

Silent Film Activity

This activity is suggested for Middle/ High School level English, Music, Theater, and History courses with a focus on alternative storytelling techniques.

Objective:	Students will work in groups to add sound, dialogue, or narration to classic fairytale, <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> (1902)
Goals:	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a better understanding of storytelling techniques and story structure, including identifying how sound— dialogue, music, and narration—serve as a storytelling device 2. Create sonic elements that further the stories they are trying to tell 3. Grow in empathy, learn to communicate ideas effectively, and create engaging narratives <p>Facilitator will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a new understanding of how to use film in the classroom 2. Produce lessons which incorporate films in untraditional ways

Materials:	
Provided in this activity set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Jack and the Beanstalk film • A Google Drive with access to the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mp4 files of each scene included in <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> • Sample Jack and the Beanstalk Scene with added sound • Extra Sample Film with added sound • Selection of song options for students • Activity Guidelines • Activity Printed Materials • Primary Source Set • Resource Guide • Evaluation Suggestions
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing projector with audio capabilities • Personal devices (at least one/ group) with access to editing software like iMovie or Windows Movie Maker • Writing Materials

Activity Preparation:	
Groups	<p style="text-align: center;">Writer <i>responsible for recording groups ideas on the provided worksheet</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Presenter <i>responsible for presenting the groups ideas to the class</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Editor <i>responsible for using the technology to add sound to their scene</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Producer <i>responsible for ensuring the group stays on tasks and that all ideas are heard</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Optional Role: Production Assistant <i>responsible for helping with both the technology and recording on paper</i></p> <p>Note: Depending on class size, 5 groups of 4 students is recommended</p>
Set Up	<p>Projector with film ready for class viewing</p> <p>One laptop per group with Windows Movie Maker or iMovie pre downloaded with the group's individual scene</p>

Vocabulary Words	Definition
Adaptation	: a composition rewritten into a new form a screen <i>adaptation</i> of a novel Merriam-Webster
Dialogue	: a written composition in which two or more characters are represented as conversing : the conversational element of literary or dramatic composition very little <i>dialogue</i> in this film Merriam-Webster
Narration	: to tell (a story) in detail The children enjoyed the lively manner with which she <i>narrated</i> her life's story. <i>also</i> : to provide spoken commentary for (something, such as a movie or television show) The documentary is <i>narrated</i> by a famous actor. Merriam-Webster
Script	: the written text of a stage play, screenplay, or broadcast <i>specifically</i> : the one used in production or performance Merriam-Webster
Score	: a musical composition <i>specifically</i> : the music for a movie or theatrical production Merriam-Webster
Shadow Casting	: when one acts along with the film when it is played in a theater with screen-accurate costumes, sets and props. Rocky Horror Wiki
Syncopated Sound	: in film, when the sound is synced to the action on screen

Pre-Activity:	Introduce participants to this activity by using an entrance device.
Entrance Device <u>Options</u> <i>(Choose One)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry Tickets: <i>Pose a question on the board, have students respond to the question independently on a note card or slip of paper. (See Entrance Question Options)</i> • Journal Entry: <i>Pose a question on the board, have students respond to the question independently in a short paragraph</i> • Think-Pair-Share: <i>Pose question on the board, have students consider the question on their own before pairing students in groups of two (or three). After the small groups discuss ideas, ask students to share with the class.</i>
Entrance Question <u>Options</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In which ways can you tell a story? • What are the elements included in a story structure/ chart • What is your favorite movie? • Which elements used in movies do you think are the most important (script, camera angles, special effects, music, costumes, lighting, ect.)? • Have you watched a silent film before? • Which story, in your opinion, is the most popular “fairy story” (fairy tale) ever written?

