists' initial location than Australia is. They also don't have a multitude of deadly creatures such as snakes, spiders, crocodiles and sharks to scare off potential visitors.

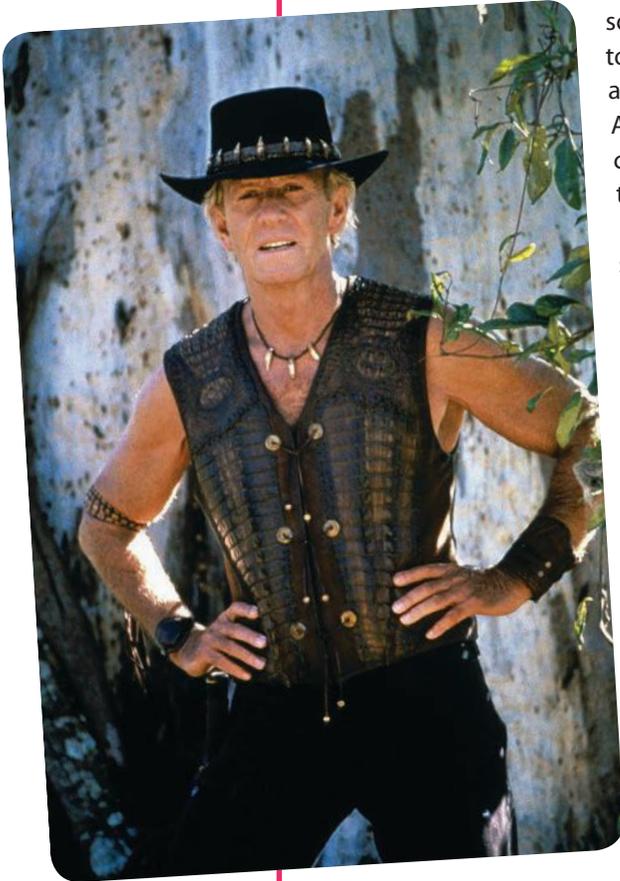
From 1984 to 1990, Paul Hogan appeared in a series of iconic ads that were highly successful. Hogan was shown putting 'another shrimp on the barbie', usually positioned next to Sydney Harbour. These ads, combined with the characteristics of Australians represented in Hogan's movie *Crocodile Dundee*, captured a lifestyle that appealed to many visitors.

In more recent times, there hasn't been as much success. The 'So where the bloody hell are you?' campaign, featuring Lara Bingle, may have put her in the spotlight, but the bikini-clad Bingle and her golden beach didn't succeed in bringing people to our shores. One of the main failings of the ad, apart from not communicating an enticing image of Australia, was that it was banned in the United Kingdom due to the use of the word 'bloody'.

Another tourism advertising campaign that failed in its mission was Baz Luhrmann's 'Come walkabout' campaign. Made after his nationalistic movie *Australia*, it featured an American woman

experiencing a series of horrible events on a rainy day and being visited by a mystical Aboriginal child telling her 'sometime we gotta go walkabout'. This seemed more to confuse people than communicate a strong message about Australia.

The secret formula, like in any form of advertising, is difficult to pin down. One thing is for sure, though: Australians rarely like these ad campaigns. It may be because we don't like seeing our Aussie culture being oversimplified and we suffer a **cultural cringe**, or because we think something different and better could be promoted instead. In any case, because we have such a diverse country and population, it is a difficult task.



cultural cringe being ashamed or embarrassed about aspects of your national identity



7.11 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING



Think about *how* you would sell Australia.

Your task is to create a marketing campaign to sell Australia to overseas visitors.

- 1 What is the main idea that you think would bring tourists to Australia?
- 2 Design and plan a television commercial and a print advertisement to sell your idea.
- 3 Create a slogan that represents your idea and is also memorable.
- 4 Summarise your idea. Explain the TV ad. What's the action? What music? What images? Describe the print ad. What colours? What images? What font?

EXTENSION: Storyboard, script and mock-up the ad.

VIRAL MARKETING

A form of advertising that has emerged since 2000 has been viral marketing. Taken from the notion that ideas are infectious (like a virus), viral marketing is transmitted by internet users who find a message amusing and want to share it with others, either through email or posting it on their social media site. The message in viral advertising rarely looks like an advertisement, often causing users to be unaware that they are transmitting an ad.

Advertising companies are now looking at viral marketing to sell their ideas and further create an identity for their brand. One of the benefits is that, if it is

done successfully, it can create a user-driven identity for the idea that moves away from being seen as a corporate message. As the ad is being circulated by internet users, the companies aren't paying for it to be broadcast or displayed, thereby cutting down the cost of the campaign significantly. Of course, if the ad is done in a way that makes users feel like they have been tricked, it can cause a large **consumer backlash** for the brand and damage their image considerably.

consumer backlash a rejection that results in a reduction in sales as people refuse to purchase a product or support a particular brand

ACTIVITY 7.12

RESPONDING

Locate the Cadbury chocolate advertising campaign from 2007 entitled 'Gorilla' on YouTube.



- 1 Watch the clip, pretending you have no idea about the company or product it is advertising.
- 2 What are your immediate thoughts when watching the clip?
- 3 When the gorilla starts playing, how do your ideas change?
- 4 What is the point of using this marketing to sell chocolate when there isn't any chocolate in the clip at all?
- 5 What idea are they attempting to attach to the chocolate?
- 6 Why do you think this ad was so successful (over six million views)?

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Have you ever been watching a TV show or a movie and noticed that all the characters must go shopping at the same places because they all use the same phones, wear the same clothes and drive the same cars? If so, you've successfully identified product placement at work. Product placement is the process of placing a recognisable brand-named item – such as clothing, a phone, sunglasses or a car – into a TV show or movie in exchange for money. It ensures that audiences who watch the show or movie become aware of the products.

As ads on TV are often skipped and many devices used to record TV have the ability to record the shows only, advertisers needed new ways to communicate products to consumers. This way, audiences get to see their favourite characters and celebrities interacting with products that are available to purchase. Product placement became most popular during the 1980s, with movies such



as *E.T.* (1982), *Back to the Future* (1985) and *The Wizard* (1989), and has remained a popular form of advertising. So how does product placement work?

In some cases producers will approach the companies, informing them that they are looking to use a product in a scene and would like to use theirs. In the case of *E.T.*, Steven Spielberg approached Hershey for permission to use their Reese's Pieces chocolate in a particular scene. In this instance, Spielberg paid Hershey to be able to use a recognisable brand; however, after consumers began buying more packets of Reese's Pieces, producers realised that they could make extra money from this process.

Today, advertising companies approach production companies, looking to embed their products into movies and TV shows that will appeal to a particular audience. Obviously product placement impacts upon the production process. First the deal needs to be made. This can be a lengthy process with many conditions that need to be met. For instance, the product cannot be shown in a negative light and the product must have a certain amount of screen time. After this has been decided, the scriptwriter and storyboard artist need to incorporate the product into the storyline and into the shot.

During production, the costumes and props manager will need to acquire the product ready for shooting. The Director of Photography (DOP) then needs to make sure that the product is visible in the shot. Finally, during post-production, the editor must make sure that all the shots featuring the product are used in the final cut.

Product placement isn't always plain sailing; it can carry with it some risk. If a company enters a contract and their product isn't displayed exactly as their believed it would be, legal action can take place. This is exactly what happened with Reebok and the Tom Cruise movie *Jerry Maguire* (1995). Reebok entered the deal believing that their line of footwear would be shown in a positive way; however, after an editing decision, the film was altered and the company wasn't portrayed in the most flattering manner.

This raises the question of whether product placement is detrimental to the filmmaking process. While it brings in extra money, what is the cost to artistic expression and freedom? What do you think?

CASE STUDY:

Michael Bay and David Lynch

Michael Bay's film *The Island* (2005) is about a futuristic island in which the inhabitants' lives are closely controlled and monitored by 'the Overseers'. The film has been highly criticised because of its level of product placement. In the 136-minute running time, over 30 different products make an appearance. Others,



including Michael Bay, have argued that it adds to the realism and authenticity of the film. Michael Bay has said:

There are products in everything in everyday life. Do people think there shouldn't be brand names or something? Everything is branded. I hate commercials when they take logos off of stuff. It's not real life.

On the other hand, director David Lynch doesn't believe that product placement simply adds to the realism. In an interview in 2008 he said:

I do sometimes [make] commercials to make money. But I always say, every time I learn something: efficiency of saying something and new technologies. But product placement in a film putrefies the environment. It's so absurd but it's happening more and more. What kind of a world is this?

artistic integrity

the authenticity of the message that the artist is communicating

ACTIVITY 7.13

RESPONDING

- 1 What do you think? Who do you believe is right – Michael Bay or David Lynch?
- 2 Does product placement damage the **artistic integrity** of a film or does it add to the realism of the text?
- 3 Create a table which lists the pros and cons of product placement.



ACTIVITY 7.14

MAKING & RESPONDING

Imagine you are the director of a film adaptation of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. If you are unfamiliar with the story, a copy can be found online.

One morning, the producer tells you that a major financial investor has pulled out of the film and that you must resort to product placement in order to gain the money to continue making the film. She says that she has been in talks with a company that owns a chain of hardware superstores and that they are willing to supply anything from their store, just as long as the logo is displayed. To meet the contract, the following conditions must be met:

- you need to use at least *five* of their products
 - the products cannot be used in a negative way
 - the products need to be displayed for a moderate amount of time.
- 1 How would you go about incorporating the five products into the film?
 - 2 Has the embedding of these products ruined or enhanced the film? Explain why you believe this.



LOOKING MORE CLOSELY AT PROPAGANDA

As noted earlier in the chapter, propaganda is different from advertising only in the sense that it aims to sell an idea or attitude rather than a product or service. Another difference is that propaganda is usually created or commissioned by the government in order to communicate a certain idea that they want people in society to believe. While the use of the word has many negative connotations, there have been many positive outcomes that all can agree are beneficial to society.

It is interesting to note how propaganda usually works. Propaganda usually plays on the fears and insecurities of people in society. This idea is most commonly suggested through the creation of 'worst case' scenarios that reflect a world in which the action that is being recommended has not been taken or the ideas that have been presented haven't been adopted.

Australia – World War I

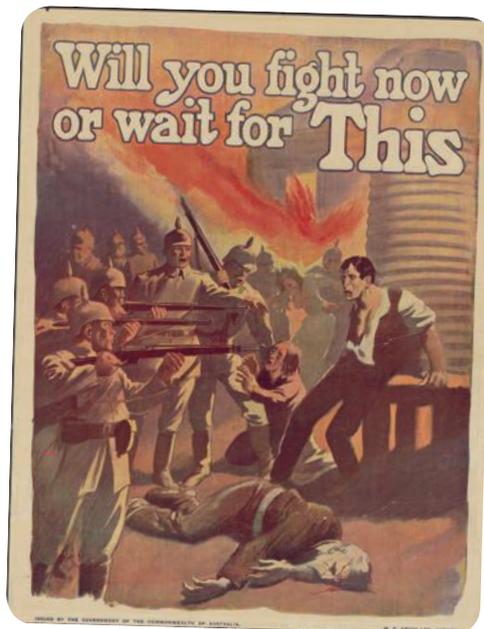
When the British Empire declared war on the German Empire in 1914, Australia rallied to the cause. Determined to prove themselves in the first significant conflict since **Federation**, many young men were eager to sign up and join the war effort. Despite this, the Australian government still commissioned the creation of propaganda to further encourage men to enlist.

Famous Australian artist Norman Lindsay was responsible for many iconic images that tapped into the Australian mindset and forecast grim realities should the German Empire not be stopped. As with any propaganda, these images exaggerated the possible outcomes should Australia and the British Empire lose.

Federation the process by which Australia became a country on 1 January 1901

H. J. Weston, *Would you stand by while a bushfire raged?* (1918)

Norman Lindsay, *Will you fight now or wait for this* (1918)



ACTIVITY 7.15



Examine the two images on the previous page.

- 1 What fear did they play on to encourage Australians to enlist?
- 2 Do you think the same images would work today? Why or why not?
- 3 What are people in Australia fearful of today?
- 4 What other images could be used today to get people to join the army?

RESPONDING

PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

During the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, propaganda has also been used to promote positive social behaviours and habits with the intention of cutting down rates of death, infection or disease. One of the first mass media health campaigns directed by a country was in Nazi Germany. During the 1930s and 1940s the German media contained anti-smoking images and messages. This was quite revolutionary for the time.

As previously mentioned, Australia didn't pass bans on cigarette advertising until the 1990s. Back in the 1930s, German doctors had established a link between various ailments and the smoking of cigarettes. Of course, smoking in other parts of the Western world was popular and highly promoted. So, in an effort to ensure that Germany possessed a healthy population, the Nazi government created and promoted history's first anti-smoking campaign.

Not long after this, when the Allies were engaged in war with Nazi Germany, the United States military were struggling to educate their ill-informed soldiers. As a result of this, the First Motion Picture Unit created a series of cartoons featuring a dim-witted soldier named Private Snafu. Written by Theodore Geisel, better known to the world as Dr Seuss, this collection of cartoons was designed to educate the troops, particularly those with low literacy skills, about a number of dangers that they might face during the war. Malaria, spies, camouflage, dysentery and booby traps were all topics covered in these amusing animated cartoons.



Nazi anti-smoking campaign



The opening of the US army World War II short animated film *Private Snafu* (1943)

- 1 If you required a group of animators to design amusing and informative cartoons for today's soldiers, which animation team or animator might you choose?
- 2 What kinds of scenarios might be important for them to cover?
- 3 Detail one scenario that would be important for troops or civilians to know.
- 4 Do you think that these would be effective or do you think they might not be taken seriously? Explain your response.



7.16 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

For most Australians, summer means lots of time outdoors in the sun. It is because of this, and because of the high UV environment, that the rate of skin cancer in Australia is higher than in many other countries in the world. In an effort to combat this statistic, the Cancer Council of Victoria launched the 'Slip, Slop, Slap' campaign in 1980. Featuring 'Sid the Seagull', the ads featured the lispng Sid singing a jingle and communicating the message to the audience: slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen and slap on a hat to avoid getting burnt. While the message started with an animated seagull in the 1980s, SunSmart's ads evolved in the 1990s to feature far more graphic images and much more serious messages that link exposure to the sun with skin cancer and **melanoma** development.

During the 1980s, Australia also faced a serious health risk from the **HIV/AIDS** epidemic. AIDS was first diagnosed in Australia in the early 1980s and it was predicted that the epidemic would spread in a prolific manner and end up killing 50 000 Australians. In response to this dire forecast, the Australian Government commissioned an advertising campaign that would communicate the seriousness of the threat to Australians. What was created was one of the most memorable ad campaigns in Australian history.

The Grim Reaper AIDS campaign featured a group of people being lowered as a set of bowling pins into a smoke-filled and ominous environment. As they stood there, cutaways to close-ups on the face of a Grim Reaper were intercut with close-ups on the terrified faces of the people. The Grim Reaper then bowled a bowling ball, knocking down and killing all the men, women, children and infants that were standing. A high-angled shot then showed the lifeless faces of the dead. The camera pulled back to reveal a large number of Grim Reapers bowling, suggesting the widespread nature of the epidemic. Throughout the ad, a voice-over informed the audience of the statistics associated with HIV/AIDS. As a result of this ad and a number of health campaigns, the number of Australians dying since that first prediction has been just under 7000 people, a fraction of the estimated figure.

Another successful public education campaign has been created by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). Since the creation of the first slogan in 1990, 'If you drink and drive, you're a bloody idiot', the TAC has featured on Australian media promoting safe driving practices and behaviours. Designed to shock, these ads have not only featured a range of effective messages (e.g. 'Don't fool yourself, speed kills' in 1994), but have also featured a number of graphic



Advertising to prevent skin cancer. Permission for use of trademark and image granted by SunSmart, Cancer Council Victoria

melanoma a cancerous tumour of the skin

HIV/AIDS Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

TAC campaign



images and scenarios that feature horrific accidents resulting in the death or severe injury of the driver, the passengers or other members of the public. Ever-present in the media, these ads have sought to create public awareness of the potential dangers associated with the road.

Public education campaigns setting the agenda

So what is the purpose of these public education campaigns? Are they designed to scare us into not behaving in certain ways? Are they designed to make us tell others not to act in certain ways? One certain outcome of these ads is that they put an idea into the mind of the general public. As not many of us have witnessed accidents firsthand, or seen the effects of skin cancer or AIDS, these ads serve to bring the circumstances and aftermath into our consciousness. They include ideas that are often left out of the normal media. Without these ads promoting the idea, we wouldn't necessarily be talking about it. Whether or not we agree with the message, the fact that we are discussing it suggests that the ads have been effective in communicating a message.

ACTIVITY 7.17

MAKING & RESPONDING

1 Choose one of the following and create a new idea for a TAC advertisement:

- speeding
- drink driving
- drug driving
- driving while using a mobile
- driving and texting
- seatbelts
- inexperienced young drivers
- bicycle/motorcycle safety.

