

YOUNG FILM CRITIC



TEACHERS' NOTES: MINI FILM FAN

This resource is for teachers of pupils in the EYFS or age range 4–7. It gives an overview of what to do if you or your pupils would like to enter the Mini Film Fan of the Year – part of Film Education’s Young Film Critic Competition. This resource gives you some useful background information on the craft of creating film posters so that you can guide your pupils through the process to produce some truly unique and outstanding examples.

HOW TO ENTER

To enter, children aged 4–7 choose their favourite film released in the last year, and using any materials they wish, design an eye-catching poster for it or create an image depicting their favourite scene from the film. Each entry should be on an A4 sheet of paper with a completed entry form attached. Full details can be found at: <http://www.youngfilmcritic.org>

Those entering the competition can choose any film they have seen in the past year, but you may want to make things more formal by taking advantage of Film Education’s annual offer of taking children and young people to the cinema for free during National Schools Film Week in October. Attending one of several thousand screenings arranged during Film Week is the perfect opportunity for early years and schoolchildren to encounter film as it should be encountered: ten feet high, in the dark and surrounded by other people sharing the experience. The posters and other images arising from one of these events may be far richer than those arising from a film shown in a more familiar setting with all its customary distractions.

Each year, there is the thrill of a prestigious London awards ceremony for all Young Film Critic nominees, with attendant publicity and the chance for winners to see their work exhibited online.

That is the rationale. We hope the following suggestions will support you when encouraging children to create colourful and imaginative entries.



SUBMITTING YOUR PUPILS' ENTRIES

All entries must be received by 16 December 2011

Send entries by post to:

**Mini Film Fan Competition 2011
Film Education
91 Berwick Street
London
W1F 0BP**

Or email scanned versions of pupils' work, along with a completed entry form to:

yfc@filmeducation.org

Or submit scanned files online at:

<http://www.filmeducation.org/competitions/upload.php>

Pupils must be aged between 4–7 at the time of producing their entry for the Mini Film Fan competition. There is a corresponding category for pupils with sensory impairments; that is, those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or partially sighted. Make sure your pupils' entries are in the correct category.



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MATERIALS AND MEDIA

The competition may request that those entering keep their work to an A4 sheet, but there is absolutely no restriction on the kind of creation (or construction) that they manage to fit into that space. Clearly, the fact that it must survive the post is one constraint but in the past some of the most successful entries have been those that have gone well beyond simple drawings and paintings. Some of the most successful entries in recent years have been mixed media. We have seen, for example, pop-up and fuzzy-felt entries. But please don't feel that children need to work with expensive materials to have a hope of winning. An interesting collage would stand out. And, if children do opt for drawing or painting an image or poster – and most will – the only request is that they have a chance to work with pens and markers of a reasonable quality.

The more examples of film poster art you can show them the more experimental they can become. For example, consider the use of silhouettes in this poster for Mary Poppins (1964): http://www.filmsite.org/posterpages/p_mary2.html

Children wanting to use photography and some form of computer design are welcome to do so, though these entries are quite rare in the competition. In this case, images used should be created by the children themselves rather than taken from clipart, photos or found images.

It would also help – especially with the entries from younger children – if a note could be added to the design or image indicating the film in question and also anything the child would want to explain about his or her design. Some entries can be a bit baffling!

RESEARCH

Before children begin the task of creating a poster, why not show them some examples of great poster artwork and discuss what makes them special? Not only will this be a great opportunity for speaking and listening but it could also have an impact on their creativity when they come to creating their own design.

EXAMPLE 1: THE JUNGLE BOOK (1967)

This image can be found at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jungle_Book_\(1967_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jungle_Book_(1967_film))

There is a lot that could be said about this image but perhaps the key things to ask children is:

- How the poster suggests the film is fun?
- Can they spot any shapes in the image? What are the key colours?
- Can they guess who the most important characters in the film may be from the poster?
- Why do they think that Ka the python and Shere-Khan the tiger are not part of the central circling group of characters?
- What other information is included on the poster apart from the picture?



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EXAMPLE 2: THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT (1975)

You can find this image at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Land_That_Time_Forgot_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Land_That_Time_Forgot_(film)) and there is interesting information about the artist Tom Chantrell at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Chantrell

This poster is a great example of a piece of artwork that is working incredibly hard to tempt the audience – promising the most incredible spectacle and combining still images with fantastically conceived and organised artwork. It is in a great tradition.

- How many different things can children see going on in this image?
- What might the story be? In which order do children think things will happen?
- How does the artist manage to keep this very busy picture from being just a muddle?
- How does the artist manage to make the title of the film fit into the picture?
- How does the way the words appear fit in with the film?

EXAMPLE 3: GHOST BUSTERS (1984)

Some film posters use just one image to sell the film. This 'teaser' poster for the 1984 film Ghost Busters is a good example. Here a single logo is being used to sell a film:

http://www.filmsite.org/posterpages/p_ghos.html

Go to <http://www.cbbfc.co.uk/> (The Children's British Board of Film Classification) and ask children to choose their favourite film poster from those that they can see. Discuss why it works and which elements they could use in their own poster designs.

HOW TO CREATE THE ULTIMATE FILM POSTER!

1. POSTER PLANNING

Before pupils start, encourage them to have a good think about what they want to include on their poster and where each object will be. Sketching a plan of the poster might help.

2. INTERESTING IMAGES

The picture or pictures pupils draw will need to give people a sense of the film to encourage them to want to watch it. Encourage them to include the main characters or draw something exciting that happens in the film.

3. BRILLIANT BACKGROUNDS

Tell pupils to use the whole page! The picture behind your characters is just as interesting as the characters themselves and can give clues to where the film is set e.g. in space, in a city etc.

4. EXCITINGLY EYE-CATCHING

Explain how posters need to make people stop and look at it. Bright, colourful and eye-catching will draw anyone's attention.

5. TELL-TALE TITLES

Pupils must not forget to include the title of their film! Get them to practise using different styles of letters to see which they like best then write their title big and bold! Look back at the examples of exciting typography in the last section.

6. DISPLAYING DATES

To make their poster look even more authentic they can include the date that the film is released to let everyone know when the film is/was in the cinema.

7. TEASER TAGLINE

A tagline is a short, funny sentence to tell you about the story. Some examples are 'Chicken Little. Movie Big' from Chicken Little or 'Something bunny is going on' from Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit.

8. A BRIEF EXPLANATION

A picture is meant to be worth a thousand words but it is sometimes hard working out what is being depicted in the youngest children's work and so a brief caption explaining the image would be really helpful to the judges. This is especially true if children are entering a picture based on a scene rather than a poster. Also, if children are trying to experiment with a more symbolic or mood driven design, something explaining their intentions would prevent misinterpretations of what they have created.