Activity:	
Step 1:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch full film as a class 2. As a class, identify major plot points and characters 3. Note: You may need to watch the film three times. 4. The <i>first time</i> for enjoyment, the <i>second time</i> for critical thinking, the <i>third</i> for analysis. <p><i>Option to watch provided Sample Film with Added Sound as an example for this activity</i></p> <p>Questions to ask after film:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this film about? • What do you notice about this film that is different from films today? • Which scene was the most exciting? Least exciting? Explain your reasoning. • How do you think you could make this film more interesting?
Step 2:	<p>Have students get into their pre-determined group and inform them that they are now the directors of the modern-day adaptation of this film.</p> <p>They will be responsible for adding syncopated sound into one (or two) scenes in this film.</p> <p><i>Option to distribute complimentary primary sources for comparison.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary sources can serve as research for their scenes • How is their scene similar or different to these sources? • How can these sources serve as inspiration to their adaptation?
Step 3:	<p>As a group, the students will fill out one worksheet where they are asked to identify</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>See: Silent Film Activity Worksheet</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters • Location • Main action • Where their scene falls in the “story structure chart”
Step 4:	<p>Each group decides how they will add sound</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: Write a dialogue (script) that corresponds with what they think the characters are saying • Option 2: Score the scene with music, selecting a song fits the mood of the scene. Consider using Citizen DJ or the National Jukebox. <i>See: Potential Playlist for Jack and the Beanstalk Resource</i> • Option 3: Describe the scene with narration, as it plays on screen. What is important for the audience to notice? What might the characters be thinking? <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your opinion, which option makes the scene more interesting? • Which scene clarifies the main action better? • Which option is your group more equipped to use? Do you have group members that are good writers or musicians? Do you have group members who are willing to record their voices?

Step 5:	<p>Each group will add audio to their scene.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>See: Sound Template Worksheet</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: Requires No Editing Software. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students review assigned scene as a group 2. Students decide if they will add <u>dialogue</u>, <u>score</u>, OR <u>narration</u> 3. If students choose <u>dialogue</u> or <u>narration</u>, they will write out their <u>script</u> (option to use provided template). To present their work, they will then decide who in the group will read the script along with their scene in front of the class. See <u>*Shadow Casting*</u> 4. If students choose <u>score</u>, they will work as a group to find the song that best matches the mood of the scene. To present their work, they will play the selected song along with their scene in front of the class using either a personal device or teacher laptop. • Option 2: Requires Editing Software. <p>Students use either iMovie or Windows Movie Maker to add audio to their scene. Have students save finished scene and send to instructor to combine all the scenes together.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students review assigned scene as group 2. Students decide if they will add <u>dialogue</u>, <u>score</u>, OR <u>narration</u> 5. If students choose dialogue or narration, they will write out their <u>script</u> (option to use provided template). To present their work, they will then decide who in the group will read the script along with their scene and record it. They will then combine their scene and the audio file using one of the above editing software. 3. If students choose <u>score</u>, they will work as a group to find the song that best matches the mood of the scene. To present their work, they will add combine their scene and audio file using one of the above editing software.
Step 6:	<p>As a class, re-watch the film with the added sound.</p> <p>You may need to watch the film three times.</p> <p>The <i>first time</i> for enjoyment, the <i>second time</i> for critical thinking, the <i>third</i> for analysis.</p> <p>Option for the “film screening” to be the next class and a “fancy event.”</p>
Step 7:	<p>Option 1: Reflection Activity- <i>Silent Film Awards</i>- Have students vote for the best scene in the following categories;</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>See: Voting Exit Ticket Worksheet</i> <i>See: Silent Film Awards Worksheet</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Most Improved</u>: Which scene was made better with the use of sound • <u>Best Soundtrack</u>: Which scene had the best use of sound? • <u>Best Narration</u>: Which scene had the best use of narration? • <u>Best Actors</u>: Which scene had the best use of dialogue? • <u>Best Comedy</u>: Which scene made you laugh the most? <p>Option 2: Reflection Question – At the end of the lesson, ask students to respond to <i>one</i> of the following questions individually or as a group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the addition of sound change your understanding of the film? • Do you think the addition of sound changed the structure of the story? • What was the most challenging part of this project and how did you work together with your group to make it less challenging?