2 What issues are important for you to consider in setting the agenda for society?

3 What idea will you aim to highlight with your ad?

4 What is the scenario in your ad? Describe it.

5 What images will you include? What will you exclude?

6 What slogan will you use to communicate your idea?

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'Advertising is just as dangerous as propaganda as both seek to mislead and misinform the public.'

Consider the following questions when formulating your response:

- 1 Compare the purpose of advertising with that of propaganda. Is one better than the other?
- 2 Are there positives to advertising? Are there positives to propaganda? What are the differences?
- 3 What examples have there been of advertising of products that have been harmful? What about examples of products that have been positive?
- 4 What positives have come from propaganda? What negatives have come from propaganda?
- 5 Could we live without advertising or propaganda? What might the world be like without either of them? What if we had one but not the other?

But wait, there's more ...

- For more information on advertising laws in Australia, try the Advertising Standards Bureau's website.
- You can explore information online about famous logos, famous advertisements, the Clio Advertising Awards and the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity.
- The Internet Movie Poster Awards website and the Internet Movie Database will allow you to explore more about movie posters.
- You can explore examples of war propaganda at the National Library of Australia's extensive online resource.
- The Internet Archive has a wide collection of public health campaigns and war propaganda (including all the *Private Snafu* cartoons that you can view and download).

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Prue Newton is an advertising and communications specialist who has also worked in the field of marketing strategy.

What inspired you to become a marketing advertising specialist?

I had a general interest in the broad area of marketing and communications, but what appealed the most was that I could combine my interest in business within a creative environment . . . the best of both worlds.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

My first step was deferring from a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) and Bachelor of Arts (Chinese) and enrolling in the Graduate Diploma of Business (Advertising) at RMIT.

The course offered a cross-section of subjects from creative to production to more traditional business and strategy subjects, and it was the latter area that I was most interested in pursuing.

For the early years of my career I worked in marketing and communication departments across the financial services and government sectors. I then moved across to a specialist advertising and communications agency, after having gained client experience in marketing strategy and campaign development.

What does a typical day in the life of Prue Newton involve?

Arrive at work, turn on my computer and before anything else . . . check what meetings and deadlines are scheduled, prepare a work priority list, and have a

- quick chat with my team, the creative and production departments to go through the work for the day. It is my job to ensure the creative teams have the key information and research highlights they need to develop great campaigns.

Around 9 am the emails and phone calls start (and go all day) . . . from clients, media agencies, production houses . . . sometimes making it difficult to get jobs done quickly.

Coffee time comes at around 10 am . . . giving me a chance to scan the newspapers for key issues and articles relevant to my clients and also for any new competitor advertising and media mentions.

The rest of the day is spent in and out of a range of meetings – work in progress reviews with clients; reviewing advertising concepts and final artwork/storyboards with the creative department; production planning sessions.

Early evening I get time to myself again . . . to check emails (again); write

- contact reports from the day's meetings;
- review any new briefs from clients, read research reports and surf the internet for
- information to include in creative briefs.

- Other typical tasks include working with media planners to develop media strategy and schedules for clients;
- preparing competitor analysis reports and presentations; attending research group sessions; and analysing research reports and data.

- Finally . . . around 7–8 pm I leave the office and head home for dinner.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

My job is diverse – from the many different people I work with (business execs, creative people, filmmakers, researchers to name a few); through to the diversity of content and business problems across my client portfolio.

What motivates me the most though is being able to influence the strategic and creative direction for marketing campaigns. I really enjoy the challenge of taking an often complex business problem or social issue, and developing a creative solution that engages with consumers and the community.

What is your least favourite aspect?

The long hours and having to juggle competing and tight timelines.

How has the introduction of new technology allowed for different methods of persuasion?

Technology has impacted and continues to impact the advertising landscape in so many ways. There are now many more methods, avenues and tactics available to advertisers to reach and influence consumers. Companies now have to maintain up-to-date and relevant digital content and information and have the ability to respond to consumers instantly, in real time.

It is now easier for companies and brands to connect more personally and directly with their customers. For example, offers and deals can be promoted through advertisements, using a website, SMS, augmented reality apps.

with

PRUE NEWTON



Technology has also given consumers a lot more power and choice . . . they can now be the persuaders and have an active voice. It is easier for customers to access information and connect with the brand.

They can do their own research – seek opinions from peers and the broader community – it is no longer based on information that the company publishes. Consumers now have the power to tell a brand what they want, what they think about it and they can share this information with the whole community.

For example, recently when Mortein announced they were considering ‘killing’ off the mascot, Louie the Fly, a Facebook campaign aimed at saving him reached 200 000 fans.

What is the strangest advertising campaign you’ve seen?

The campaign that comes to mind is the Cadbury Chocolate ‘Gorilla – I can feel it’ campaign – UK-based campaign that went viral on a global scale. Featuring a gorilla playing the drums to a well-known Phil Collins track. Although the campaign was successful and had high awareness, I found the use of a gorilla as the hero for a chocolate brand strange, as there is no obvious or direct connection between the product and the campaign hero.

How has product placement changed the nature of advertising?

Ultimately, it has increased the number of advertising messages that consumers are exposed to; therefore brands and products are competing in a far more ‘cluttered’ environment for attention and share of voice.

On the flip side, product placement can also reinforce the advertising messages and enables brands to leverage the ‘popular’ culture of a show or celebrity and attach these attributes to the brand by association.

Product placement in TV, films and video will soon start to change with the introduction and increase of new technologies such as digital television (DTV), digital video recording (DVR), and linking of products seen on screen (product linking).

Top five most historically influential ad campaigns and why?

1 Qantas ‘I still call Australia home’ campaign

– use of a well-known and iconic Australian song that has become intrinsically linked to the brand. Its use of young Australians (Australian Boys and Girls Choirs) connected the brand to the community. The campaign was visually spectacular, taking consumers all over Australia and the world. The campaign was used for years and featured a number of creative executions, evoking a sense of pride about being Australian.

2 **Apple vs PC** – very simple campaign using a well-known actor (Apple) vs a pudgy guy (PC) – most importantly they were humorous. The Apple campaigns were unique and innovative as they did not focus on the technology features and benefits. These advertisements gave Apple and its competitors a human personality.

3 **Nike ‘Just do it’** – a long-running campaign with a tagline that says it all.

This campaign became a part of people’s psyche, connecting the Nike brand to sport

at all levels.

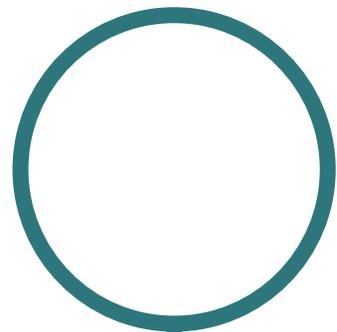
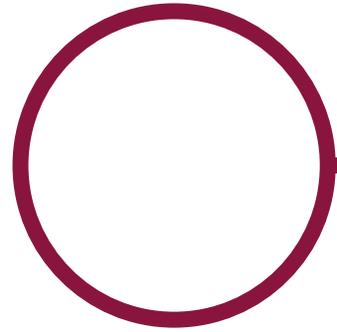
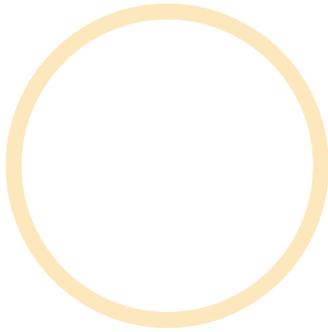
The evolution of the Nike tagline and ‘tick’ logo became so strong that they ran advertisements featuring the logo without the brand name.

4 Victorian Transport Accident

Commission (TAC) – these ads have been running for over 10 years, addressing speeding, drink driving and other causes of road accidents. The campaign has been one of the significant contributors to lowering the road toll. They’re real and the earlier campaigns used shock tactics, with very visual and very real situations. There was also a high emotional quotient in these campaigns, showing the impact on the lives of those involved. This style of advertising using confronting shock tactics is now an approach used by many behaviour change campaigns.

5 Coca-Cola ‘Share a Coke with your mate’ campaign

– developed in Australia, the campaign invited Aussies to nominate people’s names to appear on Coke bottles. It used mainstream media and had a strong social media component, receiving more than 65 000 nominations and stories from people all over Australia in under a week. The campaign has personalised the brand to its consumers and is one of the first demonstrations of how mainstream advertising and social media can be successfully integrated to achieve an overwhelming response and create brand loyalty. Coca-Cola are now considering a roll-out into international markets.



8

TEXT MEDIA

This chapter explores the print media, but also how text-based media has evolved a new set of codes and conventions in the digital or online world. Throughout early history, stories were communicated orally from one generation to the next. As language evolved, it became increasingly necessary to write information down. Initially books and documents were handwritten and hand-illustrated, and this time-consuming process made them precious items.

Since the invention and development of the printing press, the written word has become more and more accessible. Written text has long been used as a way of storing and sharing information, entertainment and histories, and most importantly, communicating with others.

COMING UP...

Rewind**Technical codes and conventions of text media****Fonts and paper stock****Digital texts****Media ownership and media influence****New media****Up for debate****But wait, there's more ...****Inside the green room with Sophie Black****REWIND**

During the Middle Ages, Johannes Gutenberg, a German blacksmith, goldsmith, printer and publisher, developed the first printing press. He didn't invent it from scratch, as there had already been printing presses available; however, he combined the existing elements into a system that allowed for the use of movable type in the mass production of books. The press he developed became known as the Gutenberg press and had a profound impact on the democratisation of education and the spread of knowledge throughout the world.

Compared with previous presses that could produce about 40 pages in a day or hand copying that produced only a few pages per day, the new Gutenberg press was able to produce over 3000 pages in a day. The first full work printed on the Gutenberg press was a Latin bible. Bibles were the first thing published because the Church could afford to have them published. The bibles were printed for members of the clergy; not many people could speak or read Latin at this



**A printing press,
circa 1811**

THE AGE

The West Australian

THE DOMINION POST

THE TIMES

Headlines – These are the titles given to the articles. They are shown in bold print and give the reader an idea about content and also sometimes about the tone of the article.

Captions – These are the small text additions to images/photographs found in newspapers. They provide more information about the content and often provide details about people in the images.

By-line – This is the name of the author of an article, shown mostly at the top of the article they have written, following the word ‘by’.

Articles – These are the stories and main written content of a newspaper. They are normally printed in columns. Articles can also be referred to as ‘columns’.

Columns – When looking at a newspaper you will notice that the text does not run from one side of the page to another as it usually does in a book. The content runs in thinner rows down the page, which are called columns.

Journalist – This is a person who writes for the newspaper (sometimes called a columnist).

Fold – Larger format newspapers are folded after printing for transportation and selling. Important stories are placed above the fold and can be seen by the buyer, while stories below the fold on the front page are hidden.

Broadsheets vs tabloids

These terms refer to the physical size or format of the newspapers. *Broadsheet* refers to the single sheet size of original newspapers with wide and long vertical pages. These newspapers are often folded in half for sale and storage so only half of the front page is able to be viewed. It has often, and continues to, referred to journalism that is considered to be of a higher standard and with more integrity. This is the largest format newspaper.

Another popular format is the tabloid newspaper. It is smaller in height and width than the broadsheet and is often associated with **tabloid journalism**, or journalism of lower quality and standard. This is not always the case, as newspapers have changed their size and format for ease of reading, economy and use over the years. Therefore these terms are not necessarily accurate technical terms anymore.



- 1 See what you can find out about the circulation numbers for two major newspapers in your area now, 10 years ago and 30 years ago. Has circulation declined? Do these newspapers have online counterparts?
- 2 Survey the class to find out if anyone reads newspapers. Who are the type of people who read newspapers? Can you identify a specific **demographic** for the newspaper you are looking at? Does anyone access news online? How do you find out about what is going on in the world? If you don't, why not?



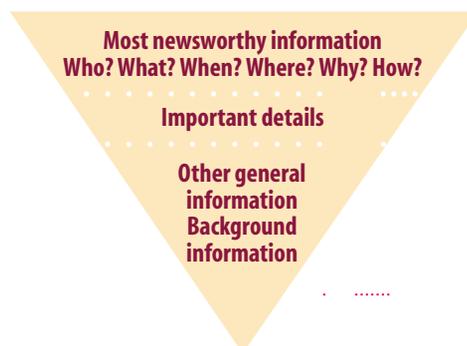
8.1 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Articles

The inverted pyramid model of article writing is a common technique that is taught to journalism students and interns. Under this model, the most important information is placed at the beginning of the article – the who, what, when, where and why of the situation. This is followed by less important information and then more general information.

This approach to article writing is used in newspapers so that if an editor needs to reduce the size of a story they can cut out the paragraphs at the bottom without



tabloid journalism a term used to classify newspaper, magazine or internet articles that contain little detail and/or content that could be considered exaggerated or sensational

demographic a section of society; in this context, usually the target audience of a specific media product

Article writing: the inverted pyramid model

losing the most vital information in the story. A journalist has to write an article as if each paragraph will be the final one, so that the story will make sense no matter which paragraph becomes the last one after editing.

The inverted pyramid model is rarely used in fiction writing, where you want to encourage the reader to continue to read on by drawing them in slowly and leaking out details and teasers slowly and enticingly.

Common types of articles

Hard news – These are the staple news items and main reason for a newspaper.

Hard news stories are principally concerned with information – facts and figures. They are typically written using the inverted pyramid model.

Features – Stories that add emotion and analysis to hard news and other content.

Colour piece – A colour piece will provide the atmosphere or feel of an event as well as the information.

Profiles – These are articles about a person, like mini biographies. They are well researched and often provide multiple perspectives on the person's life and work.

Opinion pieces – The editor's or another expert's opinion about a topic.

Letters – Selected correspondence sent in to the newspaper from the general public on current topics or issues.

Analysis – An article providing a lot more background to a news story using opinion and informed content from experts. It usually has a long-term, broader look at a topic, in contrast to a short-term, informative, fact-providing hard news article.

Vox pop – Asking the general public questions to find out their opinions about an issue.

Column – An area written about by a regular writer/journalist who the audience has grown to appreciate for their own style and opinion. Some popular types of columns are service/advice columns (such as gardening tips), gossip columns (predominantly with information about celebrity spotting) and personal columns drawn from the life and opinions of that specific journalist/writer.

Obituaries – Death notices. These are similar to a profile that occurs after a person has passed away.

Cartoons – Illustrations that can be created as a light-hearted separate piece of artwork or to accompany a news or feature story, often providing opinion or analysis in visual form.

Comic strips – Short ongoing and regular pieces, with four or five images and text, which are usually light-hearted.

Reviews – Opinions about any manner of things, such as movies and other art forms, which are usually written by an expert or someone with a lot of experience in the area.

Write an article for a newspaper. (This can be used for the newspaper task in Activity 8.11 or for another class assignment.) Choose a type of article and investigate further the content and style for that article. Things to consider:

- 1 How long usually is that type of article – 500 or 1000 words? (You will need to write to this word length exactly.)
- 2 Who is the audience for the article and newspaper? Write in an appropriate tone and style.
- 3 You will need to research content and/or interview someone so that it is based in fact.
- 4 Use the inverted pyramid model.



8.2 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

Magazines

Magazines are published weekly, monthly, bimonthly, quarterly or even annually. Magazines generally contain subject-specific content, shaped more obviously by a specific audience, usually defined primarily by gender, age and particular interests.



Magazines are classified by their content and audience, such as car magazines, women's magazines, food magazines and health magazines. Magazines have a wide range of qualities and styles, but are still informed by similar features.

All magazines have a cover page, which contains the title of the magazine, publication details and a bar code for sale, including an **ISSN**. Most prominent is the cover's image, which is carefully selected in order to draw in the purchaser.

Magazines sit in racks in newsagents, supermarkets and specialty magazine shops, where their covers can be viewed from a distance. Each magazine needs to stand out from its counterparts within the same content group, and also within the mass of magazines in general. Magazines need to be instantly recognisable, so they tend to contain consistent features over a long period of time.

As with the masthead and layout of a newspaper, a magazine's title usually appears the same way on every issue – situated in the same place on the cover, with the same typeface. If the cover usually shows a woman or a celebrity, the audience will expect this to always be the case. *Peppermint* is an example of a magazine that has consistent cover imagery.

If a women's magazine suddenly had a man or an image of a family on the cover, this could confuse the audience. Such deviations would have to happen for a very specific reason.

Magazines also try to draw in their audience by placing enticing leading article lines or content on the cover to give the audience an idea of what is inside. Magazines contain regular sections that appear in every issue. They usually have a note or message from the editor, feature articles (the exact content or focus may



Peppermint is an example of a magazine with a consistent image on its covers.

ISSN International Standard Serial Number, used globally to identify all serial print publications

change frequently but is always within a general subject area), a subscriber page and, depending on the magazine, a series of other common features, such as a beauty section in a women's magazine or a classified section in a car magazine.

