

LESSON PLAN 6 - THE TREATMENT

In this final session, students will get to put together a mood board, theme song and actively pitch their ideas to the other students and their teacher, presenting their own work and taking questions.

6.1 - INTRODUCTION

This is the culmination of all the students' hard work in one document - a comprehensive explanation of the movie they wish to make.

How you display this can be up to you, or the students. Treatments sometimes take the shape of a presentation on PowerPoint, along with a speaker. Sometimes they are documents with clearly-defined sections, which we will outline below. Students could also make trailers based on their movie, or even record a scene from it to act as a teaser.

In Ireland, the funding body Screen Ireland will look for something similar to the following;

Elevator Pitch (25 words only)

Two Page Synopsis of Plot

A Page Describing Characters

A Page of Writers' Notes Explaining Tone and Mood

You can follow this method, but treatments can also be wild and wonderful 'found' documents, such as the [Stranger Things treatment](#) - which has been made to look like a document from that era. Students are encouraged to get creative and artistic with their treatments - a pirate movie treatment down on paper soaked

in coffee grounds to look like parchment, with hand-drawn maps, or a sci-fi movie treatment put on a poster made to look like a computer screen or a map of a star system.

Theme songs, fake posters, playlists of songs, potential casting choices, whole written scenes or concept art design for monsters, villains and costumes - all of these can be incorporated to make sure every student has been given a chance to deliver creative input.

Whether or not you have been incorporating the public speaking element so far, this is a fantastic opportunity to make a big deal out of the final presentation. It could be done in front of the entire class, or even a couple of classes, with the students getting a chance to question the writers' room on different elements.

There can also be a competitive element, where a panel of judges decide which movie they would 'fund,' but its important that all students feel like their work was valued and an integral part of the process.

1.2 - FEEDBACK VOCABULARY

Giving constructive feedback is an artform, and one that takes practice to become comfortable with. However, feedback is crucial in empowering young creatives. If time is spent in creating a system in which students feel comfortable critiquing each other, it pays off in terms of their investment.

Some useful tips and vocabulary:

1. **Specificity:** never say simply that you thought something was good - *find* something specific to compliment. This is true also of constructive feedback - the students have been encouraged all along this process to think about *why* they do not like something, and they should do that here.

2. **Questioning:** A non-combative way of outlining an issue with a text is to ask questions. 'What were you hoping to evoke in the audience here?' 'I'm not sure what you were trying to explain here, can you help me understand?' Simple plot questions like 'how did this character do this thing?' will highlight problems for students without explicitly calling them out.
3. **Phrasing:** Phrases like 'I bumped on this' are more gentle than 'I didn't like.' Using the compliment sandwich - 'I liked this, I wasn't sure about this, I also liked this' - is also helpful. If you are going around the room collecting feedback, it's useful to do all the positive comments first, and then go around and ask for the constructive feedback. If the same comment keeps coming up, encourage students only to speak up if they have something new to add, or they can just say 'I agree' with the previous comment.
4. **The Point of Feedback:** Stress to students that hearing this feedback now is the equivalent of winning an argument before you have it. If you hear this feedback in the early stage of a project, you catch it before it goes out to the public, and more people see it.
5. **Redrafting:** It isn't hard to research the original versions of stories the students love, from early drafts of books to first drafts of films. Pointing out the differences can show students that everything, even their favourite stories, gets rewritten and edited. No story is perfect, first try.

With their work complete, encourage the students to try these writing tips in different settings. Writing.ie has a whole host of writing competitions for all age groups, and there are many journals now that cater to young people who wish to write.

Stress that writing is not talent, but practice, and the more of it they do, the better they will be.