*Of Mice and Men* Film Project

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Lesson Overview

After writing a pitch to get the backing of an investor, students will create a short film or movie trailer for the novel *Of Mice and Men*. Students will use knowledge of the novel’s central themes and the elements of production to create a technical plan, costumes, script, movie poster, and movie pitch.

**Lesson Objectives**

* Compare and contrast the treatment of themes across multiple media
* Analyze the role of setting, characters, and the elements of production in a film
* Create a film plan and adaptation of a scene from a novel

Materials

* *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck
* Film Planning Sheet
* Group Roles Sheet
* Markers, colored pencils, construction paper
* Flip video cameras, camcorders, or iPhones (optional)

Instructional Procedures

1. Put students into small groups of around four and pass out the Film Planning Sheet. Explain that they will be working as a production crew trying to create a film adaptation of *Of Mice and Men*.
2. Have students complete a film pitch using the Film Planning sheet. Explain to students that you will be acting as a potential investor in the film, and their pitch must convince you that the film will be a success and is worth your investment.
3. Once students present their pitch and get approval from the investor, give them the Group Roles sheet. All tasks must be completed, and each member of the group should complete one of the group roles.
4. Give students one class period to complete all of the necessary tasks on the Group Roles sheet.
5. (OPTIONAL) If you have access to recording devices, have students film their scripts with props and costumes. Upload films onto an iMovie or Windows Movie Maker program and let them alter the elements of production and add music. If you do not have access to cameras, have students perform their scripts in front of the class.

Extension

* Have students watch the 1939 and/or 1992 film adaptation of *Of Mice and Men* and compare/contrast with the films presented in class.

Group Roles

These are the roles that must fulfilled in your group. Each person is responsible for completing all the tasks under his/her role for a possible 20 points, for a group total of 100 points.

Music Director (20 pts)

* What mood do you plan to create through the use of music?
* List at least three songs being considered for the movie. Write one paragraph explaining each of your choices. How does the song’s content relate to the movie? How does it help create a mood?
* Present your ideas to the script writers. At what time(s) will you be incorporating your song(s)?

Costume Designer (20 pts)

* Create a sketch of each character’s outfit including color.
* On the back of the drawing, write a rationale for the costume you have chosen. Why did you pick the color you did? The style? How will your choices contribute to the audience’s perception of the character?

Art Director (20 pts)

* Create a movie poster featuring the title, a picture from a key scene in the movie, the stars (choose celebrities you would imagine in those roles), and a tagline.
* Carefully consider color choice, shading, size and placement of the text.
* On the back of your movie poster, write a rationale for your choices. Why did you choose the colors that you did? What are you hoping to achieve? Why did you illustrate the scene that you did? How is it vital either to the movie or to attracting audiences? Explain your movie’s tagline. Why did you choose the celebrities you did? Why would they be good in the roles that you chose?

Prop Coordinator (20 pts)

* What props will your group need for its scene?
* Can you make any of the props? If so, take this time to start.
* What props do you have access to in your home? What props will need to be pantomimed?
* What visual effect will the props add to the scene? Are these props necessary for your audience to buy into the reality of the scene?

Script Writers (20 pts)

* What are the important details that are necessary for your scene?
* How does the style of dialogue affect the audience’s perceptions of the character? For example, how does the way Lennie speaks influence the audience’s ideas about him?
* Don’t forget to give your actors stage directions!
* Use your tools to create the necessary mood for your scene—aside, soliloquy, monologue, stage directions, dialogue.
* Time your finished script. Is it 3-5 minutes in length?

*Of Mice and Men* Film Project Planning Sheet

*Of Mice and Men* has been adapted in multiple forms since the 1930s, including two films, a musical, and an opera. While all of the adaptations have remained true the original text, each has had an original signature that uses the elements of production to call emphasis to the themes that resonate with the intended audience.

Your role:

Imagine that you are the producers of a movie adaptation of *Of Mice and Men*.

Your task:

You will need financial backing to film your movie. Write a movie pitch to present to film companies to convince them to back your project. Your pitch must be organized and professional—after all, this is a business deal. You will submit a packet to the investors with all of the following information:

* A one-paragraph discussion the major themes and conflicts of the film and how they are relevant to a movie audience of today. You must convince the investors that today’s audience will be interested in the film. (25 pts)
* A one-paragraph discussion of your intended audience. What section of the population are you targeting—teens, parents, the elderly, etc. What will you do to draw in this audience? (25 pts)
* Basic plot outline, including setting, (time and place) and characters. Choose one scene from the novel that you think is particularly important to a central theme that you will use for your pitch. (25 pts)

Submit your packet to the investor (me!), and once you have received backing, you may begin working on your film. The investor may ask questions or make suggestions about the film. The total possible point value for each section of the pitch is listed in parenthesis; your group may receive total of 75 possible points for the pitch. The investor will give you a sheet to help guide in completing and executing your scene from the film!