Magazines make a portion of their profits from sales of each issue in shops, but a large amount of their income is derived from advertising sales.

ACTIVITY 8.3

RESPONDING

- 1 Do you read magazines? What type of magazines? 
- 2 Take a poll of your class and come up with a list of the top 10 magazines that people know about/understand/read.
- 3 As a group, discuss the audience and content for these magazines. What are the audience's expectations for these magazines?
- 4 Locate circulation details for these magazines and compare subscriptions with purchases over the counter.

ACTIVITY 8.4

RESPONDING

- 1 Collect cover images for four magazines that have different audiences. 
- 2 Analyse the cover images, titles and advertised feature articles. Compare and contrast these across the four covers – what is the same and what is different?
- 3 Collect several copies of the same magazine. Go through each copy and write down the common features that occur in the issues.

ACTIVITY 8.5

RESPONDING

- 1 Count how many ads there are in the magazine you have collected and how many articles. 
- 2 What did you find out?
- 3 As a percentage of the magazine, how many ads are there?
- 4 Is this different in a different genre of magazine?
- 5 What are the ads for?
- 6 Is this different in a different genre of magazine?

Magazine design

Magazine design works on the basis of a double-page spread for laying out articles and images. This gives magazines a very different visual feel and appeal if you compare them with newspapers, which tend to be more text-focused. In fact, some magazines will have pages and pages of images only with a few captions to explain what is in the images.

Magazines are also printed on different types of paper stock. Newspapers are almost always printed on newsprint, which is a very fine, translucent, lower-grade paper, whereas magazines vary a lot, and the quality and style of paper is part of what defines each type of publication. They might use high-gloss and low-weight paper. Like *Peppermint*, they might have a matt finish and the paper may be quite

thick. A lot of the modern environmentally focused magazines make a big effort to stress that they are using paper made from either recycled or sustainable resources and have a matt or low-gloss look that 'matches' their environmental message.

CASE STUDY:

Cover design

When preparing to publish a magazine, you start from the end and work backwards to develop a timeline. If you have to bring out a monthly magazine, then this timeline is done every month. If you are making an annual magazine, then the timeline is over a year.

You need to consider the following things:

- When does the magazine get released to the public?
- How many days or weeks are needed for printing?
- How long will the designer need to get the design work done and therefore when does the designer need the final files?
- What is the deadline for images and text to be at the editor? This is based on the assumption that they need to be edited and possibly sent back to get fixed or approved by the writer (depending on the type of magazine) and then sent back to the editor to pass on to the designer.
- What is the entire time the editor will need to know how many pages need to be filled with photos and articles? Also how much space will be filled with advertising and other content?

When starting up a magazine it is very important to get the feel and layout of the cover right, as this will be part of your branding and let your audience know who you are, what you stand for and what they should expect from your publication.

Below are several options that were provided by designers to the editor of *Macedon Ranges* magazine for its first issue. The editor, Sarah Preston, has provided comments about what does and doesn't work. She worked with a few different designers to come up with the cover she eventually chose.

FINAL COVER DECIDED ON

Have decided to go with Fran's cover ... but with your picture behind it. Seeing the more flowing font as a heading, I think I prefer the simpler font. The one where the word 'magazine' is tucked under the bigger title in the same font? I think the main title fonts were almost identical except for the word magazine. But I love how inviting it is with the girl walking away with yours, rather than her face, which feels like it should have some story about her. Walking away, it could be anyone ... It creates such a nice feeling of adventure.
– Sarah Preston (editor)

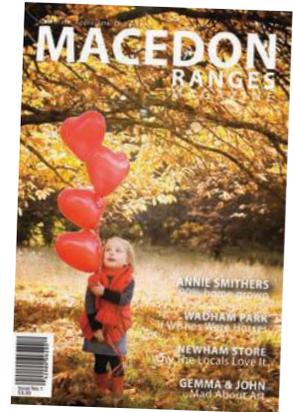


OTHER OPTIONS

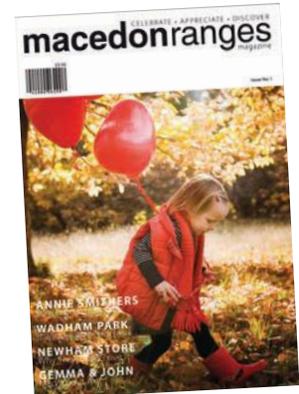
Very close to Fran's one that I went with. I preferred Fran's article names with the lower-case sub-heads although we changed the kind of shadow behind them. I love the way the photo was used, although we decided as it was a new mag, having the title behind the balloons was not good for branding initially. Didn't like 'magazine' scrawled under it, seemed less classy.



I liked this one too. I'm not sure about the tagline though. I like it better how it looks on Option 3 and on Option 2, but I realise it all has to tie in together. Can we try it without the little vertical lines in between, or maybe in capitals, or in lower case? I think in the end I didn't go with this one as it seemed too ... hard, for lack of a better word. Maybe kind of masculine. Again, not really much reasoning, just a bit of a feeling about it ...



I LOVE the heading, tagline and business cards. I think it looks really classy. I don't really like the white banner though.



This one didn't even get a look in – just didn't like it.



ACTIVITY 8.6

MAKING

- 1 Mock up your own magazine cover.
- 2 Think about the genre of the magazine that you are making and investigate what would be required on the cover.
- 3 Come up with a title and a list of articles that will be advertised on the cover to help sell the magazine.
- 4 Source a cover image appropriate to the genre.



Zines

Zines are niche magazines that are often handmade and therefore have a very small **circulation**. Their content can be very specific. Some zines are even hand-illustrated or photocopied instead of being printed.



An example of a zine

circulation relating to newspapers and magazines, it refers to the number of copies sold or distributed

- 1 Research all you can about zines. What kind of subject matter is usually in zine form?
- 2 Make a small one-off zine on a specific area of interest to you. Then hold a zine fair in your class and see how other people made zines and what they are about.



8.7 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING & MAKING

Books

Although there won't be much focus on books in this chapter, it is important to note that books are a form of text media too and as such follow their own system of technical codes and conventions. How can you tell a book is a book?

Books have front and back covers that contain specific information, such as the title and author on the front and a blurb on the back. Books also contain an **ISBN**, similar to the ISSN found on magazines, usually located on the back cover above the bar code.

Inside a book there is an imprint page, which contains details about publication, including the publisher, copyright, paper stock and fonts used. Inside a book there will be a title page that repeats the title of the book and the author's name. Depending on whether it is fiction, nonfiction, a secondary school textbook (like the one you are holding in your hands right now) or an academic text, it will have various other pages, such as a contents page, before it gets to the main body text.

Open a few different books. What similarities do you notice? What differences? Where are the pages numbers? Where is the text printed for a novel? Does this differ from the textbook you are using right now? Is it like other textbooks you use in other subjects?

Comics and graphic novels

Comics and graphic novels are another form of print media that contain both text and images. They have their own codes and conventions that govern how they look. Comics and graphic novels are usually characterised by multiple small images laid out on a page. The images work together to create a story and the characters' thoughts and speech are shown in thought bubbles or speech

ISBN International Standard Book Number, used globally to identify all published books



bubbles. These images may be preceded by a rectangular box that puts the action into context – the time of day, who the characters are, the location of the action. This information also acts as a useful segue from one set of panels to the next.

FONTS AND PAPER STOCK

Font is the technical name for typeface (or the way the letters and words look) on a page. A font's style applies to the entire alphabet from a to z or a different alphabet from another language. There is one major difference between fonts – some such as **Arial** have no 'tails' and others such as **Book Antiqua** have tails. Tails refer to the extra lines that come off the edge of the letters; these increase ease of reading as they allow the eye to move to the next letter or word in a more natural fashion. Fonts with tails are known as serif fonts; those without tails are known as sans serif fonts – *sans* being the French word for *without*.

Fonts have several other qualities that we can refer to when discussing them. As noted above, they usually have a name, such as **Times New Roman** – some of the names are connected to their historical significance. Text is described by a size such as 14 (the larger the number the larger the size; the unit of measure is the point, written as 'pt'). Text can also be treated differently, with **bold** (extra thick lettering), *italic* (leaning to the side) or underlined detailing, or some combination of these, such as ***bold italic underlined***. These features are used to emphasise different sections of text for different purposes and there are also codes and conventions that govern their use.

For example, when writing up a bibliography (depending on which style of bibliography you are using), you italicise the title of the books to differentiate that part of each entry. Italics are also used to show foreign words that are not commonly used in our vocabulary or dictionary.

SERIF
FONT
AaBbCc
SANS SERIF FONT
AaBbCc

There are many different fonts and some have been in use for as long as there has been printing. Others are very new and have been designed by companies as unique fonts used as part of their brand recognition. Fonts can say a lot about the content of the text; they can emphasise words in the visual form and how seriously the content should be taken.

If you are writing a serious essay for school, use more traditional fonts and colours that demonstrate that you are serious. Don't use **Comic Sans**, for example. You want to make it easy for your teacher to read, so it is best to use a serif font such as **Times New Roman**.

Perhaps if you are writing something that is old-fashioned or set in the past you could research a font from that period. Comic books contain their own fonts and this is one way of indicating genre and style of text. Your mind subconsciously reads the font and helps you determine the form of text from the type of font used. Most word processing and computer programs contain a list of fonts that you are able to use, but there are also thousands of other fonts that can be purchased or downloaded.

In the modern world there will be less and less paper, but until we become a paper-free society you will need to understand the different terms relating to weights and finishes that can be used when talking about paper.

First there is a surface look known as a finish – this is what the paper looks and feels like. Finishes include gloss and matt as well as a few others. Gloss is a shiny surface and has predominantly been used for magazines. The surface feels more slippery to touch and it reflects the light more. Matt is a muted and duller surface type and is more likely to be used by niche magazines to distinguish themselves from the glossy magazines. It tends to be seen on environmentally related publications or art magazines. As noted earlier, newspapers are printed on newsprint – it is a cheap paper to produce and has a shorter shelf life than other paper types.

When you talk about paper, you need to talk about its weight (how thick and heavy gauge it is). Paper is measured in gsm (grams per square metre). Typical printer paper is 80 gsm. When you are making a printed text you should consider the weight of the paper it will end up on to make it more authentic as a final product. Posters are made on a different type of paper from magazines, and textbooks come in different types again. Look at a few printed products around you. Which has gloss finish and which has matt? Which product has the most dense paper stock and which has the least dense? What about the book in your hands right now?

DIGITAL TEXTS

As noted earlier, text-based media now exists in forms other than traditional print. Online text media is part of our everyday lives and we interact with it and respond to it in different ways.



Online newspapers

Websites have their own codes and conventions and they differ from print texts in a few ways and for specific reasons. Online newspapers, like traditional printed ones, usually contain a masthead/title and articles. However, the articles in an online newspaper are often shorter, and the front page may contain only the first few paragraphs of an extended article; if you wish to read the article further, you navigate through the site using hotlinks. The content managers of online newspapers and the people who write for them are required to make the content easily readable on the screen, so the font size and type is important.

The amount of information to be loaded on each page by the average computer or device also needs to be considered so that people are not waiting too long to load the next link or page. Have you ever been looking at a website and just decided it was taking too long and gone somewhere else?

Twitter

One of the newer forms of textual delivery is Twitter. It is characterised by only being able to post 140-character (letter) tweets. These posts are logged onto the Twitter feed of the person writing, and anyone who is following them will see that feed. There are now people employed at news and other information and entertainment businesses solely to run social media and Twitter feeds for

their organisations. You can follow any of the popular traditional print newspapers and television news outlets via their Twitter feeds, and also many organisations that were previously inaccessible, such as those from other countries and underground networks.



The highly
recognisable
Twitter bird

ACTIVITY 8.8

MAKING

- 1 Write a conversation with the person next to you using no more than 140 characters at a time.
- 2 Try to find out what they did on the weekend and tell them what you did. Is it difficult?
- 3 Did you use a lot of abbreviations?
- 4 How much information did you choose to leave out?



Blogs

The term *blog* is short for *web log*, a journal-type website usually run and managed by an individual and often containing personal opinion and very subjective content. There are numerous free programs that allow you to set up and host blogs, including Blogger, Weebly, Tumblr and WordPress. You set up an account with one of these online hosts and start writing. You can upload images as well as text, which allows you to make your blog highly personal in style and appearance.

A blog might be a personal account like a diary and discuss issues chronologically, or it might comprise more professional critiques of industry, such as restaurant reviews. Blogs have allowed the individual to have a public voice without having to be approved by an editor or someone else in a position of power in a more traditional text medium. Some common blog topics are fashion and fashion photography, food and recipes, music and film reviews, photography and craft. If you can name it there is bound to be someone blogging about it!

Create your own blog.

- 1 Choose a topic such as sport or films or something else that interests you and set up a blog using one of the free programs provided on the internet.
- 2 Aim to write one paragraph or more a day on the blog for a period of a few weeks. Obviously keep going for more than a few weeks if you enjoy it.
- 3 Try to get other people to view and comment on your blog entries.
- 4 You could also try this activity as a class blog where everyone contributes.



8.9 ACTIVITY

MAKING & RESPONDING

MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND MEDIA INFLUENCE

Media ownership refers to the broad details of who owns and therefore runs the media we as the audience receive. There are laws and guidelines that govern how much individuals and businesses can own in particular media markets. The laws have been developed so that the influence that the media (and individuals in charge of the media) has on its audience can be reduced or spread over a broader range of opinions and interests. Private companies, national public broadcasters and not-for-profit community organisations can own media. Text-based media has been one of the longest running forms of media and there are media ownership laws governing who can own newspapers, radio and television stations



and their online counterparts. The laws also restrict the ownership of media by foreign companies.

Previously the laws were mainly found in the *Trades Practices Act 1974*; since its introduction they are mainly within the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*. Up until the invention of the internet, the media was owned by relatively few people (you can search the internet for updated details of which media is owned by which companies). The owners are often wealthy private companies who can afford to purchase such expensive businesses and keep them running.

Most daily newspapers in Australia are owned by either News Corporation or Fairfax Holdings. This means that the news received from traditional print media (newspapers) is received from only two main sources. If you receive your news and information from other sources, such as the internet and independent organisations, or from other media forms which are owned by other companies, then your sources of information broaden considerably.

The Agenda Setting Function Theory

Despite there being many ways that we can receive news and information, such as the radio, television or the internet, the newspaper still possesses a significant amount of influence in our society. Whether we refer to the printed hard copies that are distributed first thing in the morning or the digital copies that can be accessed via web browsers or tablet applications, the level of influence is arguably immense, as newspapers have the power to 'set the agenda' for defining what are important issues and events in a society for the day.

The 'Agenda Setting Function Theory' is a media communication theory that attempts to explain the influence that media organisations like the newspaper can have on society. This theory suggests that the media can't tell you what to think, but it can tell you what to think *about*.

For instance, any event that is considered 'newsworthy' is placed within a newspaper in order of perceived relevance and importance; the most significant event is placed on the front page, along with a large headline, with other events appearing in order of importance through the newspaper. Obviously, a newspaper also has various sections that relate to specific topics, such as sport or finance; however, the events are ordered in the same way, with the most significant appearing first. According to the theory, it doesn't matter what you think about the events or topics, it is the fact that you are thinking about them that is important. As there is a limited amount of space within a newspaper, any event that is not considered newsworthy is not reported on and left out of the edition.

Agenda Setting Function Theory identifies the newspapers as the 'gatekeepers' of information, because they metaphorically 'open the gate' and select events and information to include, while also 'closing the gate' to omit or leave out other content. This means the decisions made by the newspaper editors have a large impact on what a society is aware of and is thinking about. As the front page of the newspaper displays the most important event of the day, it is responsible for making people think about that topic or event. The newspaper cannot control what people think about the event, as all audiences have different opinions;

however, the influence the newspaper has over the society stems from its ability to define the topic of the day. Alternatively, if an event is left out of the newspaper and not reported on, people in society won't be thinking about it because they are not aware it occurred.

For example, if a newspaper has a story about climate change on the front page, it will be considered the most important idea or event of the day and people who see the front cover will be thinking about it. They might be thinking how much they consider it an important issue, or they might be thinking that they are not convinced; the point is, however, that people in society are thinking about the topic. According to the Agenda Setting Function Theory, this demonstrates the level of influence that the media has on society.

As a class, discuss the issues relating to media ownership and media influence.

Consider the following questions:

- 1 Do you agree or disagree with Agenda Setting Function Theory?
- 2 Have you seen evidence of this occurring?
- 3 Collect a few newspapers from your library or home on any given day. What are the front page stories? Are they the same across the newspapers? If they are different, what is the most important story for each paper?
- 4 Why do you think those stories have been chosen?



