

CURRICULUM LINKS

MEDIA STUDIES - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts (and critical debates)

- Identify the enabling theories, key ideas and terms that constitute key theoretical aspects of media language
- Recognise semiotic, narrative and generic codes and conventions within the individual texts and across the topic, accounting for similarities and differences in codes and conventions across the media

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Introduce the key concept of Narrative, and the role of narrative theorists in its analysis.

Learn to apply Todorov's equilibrium model, Levi-Strauss's binary oppositions model and Vladimir Propp's Spheres of Action model.

SPECIFICATION

Identify the enabling theories, key ideas and terms that constitute key theoretical aspects of media language.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students will understand the key characteristics of a typical narrative: cause and effect, the overcoming of obstacles, and characters. Specifically, they will be able to contextualise Tzvetan Todorov's equilibrium framework, Levi-Strauss's binary opposition model and Vladimir Propp's model to an episode of Emmerdale.

RESOURCES

Narrative workbook with activities.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these lessons is to prepare your pupils for a visit to the Emmerdale Studio Tour, where they will experience the amazing creativity that goes into making a TV show.

1. These pre-visit resources focus on the narrative elements of the production process, tying the pre-visit learning to Todorov's narrative theory, Levi-Strauss's binary oppositions theory and Vladimir Propp's Spheres of Action model.
2. When you visit the Emmerdale Studio Experience you will see all of the elements and departments that are needed to bring the narrative to life (such as lighting, cameras and special effects).
3. Post visit materials will provide a guide to the film making process, to support coursework, as well as examining the multitude of jobs and skills required to bring a script to the TV screen.

STARTER

- ★ Have the students pair up. They have one minute to think, then each pupil has one minute to tell the story of their day.
- ★ Invite a couple of students to tell their stories to the class, then a couple more to tell their partners' stories.
- ★ In discussion, draw out key points: that when we tell stories we tend to leave out the mundane; that many average days don't make very interesting stories; that the most interesting stories require obstacles to be overcome; that when we tell other people's stories we become even more selective than they are.
- ★ Key Skills to develop will be that paired storytelling requires students to be concise and clear and listen to each other.



MAIN TEACHING

- ★ **Think-pair-share:** On their own, students list as many different kinds of media texts in which they encounter stories. After two minutes, pair up for discussion, then list on the board. Contributions are likely to include various genres of film and tv, news, novels and plays. Tease out narratives in soap operas, then show a single image from Emmerdale – can anyone in the class construct a story around it?
- ★ In pairs, students repeat the starter with a story they are familiar with (film, fairy tale, book, or soap opera storylines.) Hear a few. In whole class discussion, can students now suggest the defining features of a narrative. Look for beginning-middle-end (linear), obstacles to overcome, characters transformed, strong beginnings, action, mystery, happy endings. Identify the cause-and-effect imperative: whose stories featured this motif?
- ★ Introduce Tzvetan Todorov and teach his equilibrium model. Students write this down and apply his model to the story they just told.
- ★ Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory suggests that all narratives follow a three-part structure where they begin with equilibrium, where everything is balanced, progress as something comes along to disrupt that equilibrium, and finally reach a resolution, when equilibrium is restored.
- ★ How can this be applied to soap operas, where narratives are on-going?
- ★ Now introduce Levi-Strauss's binary opposition model and ask them to apply it to their own story and then to the soap opera narrative they have discussed.
- ★ Then, introduce Vladimir Propp's Morphology theory. Is this useful in analysing media texts and soap operas?
- ★ Give out the narrative booklet and ask students to work through it during the lesson and for homework.