8.10 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Citizen journalism

Citizen journalism refers to the average person writing about, filming and discussing in a public forum events that occur. It can include commenting on the news in online forums, posting images and videos of events, and discussing and analysing news and events in public forums or blogs. Gone are the days when a few rich **media moguls** were the only ones to get their opinion heard. With the current prevalence of the internet and convergent digital devices, the rise of citizen journalism has been prolific. There are news websites, such as <http://slashdot.org>, whose content, like that of Wikipedia, is contributed to by citizens.



media mogul a very powerful and rich media owner

NEW MEDIA

The new world of text is digital and can be read in many formats and via many different devices. Over the past few years we have seen a decline in book sales (and therefore printing) and an increase in the number of people accessing information, entertainment and news in a digital format, using dedicated devices such as e-readers and convergent devices such as mobile phones. Is this the death of print?

Newspapers have traditionally made their profit from selling their product and from advertising space. As circulation drops, interest in advertising for those spaces will drop. They can of course sell advertising to their online counterparts, but as most people access online sites for free, they have lost some of the income they received previously.

We are currently at a revolutionary crossroads where we see a decline in interest in the printed form of words but increased access to and interest in words and text through new and different media.



ACTIVITY 8.11

MAKING & RESPONDING

As a class, create a magazine or newspaper.



- You will need to organise yourselves into roles. Research the roles of professions below and identify the main tasks they perform and what roles you will need for your publication.
 - editor
 - subeditor/assistant editor
 - journalists/writers
 - photographers
 - sales and advertising
 - designer/layout
 - printers
- As a group decide what genre your text will be and then follow the technical codes and conventions of that genre of text. Collect samples of other magazines in that genre for inspiration/ideas and the layouts/codes and conventions to follow.

NOTE FOR THE EDITOR: The editor will manage the running of the magazine and work closely with designer/layout from the beginning, so whoever you choose/vote/nominate for these positions will need to be able to work together and manage and motivate the rest of the class.

The editor will need to come up with a timeline to complete the task and work backwards from there to decide when content is due in. It can be a good idea to get photographers and journalists to pitch their stories to the editor so that the overall content of the text is coherent and consistent. Or the editor could provide a list of stories/images that need to be covered and journalists/writers/photographers can choose what they will do.

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'The media has too much influence over its audience.'

Consider the following questions in your response:

- 1 Is this true? Do you think the media exerts influence over you?
- 2 What are the positives and negatives of media influence?
- 3 Think about the rise of citizen journalism and how this could affect the content and influence of the news and information that you receive.
- 4 Do you trust what you read on the internet? Why or why not?

But wait, there's more ...

- Most major newspapers are available to read online.
- You can download the open source desktop publishing program Scribus online.
- Explore the following interesting blogs and websites:
 - The Satorialist (fashion photography on the street)
 - Inside A Dog (a blog about young adult literature)
 - Meet me at Mikes (Craft)
 - Cool Hunting (Searching online and the world for things that are cool)
 - The Basketball Jones (Basketball blog and podcasts on the NBA)
 - Mashable (discussions of social networking, internet and technology-related sites and events).
- Explore links to free font websites.
- For information on buying and making zines, visit the Sticky Institute online.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Sophie Black is the current online editor of the independent news site Crikey.

What inspired you to become an editor?

It started with a love of writing, but then I was lured by the chance to mould and shape an entire publication – to trade in ideas, to trigger discussions, to shape debate, to foster relationships with great writers, and to discover new ones.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

My first hint at how great this job could be was during an internship at the UK papers *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. I sat front and centre at the features desk of both papers, and I was very lucky to work under journalists patient enough to explain their trade to me. They were generous and patient enough to help me get my by-line in print.

What does a typical day in the life of Sophie Black involve?

It starts at 6 am when I start consuming the news of the day. I wake up to *Radio National Breakfast* and the *AM* program for the best summary of what will be making news that day. Then I sit down to all the papers, metro tabloids and the broadsheets. I arrive at work at 7.30 am, am fully prepped by 8.30 am for our morning editorial meeting, and by 12.30 pm we've published the latest edition of *Crikey*, which comes to around

25 stories, or 30 000 words. During the morning I will have commissioned stories, come up with ideas for long-running features, written an editorial and read and subbed a whole lot of copy!

In the afternoon, I field meetings with anyone from my staff, to outside writers, to senior management about strategy or I'll chair a news conference about upcoming investigations. Occasionally I'll take part in a radio or TV interview on the issues of the day, either over the phone or in the studio.

Meanwhile the *Crikey* website keeps ticking over with breaking news and new blog posts. I leave work around 6 pm but constantly check email/Twitter and reddit or Google news across the night.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

The chance to shape the ideas and words of some very talented people, to weigh in on important issues and to pick our readers' very smart brains. Plus there's the constant opportunities to poke fun at hubris, pick on those with perhaps too much power and ask hard questions of leaders of all stripes.

What is your least favourite aspect?

The rolling deadlines of online media – it can be addictive and exciting, but it's also exhausting at times.

with

SOPHIE BLACK



Why does Crikey.com work as an online publication and not a traditional print media?

The online medium is the future of news, how we write it, how we read it, and how we consume it across our day. On a practical level, it's a much leaner operation to run than having to deal with the associated costs of running a newspaper. There are no printing and distribution costs, for example.

But predominantly, it's because that's how people want to access their news these days, and the technology and method behind that is changing constantly.

It's a challenging space to be working in; no one's quite cracked the perfect code of how to properly fund online independent journalism yet – it's an expensive line of work – but I think we're closer than anyone. We have very loyal readers willing to pay for our content and engage with our ideas, and we continue to build on that.

How has the internet influenced democracy with regards to citizen journalism?

Releases like the Wikileaks cable dumps and platforms like Twitter, Facebook, reddit and Flickr mean that now more than ever, citizens are able to shine a light on information that would otherwise be hidden, and then share it with each other. Citizens no longer need those traditional news 'gatekeepers' like newspapers or broadcast outlets to get their story out, or to discover things for themselves. The potential is infinite.

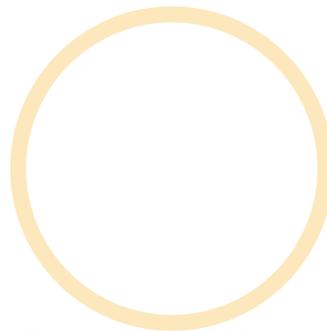
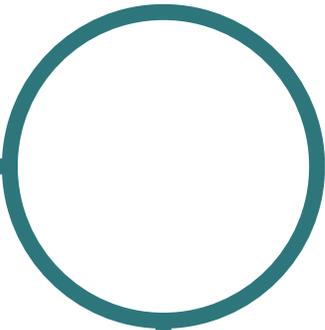
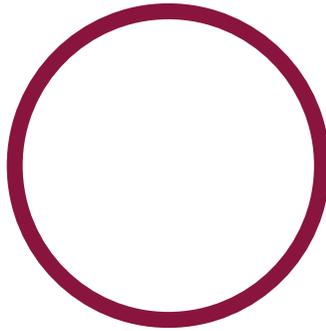
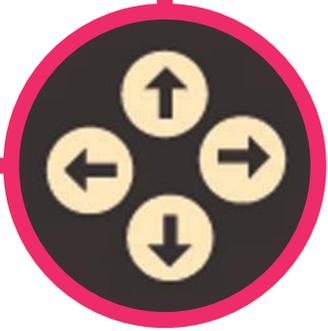
What are three important qualities for an editor to possess?

Tenacity, curiosity and the ability to lead.

Top five online news/editorial sources (other than Crikey)?

In no particular order, here are a few of my must reads:

- 1 *Mother Jones*
 - 2 *The Global Post*
 - 3 *Slate*
 - 4 *The Australian*
 - 5 *The Guardian*
- www.crikey.com.au



ANIMATION AND GAMING

Your imagination is a powerful force. When allowed to run wild, it can create the impossible. Animation and gaming are two media forms that allow our imagination the freedom to conjure up all sorts of scenarios and possibilities. From hand-drawn to stop motion, claymation and digital, animation can allow for a whole range of ideas to be explored in many different ways and for many different audiences. Whether it is communicating a simple message for a young audience or more complex ideas for an older audience, animation gives the creator an incredible amount of freedom to express themselves and their ideas.

Gaming and video games can be seen as the extension of animation with the added, and essential, component of interactivity. As technology has progressed in the last 30 years, so too have the games and the experiences offered to audiences. Now there are many different ways that you can spend your time playing video games. As games and the gaming industry have grown and developed, so too has the impact upon society. Where this technology will lead us, only the future knows!

COMING UP...

Rewind**The science of animation****Animation styles****Representation and values****Changing values****The future of animation****Gaming****Up for debate****But wait, there's more ...****Inside the green room with Darcy Prendergast****REWIND**

The ideas and principles of animation have existed for centuries. One example is the zoetrope, first invented around 100 AD in China. The modern zoetrope was created in the 1830s in England, Belgium and Austria. The zoetrope is a cylinder with vertical slots around the top half. On the inside of the bottom half sits a series of images in a progressive order. The idea is that the viewer (audience) looks

through the slots as the zoetrope is spinning, and looks at the images. To the audience, it appears that the images are moving. Obviously it is restricted to a basic sequence of events; however, when the zoetrope was invented it amazed audiences and started people thinking about how this idea could be expanded.

Towards the latter part of the 1800s, the flip book had gained popularity as a form of entertainment. Through the use of a collection of images, again displaying a sequence of events, and arranged in a small book, audiences were now able to view an extended and more detailed sequence of animation. At the turn of the twentieth century, this technique was applied to the new technology of filmmaking. The moving pictures ('movies') also used this idea of the persistence of vision to give the illusion of movement (see the Science of Animation later in this chapter).



A zoetrope

Silent animations continued to develop; in 1919, Felix the Cat was invented and featured in many animations that were screened in the cinemas, along with the newsreel, before the film was shown. In 1929 the first significant animation with synchronous sound was released. Not only did 'Steamboat Willie' alter audience expectations, but it also introduced people to the character of Mickey Mouse. Directed by Walt Disney, 'Steamboat Willie' changed animation forever.

Another significant technology used in animation was a technique known as rotoscoping. Rotoscoping is the process of projecting a frame of film onto a glass plate and using it as a guide to trace the image into cartoon form. Invented in the early 1900s, it was used significantly by Max Fleischer, most notably in the Betty Boop cartoon 'Minnie the Moocher'. Fleischer used the technique to rotoscope the ghost of a walrus over the footage of **Cab Calloway** dancing. Rotoscoping allowed animators to achieve lifelike movement in their animations, leading to far more fluid and naturalistic movements. Incidentally, this process was used many years later by George Lucas to animate the lightsabers in the original Star Wars trilogy.

The work by animators like Walt Disney and Max Fleischer led to what is often referred to as the Golden Age of American animation (1930–1960), which included classic animated feature films such as Disney's *Snow White* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940) and *Fantasia* (1940). It also saw the creation of other iconic animated characters, such as Fleischer's Popeye in 1936 and Tex Avery and Chuck Jones' Bugs Bunny in 1940.



**Minnie the Moocher
and Betty Boop**



Felix the Cat



**Popeye and
Olive Oyl**

Cab Calloway (1907–1994) jazz band leader and musician from the 1930s, famous in connection with the Cotton Club in Harlem, New York, and for his appearance in the film *The Blues Brothers* (1980)

There have been a number of famous people in the history of animation mentioned, but how much do you know about them?

- 1 Choose one of the animators listed below:
 - Walt Disney, Max Fleischer, Osamu Tezuka, Hayao Miyazaki, Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, Tim Burton, Matt Groening, Friz Freleng, Ollie Johnson, Jan Švankmajer, Terry Gilliam, Art Babbitt, Caroline Leaf, Adam Elliot, Nick Parr, Seth MacFarlane, Henry Selick, Darcy Prendergast.
- 2 When were they born and where are they from?
- 3 What animation style(s) are they famous for?
- 4 Which characters have they animated?
- 5 What kinds of stories/ideas do they like to communicate?
- 6 Do you like their work? Explain why.

9.1 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

THE SCIENCE OF ANIMATION

In the early years of animation, audiences were amazed at how still images could be made to move. Even today, when we animate something, there is a certain thrill from the fact that we've brought something inanimate 'to life'. In animation (and film for that matter) the 'moving' image is made up from a large number of individual images. When they are projected at a certain speed, the images cease to appear as flickering, individual images and take the form of a smooth motion. This is because of a process known as '**persistence of vision**'. While there is some debate about its validity, persistence of vision is the afterimage that remains on the retina after we've seen it. Displaying images faster than the afterimage disappears results in fluid, animated movement.

To create this illusion, film runs at 24 frames per second. As animation is a lengthy process, it is most commonly drawn 'on twos', which means every second frame is used. This equates to 12 frames per second. When there is a significant level of action, an animator may need to use a few additional frames to make sure that the movement of the image is fluid and smooth. However, when you are planning your animations, you should aim to take 12 images for every one second of screen time. Therefore, if you plan to make a 30-second animation, you will need to create 360 separate images.

ANIMATION STYLES

There are many different animation styles that have evolved over time. Let's explore some of these now.

Flip book animation

One of the early forms of animation that was enjoyed by many different audiences was the flip book. Flip books are one of the most straightforward forms of animation. (No doubt you've made one before in the bottom corner of a textbook!) Flip books have a progressive series of slightly different images drawn on each of the separate pages. The audience then holds the spine of the book in one hand and by slightly bending the book and using their thumb they release a page at a time. The audience watches the book as they 'flip' the images and witness the animation taking place. Flip books are relatively easy to make. However, the more complex the drawing, the harder it is to ensure the animation is smooth. Flip books are also limited to showing one simple sequence of events, as the length of the book limits the number of separate images you can draw.

persistence of vision the length of time an image remains upon the retina of our eyes

A stack of square sticky notes works well as a flip book. Using a pad of sticky notes, try the following activity and reflection tasks:

- 1 Draw a ball bouncing up and down – it needs to go for two seconds (one second up and one second down = 12 frames up and 12 frames down).
- 2 What do you need to make sure of? Does it look realistic? How does a ball bounce? Does it travel at the same speed throughout the bounce?
- 3 Either continue drawing after the ball animation or turn the flip book over and draw a vehicle (boat, hot-air balloon, plane, train or car) travelling across the page. This time, make the animation go for three seconds (36 frames).
- 4 What was harder about this animation?
- 5 Now draw a stick figure walking across the page. Have it stop in the middle and wave at the audience. Then have it walk off the page. This time, make the animation go for six seconds (72 frames).
- 6 Reflect on what was most difficult about this animation. What did you find required more time and effort to get right?

9.2 ACTIVITY

MAKING

Hand-drawn animation

The natural continuation of flip book animation, and the technique used throughout the Golden Age, is hand-drawn animation. This process was developed in order to simplify the process of animation so that feature-length animations could be made without having a lead animator draw each and every frame of the film. This reduced costs and allowed for animations of a much higher level of detail and accuracy to be created.

The process of creating a hand-drawn animation is similar to that of filmmaking, as it begins with a script. Once the script is approved, the characters can be designed. Once the characters are approved, the story is storyboarded. After this, the script is recorded and a guiding track created to provide a sense of timing for the animators to work to. The lead animator then draws the key frames, which are the shots that contain significant action.

These key frames are just simple outlines of the characters. After this, the process of 'tweening' takes place. Tweening is when another animator, usually younger and less experienced, draws the frames that go in between the key frames, thereby joining up the action. The frames will be transferred onto **cels**, either by inking (tracing the images from the frames onto the cels) or by photocopying. The characters are then painted.

As the cels are transparent, individual characters are put onto separate sheets. Often aspects of the characters, such as an arm, will also be on a separate cel. This allows for greater flexibility. It also requires the main character to be inked and painted fewer times, particularly if the body of the character remains still for a number of frames. All the cels are then collected and put against a pre-prepared background. The photographer will then shoot each collection of cels against

cels single sheets of transparent celluloid used in animation

the background. This film is then synced up to the audio and, after touch-ups are done, the animation is complete.

Today, there are very few animation studios that still use this traditional method to create feature-length animated movies. Studio Ghibli used these traditional methods to create *Spirited Away* (*Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi*) (2001). However, animated shows, like Matt Groening's *Futurama*, use a combination of traditional, CGI and rendered sequences.

Stop motion animation

One form of animation that has been delighting audiences for over 100 years is stop motion animation. Forming the basis of some of cinema's first productions, stop motion animation is a unique technique that allows filmmakers to create footage of objects moving on their own or of people moving in unusual ways. The

process of stop motion animation basically involves the photographing or filming of pieces of action, one frame at a time. These frames are then played together in the same way hand-drawn animation is, at 12 frames per second.

One of the first significant stop motion animations was a Spanish production made in 1906 called *The Electric Hotel* (*El Hotel Electrico*). It featured a couple visiting a hotel in which all the objects within the hotel came to life and began to attend to the couple. For example, the couple's bags moved to the rooms themselves, the brush brushed the lady's hair and the razor came to life and shaved the

man's whiskers. This use of stop motion was considered an early form of special effects and highlighted one of the main attractions of film: that the impossible can become 'reality'.

Today, stop motion still holds the same attraction; however, we now see different forms of mediums and actions being recreated. French-Swiss artist Guillaume Reymond has made a series of stop motion animations that recreate popular video games from the 1970s and 1980s. In this series called 'Game Over' he uses an empty auditorium as the blank computer screen and people in different coloured T-shirts as the pixels. For each shot he moves the actors from chair to chair to simulate the action of the game. In post-production, Reymond composes the soundtrack and creates the sound effects purely out of people humming, singing and making 'pew-pew' noises. Using this technique, he has recreated early video games such as *Tetris*, *Pac-Man*, *Pole Position*, *Pong* and *Space Invaders*.

One element essential to creating a successful stop motion animation is a solid, well-set-up tripod. When you are setting up your shot, the tripod will ensure that the camera doesn't move. This reduction in movement will improve the quality of your animation, enhancing the illusion that the objects or people are moving in strange and amazing ways.



El Hotel Electrico
(1906)

To gain an idea of the possibilities and limitations of this technique, it's best to start off small and work from there. In this activity, we are looking at creating the illusion that a person is sliding along on their feet across the shot.

- 1 Head outside and set up your tripod and camera facing an oval, sports court or other large area. Direct your actors to begin to the right of the frame, just out of the shot. Take a photo of the empty shot. Now instruct your actor to take a tiny step into the shot. Take another photo. Repeat this process as you direct them across the shot until they are out of the frame on the left.
- 2 Now, upload these shots onto a computer and import them into an editing program. Reduce the duration of the shots to a fraction of a second each. What you should have now is a person sliding, not walking, across the shot.

9.3 ACTIVITY

MAKING

Claymation

A form of stop motion animation that has also been incredibly popular is claymation (clay animation). Claymation is the technique of animating clay, plasticine or playdough in the stop motion process. Since the 1950s there have been many famous animated TV and film characters and shows, such as *Gumby*, *Morph*, *The Red and the Blue*, *Mia Mio* and *Wallace & Gromit*. The show *Robot Chicken* has also used claymation in conjunction with pop culture figurines to create parodies of well-known characters and stories.

Incorporating claymation with other materials can be quite successful in creating a more effective product. The charm of shows such as *Morph* (a popular claymation from the 1970s and 1980s) was that the characters were interacting with everyday items, such as bookcases, table tops, pens and pencils. So one thing you can try is a claymation using a classroom table with various classroom odds and ends as a backdrop: pencil cases, whiteboard markers, erasers, etc. You just need to make sure that they remain stationary as you animate the clay, otherwise the animation will be less effective.

You can also incorporate paper into your claymation. Whether you print off a backdrop from the internet to animate in front of or create a background from cut out pieces of paper, it can be a quick and easy way to create an environment in which the action can occur. Paper can also be used to create props within the shot that the clay can move around. Paper can even be used as the material to animate, such as in the series *Quaq Quao*, an Italian animated series from the 1980s that animated **origami** characters of a duckling as it went on various adventures.



... *Morph*, created
... in 1977

origami the Japanese art
of paper folding

Regardless of the material that you choose to animate, it is important that the lighting remain consistent for each shot. If the lighting keeps changing it will cause the animation to flicker and will distract the audience. You will need to ensure that you have a strong and consistent key light. Lighting the shot artificially will ensure this; natural light can change dramatically depending on the time of day and the weather.

ACTIVITY 9.4

MAKING

pixelation occurs when the digital blocks that make up an image are too big and the image will be of a low resolution, therefore appearing less sharp

Backdrops are a quick and effective way to set the scene and create a mood.

A great way to create a backdrop is to start with a box.

Boxes that the photocopy paper comes in should be readily available at your school. If you fold down one side and cut along the bottom edges, you can create a foldout 'stage' to which you can affix backgrounds.

Backgrounds can be created either by finding an image from the internet (make sure it is a high enough resolution to avoid **pixelation**) or by using cut out sheets of coloured paper.

You must ensure, however, that your backdrop remains firm. If it continually moves around, it will reduce the effectiveness of your animation.

Cut-out animation

Another popular form of animation is the cut-out or paper-cut style. This is where you use cut-out characters made from pieces of paper or images from magazines and place them on a background. By then positioning the camera to shoot from directly above, you can proceed with the same process as any other animation to create a product. This style has been used most famously by Terry Gilliam in his animations for *Monty Python* and by Matt Stone and Trey Parker in the first episode of *South Park*. (All the other episodes were made using computer software to appear like paper-cut.)



The Adventures of Prince Achmed by Lotte Reiniger was made in Germany in 1926 and is one of the earliest examples of cut-out animation.

Digital animation

As soon as the software allowed it, people began using computers to create digital animations. One of the earliest and most popular programs was Logo, which featured a turtle as the cursor. This visual programming software allowed users to program movement and actions to create vector graphics.

Currently there are many different programs to make digital animations, some more complex than others. One free downloadable program is Pivot. Pivot allows you to make stick figure animations through the moving and programming of the stick figure that is provided within the program. This simple process is a good one to begin with, as the principle can then be expanded to create such internet sensations as the *Stick Figure Fighting* series of digital animations.

REPRESENTATION AND VALUES

As previously discussed in Chapter 6, media communications are re-presentations of reality. This idea is important in animation, because everything must be created so constructions can carry a whole range of ideas. In other words, because the animator is not limited to having to find the locations or the actors they want to include, they can create exactly what they want. Whether animators realise it or not, these 'realities' that they then create can tell us a lot about their beliefs and values.

Let's explore this idea of beliefs and values. Imagine you want to animate a rabbit and you've decided that you want to have it go from the best kind environment for a rabbit to the worst type of environment.

- 1 Individually, dot point the elements and colours that you believe would be a best environment for the rabbit. Why do you believe this to be the 'best' environment?
- 2 Compare your ideas to what the person next to you has written. What similarities do you have? What are the differences?
- 3 Now dot point the elements and colours that you believe would be the worst environment for a rabbit. Why do you believe this to be the 'worst' environment?
- 4 Again, compare your responses to those of the person next to you. What similarities do you have? What differences? Were your responses more or less similar with this environment than the other?
- 5 Share your ideas as a class. Was there much difference? Was there much agreement?
- 6 What this activity should have revealed is that our imaginations can be quite different when we aren't faced with limitations. It should also reveal that what we believe to be the 'best' and 'worst' environments is based on our own individual beliefs, which also reflect the beliefs of our society.



9.5 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

CHANGING VALUES

We know that the values within a society change over time. Some of the ideas that your grandparents believed when they were young are not the same as you believe today. This is the same in every culture and society. As mentioned, because animations can reveal many ideas held by the animator, they give us an insight into the ideas that were commonplace at the time of their creation. A basic example could be beliefs about fashion. What the main character is wearing reflects the time in which the animation was made. This means that animations are great sources of historical information.

The changing depiction of smoking in the media over time has been quite obvious. Today there is no cigarette advertising and it has been suggested that any media product that features smoking should be rated 'R 18+'. This certainly is in contrast with the animations of yesteryear. For instance, in the 1949 Disney cartoon *Donald's Happy Birthday*, Donald Duck forces his nephews, Huey, Dewey and Louie, to smoke cigars as a form of punishment. Similarly, Warner Brothers' Bugs Bunny was also shown smoking on a number of occasions. These instances of smoking reflect the attitudes towards cigarettes that were held in society at the time of the cartoons' production.

Another significant value that has changed dramatically over time is the way Western society views and represents race. Back in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, Western animations contained representations that today we see as being incredibly racist and inappropriate. At the time, these negative representations were seen as humorous and were used frequently by many different animation studios, some more obviously than others. Warner Brothers' Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies studios produced a range of animations that are today known as *The Censored Eleven*, due to their negative depiction of African Americans. While these cartoons were obviously racist, there were other animations, such as the crows in Disney's *Dumbo*, that came very close to being directly offensive.

In 50 years' time, will we be commenting upon the racist ideas that are held today? Will we examine *South Park* and its representations of Saddam Hussein (and Canadians) and comment on how offensive it was? Will we be debating the value of *Family Guy* and its negative depictions of race? Or will we discuss what a 'bloody outrage' *The Simpsons* was in its somewhat inaccurate construction of Australians in 'Bart vs Australia'?

THE FUTURE OF ANIMATION

From its origins over a century ago, animation has already progressed in significant ways. The processes of its creation have allowed for ideas to be communicated in ways that at one stage people did not think possible. So what does the future hold for the world of animation? Already we've seen animation

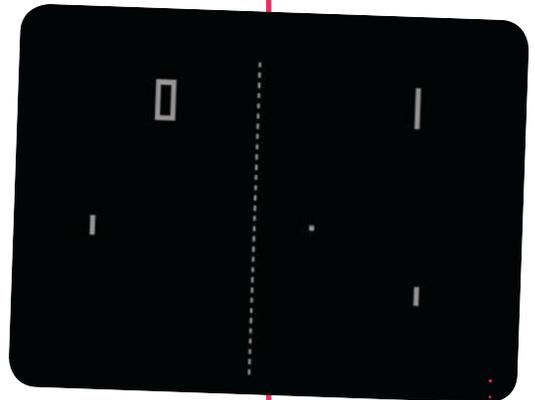
being used as the main technology in films such as James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), in which the 3D animation of the main character, Jake Scully (Sam Worthington), relied on the realism of the technology to overcome the audience's disbelief and have them make a connection with a purely digital animated character.

To see another example of the direction in which animation might be headed, we only need to look at the Japanese pop star Hatsune Miku, a completely animated celebrity. Despite being created entirely by computer software, Miku's digital avatar has released many, many songs and her hologram plays to sell-out concerts. The popularity of Miku suggests that as technology advances, and the process of creating such an entity becomes easier and the results more realistic, we may see more movies with purely digital celebrities 'acting' in them. Could such a 'person' win an Academy Award one day in the future? If they are just as real and can connect with audiences in such a way, then maybe they should be able to.

GAMING

Thanks to the world of computers, technology has allowed interaction with digital animations in the form of video games. Since the release of *Pong* onto the market in 1972, gaming has continued to grow and developed into the huge industry it is today. In 2010, over US\$25 billion was spent by consumers. Obviously the **graphics** and level of interaction has improved significantly over the years. For instance, in *Pong* players were limited to only being able to move their paddle up and down on a vertical axis. Today, we have games programmed in high definition that have a seemingly endless level of freedom and possibilities. However, the core aim at the heart of all gaming has remained the same: to get the highest score and become highly skilled at playing the game.

The audience playing games has also changed over the years. Back in the 1980s when the home console and PC market exploded, games were largely being played by the younger age group. Today, however, those gamers from the 1980s have grown up and are still playing games. In fact, the average age of all gamers today is 37, which means that your teacher is probably closer to the average age than you are. This means the popularity of gaming in society has also increased. In the United States of America, 72% of households play video games. This increased popularity has also been due to the release of more social and physically interactive gaming systems, targeted at the casual gaming market.



Pong, one of the earliest arcade video games

graphics the interactive images within gaming software

ACTIVITY 9.6

RESPONDING

Before we get further into the world of gaming, let's get an idea of the breakdown of gamers in your class. For this, create a quick survey that will allow you to get some facts and figures on the topic.

- Using a pen and paper or an online survey tool like Survey Monkey, find out the following pieces of information from everyone in your class, including your teacher:
 - age
 - gender
 - gaming platform owned (PC, Mac, Wii, Motion, PS2, PS3, Xbox, Xbox 360, PSP, Nintendo, DS/3DS, iPhone, Android, etc.)
 - hours a day spent playing
 - hours a week spent playing
 - reasons for playing
 - amount of money spent on gaming last year.
- What were your results? Did anything surprise you? Were there any trends? What were the most popular games and consoles?

As previously mentioned, the technology of video games has changed significantly over the years. In the early 1980s, most video games existed only in arcades – some refer to this as the glory days of arcade video games. People would spend hours dropping in money to play games like *Pac-Man*, *Galaxian*, *Donkey Kong*, *Missile Command*, *Spy Hunter*, *Elevator Action* and *Mario Bros*. Hours would be invested in these arcade games, with high scores registered on a worldwide leader board by the organisation known as Twin Galaxies. Even today, they still keep track of video game high scores globally.



The introduction of home **consoles**, such as the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), signalled the end of this glorious era. The NES was released in the US in 1985 and in Australia in 1987. Unlike the consoles of today, the NES was only an **8-bit** console, with no save function (even for high scores). However, it meant that people could play at home rather than spending money and hours in the arcade. This started changing the social aspects of gaming from something that was done in public, to something that was done in private.

Donkey Kong was a popular arcade game in the 1980s

consoles the hardware used to play video games

8-bit refers to the amount of processing power a computer has

Research one of these gaming consoles and then respond to the questions that follow:

- Atari, Nintendo Entertainment System, Super Nintendo, Nintendo 64, Sega Master System, Sega Genesis, Sega Dreamcast, SNK Neo-Geo, Sony Playstation, Nintendo Wii, Commodore 64, Commodore Amiga, Kinect, Intellivision, ColecoVision.

- 1 When was it first released?
- 2 Which company created it?
- 3 Which console came before it?
- 4 What were its main features?
- 5 Which games did it have on it?
- 6 List popular characters that featured on it.
- 7 Was it successful?
- 8 Which console came after it?

9.7 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

Of course, today many games are multiplayer in nature and audiences can play against people from all over the world. This has once again altered the focus of games to something that is far more social than a purely individual pursuit. Some games, however, are still individual; it just depends on the type of game that is being played. Let's turn our attention to the different genres of games.

Gaming genres

Platform

Historically two-dimensional in nature, the platform genre is defined by the primary aim of the player being to guide a character, usually by jumping, across a series of platforms. With many obstacles, such as enemies, moving surfaces and bottomless pits to contend with, platform games require gamers to possess timing and precision. Should these dangers not be avoided, players lose 'lives', with the loss of all the 'lives' signalling the end of the game. This genre was made famous by *Mario Bros*.

First-person shooter (FPS)

Prominent parts of the software landscape, FPSs are easily identified by all the action taking place from a first-person perspective. Usually the character carries around an unrealistic arsenal of weapons in order to shoot enemies, explore landscapes, solve problems and survive situations. This genre began with a single-player focus, with limited health (*Wolfenstein 3D*, *Doom*); however, it has now moved to more online cooperative/death match play, with regenerative health (*Halo*, *Call of Duty* series). Sub-genres include third-person shooter and first-person survival.

Example of
an FPS



walkthroughs step-by-step guides on how to complete a game

indie games short for 'independent games', indie games are software developed by people without the financial aid of large companies.

Real-time strategy (RTS)

Primarily presented from an isometric view, this genre sees the player control armies, build bases, harvest resources and defeat an opposing force. This genre started with *Dune 2* and was made more popular with the *Command & Conquer*, *Warcraft* and *Starcraft* series. Tower defence games are a sub-genre.

Adventure

Beginning as text-only programs, adventure games see the player controlling an avatar, navigating around an environment, collecting objects and interacting with the setting and non-player characters in order to solve problems and push the narrative forward. This genre suffered due to the internet providing an abundant source of **walkthroughs**, but has seen a resurgence of late. This genre was made famous by games such as *Monkey Island* and *Sam & Max*, and now includes many online **indie games**. Indie games usually boast innovation and can fall into any genre, as they are only defined by the lack of connection with software giants. *Minecraft*, *World of Good*, *Super Meat Boy* and *Limbo* are all examples of indie games. Sub-genres include hidden object games and escape-the-room games.

Simulations (Sims)

These games aim to recreate reality for gamers and put them in control of cars, planes, trains, boats, cities, people, families, farms and even ant colonies. This genre can be divided into two main sub-genres: action sims (*Need for Speed*, *The Sims*) and micro-management sims (*Farmville*, *Sim City*).

Arcade

Having their origin in the arcade, these games have evolved over time; however, they are all designed around the idea of 'lives'. Players have to defeat aliens, beat up gangs, defeat fighters, eat pellets and avoid ghosts, just to name a few



objectives, in order to gain points and keep the game going. As the game progresses, so does the difficulty, which is designed to make the player part with more money as they buy more lives. The *Street Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat* series have both been incredibly popular arcade game franchises.

Role-playing games (RPGs)

These games place gamers in realities (primarily science fiction or science fantasy settings) in which they control a character or characters to solve problems and defeat monsters in order to gain 'experience points' (exp), which can be used to improve and build the skills and abilities of their character(s) in order to progress further in the game. Players also aim to collect equipment and items that assist them in the completion of the game. *The Elder Scrolls*, *Mass Effect* and the *Fallout* series have been very successful examples of this genre.

Massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs)

Like role-playing games, these have a positive reinforcement system; however, these games are played exclusively online, combining RPG and social networking elements. Examples include *World of Warcraft*, *DC Universe Online*, *Star Trek Online* and *Star Wars: The Old Republic*.

Strategy

With its origins of chess games, trying to best human opponents, this genre sees players in turn-based games competing against the computer or other gamers. Usually with a war focus, these games see players take command of different units or pieces, all with their own strengths and weaknesses, while attempting to capture or destroy the opponent's pieces or territory. This genre has been made famous by the *Civilisation* franchise.

Gaming – the positives and the negatives

Since the advent of gaming, there have always been both supporters and critics. So, what are some of the arguments that have been put forward by each side of the debate?

The positives

Emotionally, the initial benefits of gaming have links to Ancient Greek theatre. The Greek philosopher Aristotle theorised that when audiences viewed particularly dramatic events on the stage, they shared their emotions, and through this investment purged themselves of those negative emotions. The process of



'catharsis' follows the idea that if someone views, or plays, something that is aggressive, their aggressive tendencies will be removed and their emotions will become free from negativity. So it is suggested that if a gamer plays an aggressive FPS, it is beneficial to their emotional state.

Another positive of gaming is the benefits to hand-eye coordination. Since the 1970s, gamers have used controllers with their hands to play games. The constant focus on the timing of jumps, the visual assessment of dangers and the quick reflexes needed all combine to improve a gamer's hand-eye abilities. Music/rhythm games have also been seen to improve players' musical abilities of timing and rhythm.



The inclusion of motion gaming in the market demands higher levels of physical fitness. Whether the game is focused purely on fitness or the activity is a by-product of the motions needed to complete the game, consoles are now making people move around more than ever before. To progress in arcade games like *Dance Dance Revolution* the player must possess a high level of physical fitness and coordination.

Many RPGs, simulations and MMORPGs also rely on the player being able to make sensible financial decisions. As much of the game is spent dealing with resources and commerce of some kind, a player must develop their financial skills in order to succeed in the game. If these abilities are not honed, then the game becomes very difficult.

As mentioned earlier, games have become more collaborative in nature over the past few years as internet speeds have increased and there are no longer issues with lag. For this reason, game designers are creating games to be played in a solely multiplayer environment. Gamers are

required to work cooperatively in order to progress in the game.

If a gamer's social skills and online etiquette are lacking, then it will be harder for them to progress in the game, as it is unlikely that other players will work with someone who is rude or offensive.

There are also arguments about improvements in perseverance, problem-solving skills and attention to detail that can be added to the list of suggested positive effects of gaming.

The negatives

It has been suggested that emotionally, physically and socially, gaming can be incredibly damaging. To begin with, the time and effort that is invested into games by gamers can have particularly antisocial effects. If a player does not socialise with others on a regular basis, their playing skills may improve, but their ability to relate and converse with others can be impaired significantly. So gamers can actually lose social abilities by playing games.

As active games only constitute a small portion of the market, the significant majority of gamers are playing games that require no movement, apart from hand movements and the occasional trip to the kitchen or toilet. As hours on end can be spent in front of a game, this hardly constitutes quality physical activity. Therefore, the physical condition of gamers deteriorates over time as they lack the hours of physical activity and time in the sun needed to maintain a healthy body.

This high level of investment in a game can also lead to video game addiction. As many games are built on a positive reinforcement reward system, the longer a player plays, the better their character can become. The gaming world also may be far more attractive than the real world and this can also contribute to a player not wanting to leave. There are many cases of gamers around the world being medically diagnosed as addicted to video games. Anything that can cause addiction cannot be good for a person's well-being or state of mind.

With the improvement of technology over the years has come an improvement in the realism of graphics. This means that if a game is violent, then gamers can potentially be exposed to a high level of violent and graphic images. This continued exposure can lead to the gamer becoming desensitised to violence. This means that the gamer will become so used to the scenes of carnage and violence that they will continually require increasingly violent images to gain the same psychological reaction. The danger with this is that the gamer will be unaffected by what a normal person considers to be shocking. The danger is that this can lead to a reduction in emotional reaction to real-world violence.

To follow this argument of desensitisation through to its conclusion, should a gamer be exposed to a significant level of violent video games, they may consider carrying out the acts they witness themselves. Should the level of desensitisation be so great that the gamer doesn't feel what they are doing is wrong, these imitation or 'copycat' killings can occur. Copycat killings have been linked to a number of video games over the years. The FPS *Doom* was linked to the Columbine High School shootings in 2000. The third-person action game *Manhunt*, which was later banned in Australia, was initially linked to a murder in England in 2004. More recently, the third-person sandbox game *Grand Theft Auto IV* was linked to a murder in Thailand in 2009. Whether or not these individuals were going to commit violent acts regardless of the video game, since the games gave them the ideas that they imitated, surely some responsibility needs to be taken by the software companies.



CASE STUDY:***Grand Theft Auto IV***

In 2008, an 18-year-old man in Thailand stabbed and killed a taxi driver. When asked why he did it, he said that he wanted to see if it was as easy to car-jack a taxi in real life as it was in *Grand Theft Auto IV*. This 'copycat' killing led to Thailand banning the sale of *GTA IV*, with game sellers facing three years in prison if they choose to ignore the ban.

In Australia, the Classification Board gave the game a rating of MA 15+, meaning that it was illegal for anyone under the age of 15 to play the game. In the United Kingdom the game is rated for players 18 years and over. However, as of 2013 in Australia, any game that contains content that puts it above an MA 15+ rating is given a R18+ rating. RC (Refused Classification) means that it is banned for sale, hire or public exhibition in Australia. It is legal to possess RC classified material, as long as the RC classification wasn't given for material considered illegal in Australia.



ACTIVITY 9.8

RESPONDING

- 1 Evaluate the Thai government's act of banning *Grand Theft Auto IV*. Was it an overreaction or not?
- 2 Can *GTA* and Rockstar Games be held accountable in any way for this crime?
- 3 Considering that it is banned in Thailand and rated 18+ in the UK, is it acceptable that *GTA* was rated MA 15+ in Australia?
- 4 Do you agree with the R 18+ rating for video games in Australia?
- 5 For more information about the R 18+ computer game discussion, you can visit the Australian Government Classification website.

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'Computer games and animation should be used as a major part of the school curriculum.'

Consider both the positives and negatives explored in this chapter in addition to the following questions when shaping your response:

- 1 What are the positives? What would the educational benefits be?
- 2 What do they reveal about society? What use could they be in engaging students?
- 3 What could the downsides be? What outcomes could occur?
- 4 Should educators be considering this in the future?
- 5 Should we examine animations from history that we now recognise as being racist?

But wait, there's more ...

- You can learn more about Darcy Prendergast at his website, [DeePee Studios](#).
- You can learn more about Adam Elliot at his website.
- For details on animation festivals, see what you can find out about the [Melbourne International Animation Festival](#) and the [Annecy International Animation Festival](#).
- There are many sites where you can access free animation software, including [Pivot Stick Figure Animator](#), [Pencil Digital Hand-Drawn Animator](#) and [Creatoon Cartoon Animator](#).
- There are also a number of local sites on gaming you might want to explore, including the [Aussie Games Site](#) and [AusGamers](#).

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

*Darcy Prendergast is a Melbourne-based artist and animator, specialising in claymation. Darcy was a lead sculptor for Adam Elliot's film *Mary and Max* (2009).*

What inspired you to become an animator?

I come from a very animated family. No, my parents aren't bright yellow, they are just ... strong characters that so easily could be. Dad was a zookeeper for 28 years, a man with a million of the most insane stories you will ever hear and Mum is an arts and crafts nut who would have a new favourite medium every week. It was just a very interesting upbringing, where both my artistic and storytelling skills were nurtured. The love for stories and art I guess kind of amalgamated in my later years, and animation became something I really, really loved.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

After I finished uni, I was fortunate enough to score three days a week animating stuff for ABC Kids, then into a lead sculptor role on Adam Elliot's *Mary and Max*. After that finished up, I started my own business. It's been a dream run really ...

What does a typical day in the life of Darcy Prendergast involve?

Waking up well past lunchtime, a healthy dose of sculpting, generally some illustration/character design of some sort, some writing, some chicken, some emailing, some editing and usually a game of in-studio soccer – which usually results in something getting broken. Sometimes I bash on the drums too.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

The freedom. I usually run half a dozen projects simultaneously, then just work on whatever inspires me that day. If a project (or client) starts annoying me ... then it goes to the bottom of the pile until I become re-energised about it. Clients don't like it when that happens, ha ha!

What is your least favourite aspect?

There really aren't too many aspects of my job I don't like. I enjoy everything about the process, but I guess with a lot of the bigger projects I have going right now, financing them can be a big waiting game. You sit around waiting for a panel to pass judgment, which tests your patience more than the animation process itself – which segues perfectly into ...

Were you a patient person before you became an animator or has it grown with the work?

- It's funny ... In all other aspects of life I'm spontaneous,
- hyperactive and easily distracted. It's only when it
- comes to animating that I tend to be able to harness
- all of that energy ... and focus it on the task at hand.
- I tend to believe that animation isn't so much about
- patience. It's about concentration and satisfaction. If
- you concentrate and think about what you're doing ...
- you'll generally be satisfied with the result. And it's that
- satisfaction that makes you go back for more – that
- gets you out of bed after the 16 hours of shooting for
- another 14. You might only get through five seconds in
- a day, but man! What a five seconds it was!

with

DARCY PRENDERGAST

What is the hardest medium you've tried to animate?

I've animated with about 20 jars of salsa before, which was challenging. I had nachos on standby. Ha! I think the animated light painting stuff we do is probably the most difficult though. It's the kind of thing that even with experience and practice remains constantly tough. Shooting to camera, dealing with weird perspective shifts, remembering where you painted last frame and where you have to be the next. It doesn't seem to get easier . . .

What is one piece of advice you wished you'd had when you started animating?

You've got to find what works for you and stand strong on it. I for example, have never worked well during the day. No one understands it, everyone tries to change it and after years I've come to simply listen to myself. I'll happily work 17–18 hour days if it's on my terms. If it's on my terms, then it doesn't feel like work. The crew and I will have a game of foosball, play video games, watch a movie. Hell – even go for a beer if we're uninspired. Just do what feels right to you, and cut your own path . . .

Top five animators and why?

1 Sylvain Chomet. The man created what I believe to be a flawless feature film, *The Triplets of Belleville*. It's simply perfectly balanced, with amazing characters and a beautiful story.

2 Matt Stone and Trey Parker. Two men that illustrate the power of story, writing consistently comedic content that makes you forget all about how god awful *South Park's* visuals are. The emphasis on

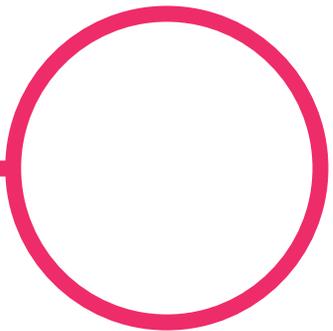
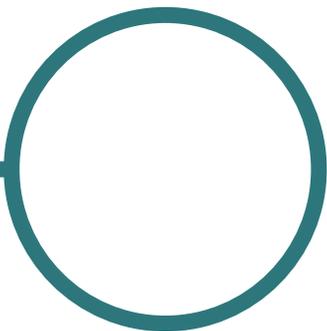
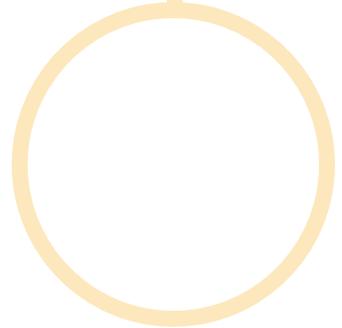


narrative and hilarity makes them a powerhouse in my eyes.

3 Adam Elliot. A good friend and an inspirational fellow. He's definitely done things the hard way and despite his success, has never sold out. He creates his own opportunities and continues to change the expectations and possibilities of animation.

4 Henry Selick. Director of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, this guy had to make the list. I watch it every Christmas Eve with my sister. We eat snacks and sing every word. His visual direction of *Coraline* was also beautiful.

5 Nick Park. Whilst I'm not too fond of his most recent attempts, the early Wallace and Gromit films will always have a special place in my heart. He is another one who really pushed the boundaries of clay animation into unexpected territory.



We live in such a visual world that we rarely think about sound on its own as a form of media. It is merged within other mediums seamlessly in the form of soundtracks and voice-over narration in movies, but we are always surrounded by it. It informs and helps to construct meaning and our understanding of the world around us, as well as most of the media forms we interact with. Audio-based media spans radio, podcasts, sound effects and soundtracks.

Humans, like most animals, use hearing as an important tool to help us communicate with each other and understand the world around us. In media, sound is used on its own, as in radio or podcasts, or in conjunction with visuals such as film and the internet, as soundtracks and dialogue. Sound recording and playback can happen in both digital and analogue forms.

AUDIO



10

COMING UP...

○ **Rewind**

○ **Radio**

○ **Soundtracks**

○ **Sound effects**

○ **Podcasts**

○ **Up for debate**

○ **But wait, there's more ...**

○ **Inside the green room with Dave Callan**

REWIND

It is important to understand that historically there are two important facets to the medium of audio. First there is the ability to record and play back audio (music and voice) and second the **transmission** of that sound over distance. Humans have worked on technology that has advanced over time to improve our communication, understanding and entertainment in relation to audio.

The first machines that could play back sound were made as early as the ninth century and used a mechanical hand-wound device, such as a musical cylinder or a music box, to play back the sound.

As science and technology developed over the years, many people continued to work on the mechanics and technology of sound recording until eventually Thomas Edison (inventor of the light bulb) came up with a device for recording music and the human voice called the phonograph cylinder.

Once we were able to record 'real' sounds, the uses for this technology shifted from purely recording information and music to developing new types of entertainment. The advent of the ability to record and make multiple copies of those recordings meant that people who previously couldn't afford the playback technology all of a sudden had access to a much greater range of information and entertainment. Think of the difference between going to a concert or event in the



Edison's phonograph cylinder

transmission the process of sending a message to an audience

town or city where you live and playing a 'record' from a performance in another country you may never get to visit. At the time listening to music like this was quite a feat; now it is something that is taken for granted. Imagine for a minute that there were no musical or other recording devices – how different would your life be?

During the second half of the nineteenth century, many engineers and scientists, including Tesla, Hertz and Marconi, worked on technology for transmitting radio waves (sound) for long-distance communication. As radio technology improved and the cost of an individual radio unit (also known as the 'wireless', as it did not have any wires) decreased through the process of industrialisation, more people had access to the technology.

As sound was being recorded and replayed for the radio listening public, it began to be incorporated into other media forms. *The Jazz Singer* (1927) was the first feature-length motion picture with **synchronised sound** and it changed the way movies were viewed. It was a musical story that made the most of the new medium.

The beginning of 'talkies' (as they became known) is immortalised in the movie *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). Before this time audiences viewed silent movies that contained caption cards for dialogue and sound effects, with live musical performances to aid in the building of tension and for entertainment value. Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin's early films are classics from this era.

Analogue recording was used until the early 1980s, and then with developments in digital technology we were able to record, store and listen to sound in more formats and with greater quality.



The first 'talking' picture, *The Jazz Singer* starring Al Jolson (1927)

synchronised sound the playing of audio 'in time' with visual images

RADIO

Almost as soon as radio transmission was invented it began to be used as a form of communication – first by industry and businesses such as shipping. Up-to-date information was passed on to boats in open water that had otherwise been without such means of communication. Some of the first radio broadcasts were to ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean between the United Kingdom and the United States. One particularly early and famous use of radio communication from this time was when the Titanic hit an iceberg on 14 April 1912 and was able to radio for help in real time.

Broadcasting officially began in Australia under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905–19*, but there was no broadcast until 1923. Following this broadcast the



government set up a two-tier licence structure: class A and class B. Class A were required to cater to a broad sector of the community, while class B could program with popular appeal and could also include advertising to provide the station with revenue. This system still survives today. In 1928 the Commonwealth set up the National Broadcasting Service and acquired the class A stations. The winner of the tender to manage the stations was at that time called the Australian Broadcasting Company and eventually became known as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Radio for sport and entertainment

As with most technology, the uses of radio were quickly adapted, expanding from information dissemination, such as basic two-way communication and news services, to popular entertainment.

Radio became a common way to **disseminate** information to a large audience over a long distance. Audiences began listening to broadcasts of radio plays and international sporting events such as the cricket played both in Australia and in other parts of the world. The radio broadcasts of sport and cricket in particular were integral in the expansion of radio networks and audiences across Australia. Initially the broadcasts consisted of commentators using a cable service from other parts of the country or the world. Local commentators synthesised a 'live' broadcast using sound effects and building tension in the game as the updated scores were received from across the globe.

Later on they broadcast a 'ball by ball' commentary of local games where the commentators had seats at the ground. Cricket was considered the national sport and therefore it was in the national interest for it to be broadcast regularly and in its entirety. Cricket broadcasts were the most popular broadcasts across the nation and radio sales increased when cricket season arrived. In 1925 radios were found in just 5% of Australian households, but by 1949 this figure had increased to 90%.



disseminate to distribute widely

**England versus
Australia, Brisbane,
1933**

Radio plays

At a similar time radio plays and comedic serial radio shows were being developed. Radio plays were also known as radio dramas, and without a visual element, radio plays and comedic radio relied on dialogue, music and sound effects to help the listener imagine the characters and story and the world around them. Radio plays were usually performed live on air and so they were closer to a live theatrical performance than a film or pre-recorded track.

Radio plays have scripts consisting mainly of dialogue and contain a lot of sound information for the sound effects/Foley person. *Blue Hills* was a long-running Australian radio play set in an Australian country town that was broadcast by the ABC and ran for 27 years.

Write and record a modern radio play – research and investigate some previous radio plays and find out what made them popular and effective.



- 1 Decide on and define an audience for your play.
- 2 Write up the script, making special note of sound effects that will need to be created separately beforehand or available for use while recording.
- 3 Record the radio play in real time in one take if possible as if you were going live to air.
- 4 Take the following into consideration: music, sound effects and characters.
- 5 Write up the radio play using the sample radio script below (from *The War of the Worlds*) as a guide or using free downloadable software such as Celtx, which has layouts for audio plays and is cross-platform.

OFFICER: Fire! (BOOM OF HEAVY GUN ... PAUSE)

OBSERVER: Can't see the shell land, sir. They're letting off a smoke.

OFFICER: What is it?

OBSERVER: A black smoke, sir. Moving this way. Lying close to the ground. It's moving fast.

OFFICER: Put on gas masks. (PAUSE. VOICES NOW MUFFLED) Get ready to fire. Shift twenty-four meters.

GUNNER: Twenty-four meters.

Comedy was popular on the radio and one of the most famous radio shows was *The Goon Show*, a British show that was broadcast initially by the BBC Home Service and then in Australia (by the ABC) and other Commonwealth countries. It began broadcasting in 1951 and remains popular to this day as repeats of the show are still played on ABC and BBC; it can also be **streamed** on the internet.

CASE STUDY:

The War of the Worlds (1938)

One of the most famous and controversial historical incidents involving a radio play was when Orson Welles' reading of *The War of the Worlds* (a science fiction novel written by H. G. Wells in 1898), which aired on 30 October 1938. A large

10.1 ACTIVITY

MAKING

streamed content on the internet transmitted in real time

portion of the radio play utilised the codes and conventions of a news broadcast and there was some panic among those who believed that aliens had actually attacked the Earth. This can be seen as an effect of the authenticity of Welles' delivery coupled with the audience's understanding of the news report format and a belief in the 'truth' of the media.

ACTIVITY 10.2

RESPONDING

- 1 As a class, listen to the broadcast (or a portion between about three and 20 minutes) of *The War of the Worlds* as if you were listening to a radio. No visuals or screens should be involved. Search for 'Orson Welles War of the Worlds 1938 complete broadcast' on YouTube.
- 2 Do you think panic would be created if the same thing were played today? Why was it created at the time it was broadcast? What made it so realistic for the listeners of the time?
- 3 Discuss your responses with the person next to you. Share your ideas with the class.

Government, commercial and community radio

Most radio was initially developed and licensed by the government to provide news and information to the general populace. After some time commercial stations became available and they made their money from selling advertising and promotion, during and between their usual programs.

Government radio

The ABC is funded by the federal government and provides programming and shows that follow its charter of producing content – information and entertainment that is in the national interest. They have a wide range of programs that are directed at smaller specific communities, social groups and interests such as youth, classical music and sports coverage.

Commercial radio

Commercial radio is privately owned and funded and contains radio advertising to produce most of its revenue. These stations often have more mainstream popular content so that they can cater to a wide audience and provide their advertisers with the biggest listening public. They run on a business model.

Community radio

These stations aim their content at specific sections of the community. They are often funded partially by the government and by their listening constituents who subscribe to the station and sometimes directly to



programs. They have a set of values or a personal charter that dictates their reason for being and advises hosts and content makers what should be on their programs. They may have a large national audience or a very small niche local audience.

Charters, standards, values and codes of practice

All forms of media are governed by various **bodies** and **legislation**. These bodies and documents provide legal and standards advice to the owners and broadcasters so that they can maintain a standard and a level of responsibility to their public.

It is believed that the media has influence over its audience, although the extent to which this is true is a constant area for debate. Due to this fact there are guidelines about what can be aired or made available for sale, what requires warnings before it is shown or heard, and how many media forms can be owned by a single **conglomerate** in one area, among other things. A lot of the legislation is monitored and maintained by the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) – a federal government authority. Lists of radio stations and information about broadcast licensing can be obtained from ACMA.

In addition, within most media forms there is an element of self-regulation whereby industry groups join member organisations and set guidelines and monitor content among themselves. Some parts of the radio broadcast industry, such as licensing, are monitored and legislated by the government and other parts are self-regulated.

Government and community radio stations also have charters that govern their content and their values.

As a class, discuss self-regulation versus government regulation of radio.

Consider the following:

- 1 What are the benefits of each system?
- 2 Who benefits from each system?
- 3 Why do we need regulation?
- 4 If we don't need it, why not?

Some useful lists of standards, values and charters for you to refer to are:

- ACMA
- Community Broadcast Association of Australia
- the SBS charter
- the ABC charter
- SYN (a youth-run media organisation in Melbourne)
- Commercial Radio Australia.

bodies groups of people responsible for the proper running of organisations

legislation laws created by a government

conglomerate a corporation that is made up of a range of different companies



10.3 ACTIVITY

RESPONDING

The continuing appeal of radio

Due to the significantly lower costs of broadcasting radio, more people can afford to be on the radio than on television. This means there are more opportunities to provide community and niche stations on radio where the stations can adjust their content based on their local area or a very specific type of music, or even have radio shows broadcast in languages other than English.

There is another factor that helps to explain why radio has remained so popular – while listening to the radio you can also do other things such as gardening, walking or driving. Other mediums – at least until recently – have been less mobile.

Shock jocks, talkback and radio personalities

There are many different reasons why people listen to the radio. Many people listen to the radio to hear new music, updated information such as news and their favourite radio personalities. Radio stations employ DJs or hosts for their shows to maintain or increase their ratings, as this is a measure of a radio station's success. In addition, a commercial station will bring in more advertising revenue if there are more listeners; for a funded station higher ratings provide validity for their funding. There are many shows that are run by popular comedians and other famous personalities. Some people, such as Alan Jones and Kyle Sandilands, become famous or infamous for their on-air antics. The term 'shock jock' refers to radio hosts who tend to air extreme views and controversial content that often eventuates in public debates on issues in the media. They are often treading a fine line between acceptable and unacceptable content, and some have been fined and fired because of their actions. Shock jocks are often re-hired by other stations as their controversy also gets them many listeners and free publicity.

Digital radio

Years ago radio was broadcast with an analogue signal and the audiences were required to own a radio to receive the transmission. Currently radio can be streamed live over the internet and be received using almost any digital device.



- 1 Research and explore some roles at a radio station – owner, producer, manager, host, journalist and programmer.
- 2 Research and investigate what kind of radio station will you be – commercial, community or government (using charters, codes of practice information, etc.).
- 3 Develop a 10-point charter to govern your radio broadcast.
- 4 Create a program for a daily weekday show that includes news, music, information and talkback segments. Consider who your *audience* will be – their age, interests and background.
- 5 Divide the group into their radio roles, making sure you have both pre- and post-production roles covered.
- 6 Develop a script program for each show – for example, if it is a music segment, you will need to find out how to get permission for playing music on the radio, who provides that licence and who you pay the fee to. You will need to come up with a playlist and interview a music personality (real or imagined).
- 7 Record 10 minutes of each segment of the program.

10.4 ACTIVITY

MAKING

Radio for propaganda

Radio was used extensively to report news, especially during wartime. It was able to provide up-to-date information to a large percentage of the population at one time. Because of this there were also radio programs that used this medium to spread war propaganda.

One of the most famous examples of this involved an English-speaking German radio show called *Germany Calling*, broadcast from Germany and received in Britain during World War II. The show spread misinformation about the Allied losses in English and was frequently listened to by the British public because it seemed to provide up-to-date information. It was meant to discourage and demoralise the audience. The radio announcer of *Germany Calling* became known as Lord Haw Haw, although the actual announcer changed during the war years. Due to the fact that so many British people listened to the show, British radio was forced to get up-to-date war information more regularly to counteract the misinformation.



Wartime radio receiver

SOUNDTRACKS

When you watch a movie you take in the visuals and sound at the same time. What you may not consciously know is that the soundtracks within the scene are created with as much care as the visuals. There are special roles in the pre-production, production and post-production processes just for people working in sound. The roles include: sound designer, composer/musical score writer, sound mixer, boom operator, sound technician, musical supervisor, re-recording mixer, dialogue editor, sound editor and Foley artist. You will find more detailed information about this in Chapter 4.

In a film soundtrack all of the sounds work together to help create the authenticity of the film's interior world. Following is a list of the features of soundtrack sound:

- dialogue
- diegetic sound (this is sound that takes place within the world of the film and can be heard by the characters such as radio stations, alarm clocks, train station announcements, music turned on by or played by a character within a scene, explosions, etc.)
- non-diegetic sound (sound that the audience hears and that helps them to connect to the content and emotion of the story, such as violin music that plays as two lovers are separating at a train station – you don't hear the trains, and there is not an actual violin player in the scene)
- atmospheric sound
- sound effects/FX
- musical score.

The sound (dialogue and atmospheric sound) is recorded separately to the visual footage so that it can be edited and levelled separately in post-production by sound editors. This ensures that the audience is able to hear dialogue, especially if it takes place during a tense action scene or within a very busy environment such as a New York City street.

Soundtracks also contain music that is atmospheric, some of which may be specific to the time or era of the film. This also helps the audience to remain connected to the narrative and the film's characters.

ACTIVITY 10.5

RESPONDING

Watch a scene from a movie that you haven't seen before with the sound turned to mute. Record your responses to the following in bullet point form.

- 1 Describe what is happening in the scene, who you think the characters are and how they relate to one another.
- 2 What can you say about the atmosphere in this scene when you don't have sound?
Now watch the same scene again with sound. Listen carefully.
- 3 How much more information do you get? What sound do the characters hear? (diegetic)
- 4 What sound does the audience hear? (non-diegetic)
- 5 What other information does the sound give you about the film's narrative that you didn't discover from your silent viewing of the scene?

Soundtracks and genre

Soundtracks play an important role in helping the director develop and express the genre of a film. Think back to what you learnt in Chapter 1. When you watch a film how do you know it is a horror or a Western? Maybe you've seen a movie poster or heard about it. If you hadn't seen any promotion or heard anything about the film, would you be able to guess when a bad or scary event was going to happen based on sound?

Conversely, in the case of some suspense, thriller or horror movies, the absence of sound plays just as significant a role. Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980) is well known for using the absence of sound to build tension and suspense in his films. By the time Hitchcock was making films, audiences were well accustomed to the codes and conventions of sound. For movie audiences it was such an integral element of the movie experience that removing sound had as powerful an effect on the mood as putting in a scary sound or a composed classic theme. Hitchcock's classic film *Psycho* (1960) used an unconventional soundtrack of edgy, screeching sounds to great effect, especially in its celebrated 'shower scene'. A later film, *The Birds* (1963), is renowned for a soundtrack that completely did away with conventional instrumentation, using electronic sound instead. This was a tremendous innovation for its time.

Soundscapes

Think of the word *landscape* (what you see in the world around you). Now consider soundscapes. Soundscapes are the **aural environments** in the world around you. They include people talking, weather and human sounds.

aural environments
environments created
through the use of sound



ACTIVITY 10.6



Consider the following images and write down what sounds you think you would hear if you were at this location. Take the time of day into account in your response.

RESPONDING



ACTIVITY 10.7



Create a soundscape of a place by following these steps:

- 1 Choose a place and research it. Listen to the sounds that tell you where it is. Are there cars or birds? Is it raining?
- 2 Recreate that place using sound FX and sound bites. Consider what is unique to the place that helps you create that soundscape.
- 3 Play the soundscape to your classmates and see if they can guess where it was, or give you a description of what is going on in the place without having seen it.

TIP: You can use the free Sound Librarian software or other Creative Commons sound software or record your own sounds to mimic those of real life.

MAKING

Microphones versus ears

As was briefly discussed in Chapter 4, when we listen to sounds around us we have the ability to pick and choose, to some extent, the sounds that our brain picks out. If we sit in a café or the schoolyard we can chat with our friends and give the background sound secondary importance. It usually doesn't impact on our hearing of the conversation unless it is much louder than the average atmospheric noise; for example, a car accident or the school bell.

If we sit in the same situation but choose to actively listen, we will hear all kinds of extra sounds – other people's conversations, cars driving down the road in the distance, someone playing music, birds in trees, etc. We may even hear the wind moving through the leaves. When we record sounds using a microphone it is as if the microphone is actively listening. It will pick up all sounds that it can 'hear' to varying degrees depending on how close and how loud the sound is. A microphone is indiscriminate.

One factor that often lets student productions down is the lack of a crisp, clear soundtrack – this is usually in the dialogue sections where the filmmaker wants to sync the sound to match the speaking of actors exactly. Two of the biggest issues that affect this are filming in a noisy area such as a crowded place (with lots of background noise and people) and filming on a windy day or one with lots of loud weather such as rain. Choosing the place (and sometimes the time of day) you are going to film is very important as it can make or break the quality of final production work.

Top tips from sound recording professional Stephan Schütze

While it's true that at the professional level sound recording equipment can be extremely expensive, this does not automatically mean that you can only make good recordings with expensive equipment. Many of the world's best sound designers started when they were young using whatever equipment they could find. Ben Burt, who created many of the sounds for the *Star Wars* films, started at a young age using a simple microphone and a cassette recorder.

Here are some tips for budding sound designers.

Be patient: Finding a great sound can take lots of time, and when you do find it, you might need to wait for the best moment to record it. Be prepared to wait for other sounds to stop, or to come back at a different time of day when other sounds will interfere less.

Always listen: Always be listening to the world around you. Close your eyes as this can help you focus; you will be amazed at what you will hear that was there all along.

Get close: Try to get as close as you safely can to the source of the sound you want to record. This reduces other unwanted sounds, but also the 'texture' of the sound you record will be more true to its real sound.

Try different perspectives: Recording a sound source from different angles can often give you different results. The sound a car makes at the front is different from the rear or side. At the front you will hear the engine and fan more; from the rear you will hear the exhaust more; from the side you will get a mix of both.

Stephan Schütze has been a composer and sound designer in the games industry for over 10 years. Recently he has created the first Australian-produced commercial sound library since the 1950s, which is being distributed worldwide and became part of the Australian National Film and Sound Archive in late 2011. The library is accessible under Creative Commons.

The sound library project represents over five years' work and has just reached 20 000 high-quality sound effects online. Stephan's ongoing work in recording and developing new sound libraries is an example of the passion he has for all aspects of audio and the driving force that motivates him creatively. Stephan is constantly researching and recording new material for current and future library collections.

Stephan invites you to explore the Sound Librarian site and sound archive or follow him on twitter @stephanschutze.

Don't assume there is only one sound: Related to the above, do not assume an object will only make one sound. Even animals have a far greater range of sounds than we give them credit for. A cat will make many more sounds than a simple meow. Be patient and discover the range of sounds you can capture from one source.

Wind is your enemy: When recording outside the greatest threat to a good recording is wind. Wind can create vibrations on the microphone that will prevent clean recordings. The fluffy covers you see on microphones help prevent this. Even a simple cover made from fluffy toy material can help reduce wind noise. Alternatively position your body to shield the microphone from the wind in the same way you would to light a match.

Let people know what you are doing: People in general do not understand what is involved with sound recording. Do not be afraid to politely ask people around you to please be quiet if you are trying to record a sound and people are talking. Often they will be fascinated to find out what you are doing once you stop recording.

Check your levels: As a general rule, you want your input levels to be as high as possible, without peaking. Peaking is where a red light will usually display. This means the sound may be too loud and will distort. But if you have the levels down too low, then your sound will be soft, and if you try to amplify it later in a software program you will end up with lots of hiss. So try and keep your levels high without red-lining.

Make use of free tools: There are many free programs and resources available to help you learn and develop your sound recording and sound design skills. Programs like Audacity and FMod allow you to edit and manipulate sounds once you have recorded them, and there are many free sounds available online that you can download to play with.

Cheap can be good: Even professional sound recordists will often use inexpensive recording devices. With the amazing digital technology that exists today, a simple but effective digital recorder can be purchased for around \$100 that can capture high-quality sounds. Even plugging a USB microphone into a computer or laptop can allow you to capture some great sounds.

Super pro tip!!

If you plan on using a **mono** microphone and your recorder has two independent inputs, here is a great tip. You need a special cable for this, but what you want to do is split the mono cable from the microphone so it can go to both inputs. This needs a splitter cable that goes from one end at the microphone and splits into two cables to plug into the recorder. Now you have the exact same signal going into both channels of the recorder. Then what you do is set the input level on one channel to very low, maybe 10%, and set the other input level to 100%.

This set-up means that you can record lots of sounds without worrying about **level peaking** and distortion. If a sound is quiet, the 100% channel should capture a reasonable signal. If there is a sudden loud noise, the 100% channel will likely peak and distort, but the 10% channel should safely capture the sound without peaking.

mono short for 'monophonic', it refers to only using one channel to record audio and is the opposite of 'stereophonic', which uses two channels, usually marked 'left' and 'right'

level peaking the loudest noise an audio device can record before the audio loses clarity and becomes distorted

SOUND EFFECTS

Creating sound effects for productions that require audio such as radio shows, comedy records, sporting commentary and movies has been around since recording has been possible. The official name of someone who is in charge of this is a Foley artist. The Foley artist is in charge of creating and developing the sound effects that haven't been recorded as actual sounds. Our ears can trick us into thinking that sounds relate to the action that is occurring. During the radio plays of the past when they had someone getting shot, they didn't shoot a gun in the recording studio (for obvious safety and cost reasons) – they used alternative sounds. The sound effects person would pop a balloon instead. If they needed the sound of running horses they used two empty coconut shells and banged them together in the correct rhythm.

Animation and computer games need all of their sounds created for them as no 'real' action happens that can be recorded. There is a lot of work creating and finding sounds that will work with the action to bring the world to life. First, voices are recorded; in the case of some animated movies the voice is recorded first and the animation is made to match. This was the case in Disney's *Aladdin* (1992), in which the character of Genie was drawn to match the voice of comic actor Robin Williams. Second, all of the action needs believable sounds to accompany it to form the reality of the world in the animation or game. This includes atmospheric and background sound.



Disney's Genie in *Aladdin* (1992), voiced by Robin Williams

Create a sound effects library for your class. Imagine you are creating a radio play (or use a radio play that you may have created earlier or one that you have found). Everyone in the class has to create a sound effect using things other than the actual sound, and the sound needs to be able to be recreated in real time in the studio. For example, try to create the sounds of a skateboard skating down a concrete footpath, a car door closing, horses running, a flock of seagulls or an engine.



10.8 ACTIVITY

MAKING

PODCASTS

A podcast (also known as a netcast) is a digital recording that can be accessed via streaming online or downloading, storing and listening on your local device, which may be a computer or digital file player. There are several common types of

podcasts – they can be a recording of an event (a debate or lecture) or a recording of a live radio show that exists already (for example, the many podcasts of ABC Radio National or some of the Triple J programs).

Podcasts began as recordings of pre-existing events. Since then, people have used them as a new way to disseminate entertainment and information as they are relatively cheap and can be accessed, downloaded and listened to anywhere there is an internet connection. They can then be stored on a local device and listened to whenever you like.

This technology has enabled audiences to access data and information at times that suit them and not just when programmers of events and shows make the event available. This gives more power to the audience to listen to content that interests them personally, at a time that suits them individually.

Podcasts have also enabled niche programs and information to be disseminated to a worldwide audience. For example, if you are involved in a small yet popular cult scene that is really active in another country or city, you are able to access their content without leaving your lounge room. Podcasts are relatively cheap to make and upload, so smaller broadcasters are able to make content and disseminate it. Podcasts and **vodcasts** have also enabled more traditional ‘consumers’ to become producers and this has given a media voice to a much larger range of people. Podcasts are usually episodic in nature and are often hosted by someone.



vodcasts podcasts that contain video content

ACTIVITY 10.9

MAKING & RESPONDING

Individually, or in small groups, create a five- to 10-minute podcast on any topic you like. You may wish to create a podcast for an assignment in another class.

History projects, for example, often require primary source responses for which a podcast would be an interesting way for you to present your research.

Follow these steps:

- 1 Develop a topic you are really interested in by writing between five and 10 questions that you want to investigate or that you think the audience of your podcast would like to have answered.
- 2 Find an expert in the area (you could be the expert if it is about your cat, for example) and then set up an interview.
- 3 Record the interview and then edit the content if necessary so that any mistakes or quiet bits (sound downtime) are omitted. Write an introduction and record this, adding it to the podcast.

Keep the following in mind: background noise is distracting; lapses in audio content make for bad podcasts (as there is nothing else to keep the audience interested); and a topic that interests you may not interest many other people, but if you are clever about the type of questions you ask or use a comedic element you may interest more people than you think.

Up for debate

Let's put what you have learnt to the test using the statement below. You could use it for a debate or as an essay prompt. Either way, choose a side and assemble an argument that either supports or challenges this statement:

'Sound is as important as visuals in creating reality in movies and video games.'

Consider the following questions in your response:

- 1 Is this true? Is sound just as important as visuals?
- 2 Think about the use of sound for communication and understanding in the media forms and in your life.
- 3 What information do we receive from audio that we don't get from visuals?
- 4 How sound-based is your life?

But wait, there's more...

- You can read transcripts from old radio programs at [Simply Scripts](#).
- You can listen to old episodes of a famous radio show on *The Goon Show* website.
- You can listen to podcasts about television at [Boxcutters](#). Or explore the podcasts page at [Triple J](#).
- You can listen to a wide variety of radio, including government stations like ABC, SBS and Triple J.
- You can listen to community radio stations such as [FBI](#), [2SER Radio Skid Row](#), [Bondi FM](#), [RRR](#), [SYN Radio](#) and [PBS](#), and a wide range of commercial stations in your capital city.
- You can create your own audio mash-ups at [Creative Commons Mashups](#).
- You can download [Audacity](#), a free cross-platform sound editor.
- You can learn new skills in radio and audio from videos and fact sheets from [SYN Radio & Audio Skills](#) website.

INSIDE THE GREEN ROOM

Dave Callan is an Irish-born comedian based in Australia who has worked as a broadcaster for many years.

What inspired you to become a comedian?

I was a bit of an outsider as a kid. I moved house and school when I was six years old and had to make a whole new lot of friends and did so by trying to make the other kids laugh. Also, when I was young my parents wouldn't let me watch comedy shows as they were often unsuitable; stuff like *Blackadder* and *The Young Ones*. This created a mystery about comedy and made me very curious about it and interested. I moved to Australia at age 15 and had to make new friends all over again. I was again one person trying to make a lot of friends at once, which is basically what a comedian is! I entered a little talent competition in Year 11 theatre arts and did my first ever stand-up routine, first for my own class and then for an interschool level competition. I had enough of a good experience to get past a fear of public speaking and a desire to do it again. During uni I went to a comedy club in Perth and became one of their 'try outs' – someone who does five minutes at the top of the show until you progress to a half support, full support and then headline. It was a slow and painfully awkward time but also magical and exciting.

What was your first step to following this pathway?

I actually did a little talent competition in the village I grew up in in Ireland for their summer festival. I did a

comedy duo act with my next-door neighbour. My Dad wrote the script. I was eight. Fun fact: I was the straight guy.

What does a typical day in the life of Dave Callan involve?

I do yoga for half an hour before breakfast then after some fruit I write for two hours. I don't concern myself with whether it's good or restrict myself to topics, I just get it all out. I can edit later. After lunch I will return calls and emails (except yours, sorry Hugh) then prepare for that night's gig. I'll write out a set list and try to incorporate any new material I am working on or wrote that morning into the structure, usually between two strong bits so if it sucks it's not a disaster. A comedian works best when their mind is clear so I will meditate for a while then set off to do the show. If it isn't a show night I will meet some friends or watch something for inspiration, a documentary or a comedy series usually.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

Travel and getting to meet people. When it goes well it's a great feeling because you have made people happy.

What is your least favourite aspect?

When it doesn't go well unfortunately it's a bit painful. If you ever want to know what it's like to be invisible, do a comedy gig badly.

What does it take to be a good radio personality – is it all in the voice?

I think you have to really love people and life. Or be really interested in both. You can't fake that sort of enthusiasm that you need. Or have access to caffeine.

with

DAVE CALLAN



Is radio still relevant in Australian society today?

Yes of course. I don't think people listen to it as an exclusive activity but as long as people have to drive places or work it's going to be relevant and important as it's a medium you can pay attention to while otherwise occupied. It conveys a wide array of cultural information and is on tap 24 hours a day and is always up to date (except those hits and memories stations).

How important has the advent of podcasting been in the history of radio?

Podcasts have taken a share of the market of available ears and audience time but will never make much of a dent as they can't license music and don't have access to the same resources a full station has. They are fantastic though because they are so specialised and cover niches that terrestrial radio cannot. And just about anyone can be a player in the podcast market. So it has enriched the medium by providing extra voices for specialised interests and experience for fledgling broadcasters.

Top five historically influential radio shows/ programs?

1 That guy who did that *Good Morning Vietnam* station as depicted by Robin Williams. The real guy [Adrian Cronauer] was quite subversive and provided a voice for all the marines and was really conscientious putting the needs of the GIs first above all things. He got in a lot of trouble for that but held his ground and had dignity and humanity in a very undignified and inhumane time.

2 Casey Casem was one of the first worldwide radio superstars – his *American Top 40* was syndicated throughout the world. Plus he was the voice of Shaggy from *Scooby Doo*.

3 Roy and HG. Long before *Top Gear* was making cars interesting for non-car people, Roy and HG were making sport interesting for non-sports fans. Their epic Olympic Games commentaries and Grand Final calls are the stuff of legend.

4 John Peel was a British broadcaster for the BBC. He was a tireless explorer of new music, championing young bands who went on to big things before anyone had heard of them. He also broke genres into the UK which have now become part of the musical landscape. He was one of the only DJs to play dubstep really early on, which is impressive considering he would have been in his sixties. A legendary and much-loved broadcaster.

5 Mick Molloy and Tony Martin had a legendary drivetime radio show and it was brilliant. Two funny guys who were good friends and obviously loved what they did. So, so funny. Like drive around the block until the inevitable Bon Jovi track comes on funny.

GLOSSARY

A

agenda the intention behind a program or institution

anchoring the process of attaching a meaning to an image through the use of text

antagonist the opponent or enemy of the protagonist in a story

artistic integrity the authenticity of the message that the artist is communicating

audience consumers or users of media; sometimes referred to as the market

augmented reality refers to a reality or experience of something that has been made greater or better than it really is

aural environments environments created through the use of sound

B

background the section in a photograph or film shot that is furthest away from the camera

bias the tendency towards a particular perspective or belief, which interferes with the ability to be impartial, unprejudiced or objective, evident in the presentation of a one-sided argument

bodies groups of people responsible for the proper running of organisations

C

Cab Calloway (1907–1994) jazz band leader and musician from the 1930s, famous in connection with the Cotton Club in Harlem, New York, and for his appearance in the film *The Blues Brothers* (1980)

cameo in a film, the special appearance of a well-known or famous person, often playing themselves

caption the explanatory text that accompanies an image

caption cards black cards with white writing on them used during the Silent Era to inform the audience of dialogue or action

cels single sheets of transparent celluloid used in animation

circulation relating to newspapers and magazines, it refers to the number of copies sold or distributed

Cold War ideological conflict between the USA and former USSR that lasted from the end of World War II (1945) until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991

computer-generated imagery (CGI) digital post-production effects that are created through the use of computer technology

conglomerate a corporation that is made up of a range of different companies

connotation the additional meaning that we associate with something that has been named

console the hardware used to play video games

consumer backlash a rejection that results in a reduction in sales as people refuse to purchase a product or support a particular brand

contracted time the shortening of time so it takes less time than it would in reality to pass

conventions the accepted and understood ways of doing things, or the particular sets of rules that govern the way things are done

cubism an avant-garde art movement that represented human forms and objects as geometric shapes, using multiple viewpoints. Pablo Picasso was one of the pioneers of cubism and his 1907 masterpiece, *Les Femmes d'Alger* one of its first major paintings

cultural cringe being ashamed or embarrassed about aspects of your national identity

cyanotype a process to make images, no longer in use, named for the cyan blue colour it produced during the printing process

D

daguerreotype the first commercially successful photographic process, no longer in use, invented in 1839 and named for its creator, Louis Daguerre

demographic a section of society; in this context, usually the target audience of a specific media product

denotation the description or definition of a person, object or place

desensitising the process by which an audience becomes accustomed to content that they would once have found shocking

diegetic audio elements that exist within the reality or space of the narrative

disseminate to distribute widely

dissolve a transition between two shots whereby one shot dissolves or disappears into the other

documentary film nonfictional film that aims to depict or document some aspect of reality, often using the dramatic structures of narrative filmmaking

driving question a question that pushes a documentary forward

DVD short for Digital Versatile Disc, DVDs are a digital method of storing information such as movies, music and data

dystopia the opposite of a utopia, it is a society in the worst possible condition

E

editing part of the creative post-production process of film and television texts that combines different shots into sequences to create a finished text; editing plays an important role in how a story is told

8-bit refers to the amount of processing power a computer has

ensemble cast a cast in which all the actors have an equal amount of screen time

expanded time the lengthening of time so it takes more time than it would in reality to pass

F

Federation the process by which Australia became a country on 1 January 1901

film noir a film genre that was at the height of its popularity in the 1940s, often featuring a detective as the main character and a femme fatale

final cut the final 'good copy' of the production

fish-eye image a curved edge to an image with a very wide angle on the shot

foreground the section in a photograph or film shot that is closest to the lens

G

graphics the interactive images within gaming software

H

hits the number of visits a website receives in a given time

HIV/AIDS Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

I

inanimate not alive and not able to move independently

indie games short for 'independent games', indie games are software developed by people without the financial aid of large companies. Indie games usually boast innovation and can fall into any genre, as they are only defined by the lack of connection with software giants. *Minecraft*, *World of Good*, *Super Meat Boy* and *Limbo* are all examples of indie games.

ISBN International Standard Book Number, used globally to identify all published books

ISSN International Standard Serial Number, used globally to identify all serial print publications

K

King Louis XVI the last king of France, executed on 21 January 1793 after the proclamation of the French Republic on 22 September 1792

L

legislation laws created by a government

level peaking the loudest noise an audio device can record before the audio loses clarity and becomes distorted

M

media mogul a very powerful and rich media owner

melanoma a cancerous tumour of the skin

MiniDV short for Mini Digital Video, the MiniDV format is a type of videocassette used mostly in amateur video making

mise en scène literally, 'put in the scene' (French), refers to all the theatrical elements necessary in composing a scene to be filmed: props, sets, lighting, sound effects, costumes, make-up and actors' placement (blocking)

mockumentary a mock or fake documentary, in which fictitious events are presented in documentary format; can also refer to an individual work within the genre

moniker a personal name or nickname

mono short for 'monophonic', it refers to only using one channel to record audio and is the opposite of 'stereophonic', which uses two channels, usually marked 'left' and 'right'

N

non-diegetic audio elements that exist outside the reality or space of the narrative

O

omission what has been chosen to be excluded from a representation

origami the Japanese art of paper folding

P

persistence of vision the length of time an image remains upon the retina of our eyes

perspective the person from whose point of view the story is being told

pixelation occurs when the digital blocks that make up an image are too big and the image will be of a low resolution, therefore appearing less sharp

precursor the technology that came before something in history

principal photography the main phase of filming that occurs during the production stage

printing press a machine invented around 1440 by German Johannes Gutenberg that enabled the mass production of printed materials, such as books, for the first time in history

production elements the particular production devices that are used to communicate the story elements

protagonist the main or central character or hero who drives a story forward

R

reception context the process of receiving a message and how the location, time and emotions of the audience impact on how it is received and how meaning is made

Reformers a group of people who challenged the authority of the Catholic Church

rough cut the quick, first edit of a production to ensure that all the footage has been filmed

rule of thirds a convention of composition within photography; by dividing up the shot into thirds vertically and horizontally, four intersecting points are created; placing the points of interest on these intersecting points makes a far more interesting and well-balanced shot

S

selection what has been chosen to be included in a representation

shooting schedule the times and locations at which filming will take place

shot list the list of shots that are needed to be taken within a shoot

socioeconomic status an individual's social and economic position in society; e.g. upper class, middle class, working class

stereotype a widely held but oversimplified image or idea about a particular group of people or a thing

storyboard a graphic representation of the action within the production, indicating the required shot and any actor and camera movement

story elements the content of a film that relates to storyline, characters and setting

streamed content on the internet transmitted in real time

superimposing images where one frame is put over the top of another to create the illusion that they have been shot together

surrealism an art movement launched in Paris in 1924 that was based on dreams and the creation of images based on irrational or improbable thought

symbolic meanings the additional meanings that we attach to something in an image

synchronised sound the playing of audio 'in time' with visual images

synchronous sound included dialogue and sound effects that match up with the footage

synopsis a short summary of the plot

T

tabloid journalism a term used to classify newspaper, magazine or internet articles that contain little detail and/or content that could be considered exaggerated or sensational

transmission the process of sending a message to an audience

trptych three images displayed together to make a whole

tweet a message of a maximum of 140 characters sent using the internet communication service Twitter

V

vodcasts podcasts that contain video content

W

walkthroughs step-by-step guides on how to complete a game

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