

The Origin of Video

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Overview

Students will connect with films created by Thomas Edison in the late 1800s through early 1900s using the Library of Congress Collection Inventing Entertainment: *The Early Motion Pictures and Sound Recordings of the Edison Companies*. They will interpret early film and analyze the effects that video had on society. Following the completion of their analysis, the students will write their own scripts to accompany the silent films.

Objectives

1. The student will be able to view and analyze a short silent film created by Thomas Edison.
2. The students will be able to describe the history of early film in the United States.
3. The students will be able to storyboard the film, interpreting the number of scenes in the film.
4. The students will be able to create their own script for the film by determining what each character is saying in the film after viewing in class.

Time Required: Four - 40 minute class periods.

Recommended Grade Range: 9-12

Subject / Sub-Topics: Foreign Languages, Language Arts, Library, Social Studies, Technology, Journalism & Broadcasting

Standards

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects
6-12: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

PREPARATION

Materials

Storyboard

Resources

- Edison Film Production 1896-1900 <https://www.loc.gov/collections/edison-company-motion-pictures-and-sound-recordings/articles-and-essays/history-of-edison-motion-pictures/shift-to-projectors-and-the-vitoscope/> n/a, n/a.
 - Lower falls, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone Park / <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694239/> Edison Manufacturing Co. 1899.
 - Mesmerist and the couple <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694244/> Edison Manufacturing Co, 1899.
 - Grandma and the bad boys <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694219/> Edison Manufacturing Co., 1900.
 - The Messenger Boys mistake <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694245/> Edison Manufacturing Co., 1903.
 - Sleighing Scene <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694381/> Edison Manufacturing Co. 1898.
 - Fun in a bakery <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694005/> Edison Manufacturing Co. 1902.
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Description of Procedures

1. **Connect - Day 1** - The teacher will begin the lesson by having the students read the article from the Library of Congress website entitled *Edison Film Production 1896-1900*. After a brief discussion about the beginning of film, the students will be shown *the Lower Falls Grand Canyon, Yellowstone Park* video. This video will help set the stage for the rest of the films. Then, the students, as a whole class, will discuss how they might have used this video. The teacher will serve as the moderator of the discussion. The teacher will pose the following question and prompts to the students during the discussion: 1. At the time, why would a video like this have been taken? 2. Why do you suppose that there was not any sound in the videos?
2. **Wonder - Day 1** - The students will be provided the storyboard worksheet. They will review the directions and have a class discussion on the importance of storyboarding. Again, as in the day's first part of the lesson, the teacher will serve as the moderator of the discussion. The students will use the *Lower Falls Grand Canyon, Yellowstone Park* video to write a one square storyboard to further demonstrate understanding of the concept and ideas.
3. **Investigate - Day 2** -The students will be broken into pre-determined heterogeneous groups of two and will be assigned a film from the resources section. Each film is just over one minute in length. The students have time to break down the video into scenes on the storyboard worksheet. It must fit into the 8 squares. If it does not fit, the students will have to make revisions. The students will be instructed to watch the film at least twice before beginning the storyboard. If students finish the task early, the student groups will be instructed to begin creation of the script.

4. **Construct - Day 3** - The students will watch the film again, and based on the storyboard, begin to create their own script for the film. They can use a separate sheet of teacher provided notebook paper to write out what they believe each character is saying in the scene.
5. **Express - Day 4** - The students will present their film along with the script they created. Each group will have five minutes to show their film and talk through the scene as it was written by the student group.
6. **Reflect - Day 5** - There will be a class discussion on what it was like to storyboard someone else's video and on script writing for silent films. The teacher and the students will also discuss the similarities and differences between sound and film making from the late 19th Century through the early years of the 21st Century. The teacher, again, will serve as the moderator of the class discussion.

Extensions

Jack and the Beanstalk Edison Manufacturing Co. 1902. Have the students watch this longer film. The students will then create a storyboard and script. The students can use the summary at the Library of Congress on this film to help them create the script.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/00694228/>

The teacher can show the film, *Fun in a Bakery*, so students can see how much difference music makes when associated with film. <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694005/>

Evaluation

The students will be graded using the following criteria:

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|-------------|---|
| _____5/100 | Script had proper grammar and spelling. |
| _____10/100 | All 8 scenes on the storyboard match the film to the end. |
| _____20/100 | The script was thoughtful and each character had lines. |
| _____10/100 | Each group member contributed to the project. |
| _____20/100 | Each group member presented part of the project to the class. |
| _____10/100 | The storyboard was complete when handed in. |
| _____25/100 | All parts of the project were complete. |

_____ **Total Points**

Storyboard

A storyboard can be thought of as a comic strip where each square contains an action picture and a line or two of dialog. In each square, you draw a picture or write a description of the action. Almost every commercial, TV show, or video began as a storyboard. The storyboard breaks down the elements of a video production into what you see and what you hear. This helps others see your vision for the film. Since many people usually work on a film it is easier to have a diagram everybody can understand. In the long run, it will save you time.

Part 1:

For this project you will first break the film into scenes. There are eight squares in the storyboard. Using pictures or words, you will use the box to describe what one will see in that frame. Make sure the entire film is documented in the eight squares. If it is not then start again. Planning is a big part of filming and making videos.

Part 2:

Write in the words or sound effects below that box. This is the Audio. It can be the spoken words of people on camera, the words of an announcer who is not on camera, or words that appear on the screen. Sometimes it's a combination of all three.

Storyboards are not meant to be long or complex. They show the flow of the video in a global context. From the storyboard you will write your script.

Group Members _____ Film _____



Draw or describe the visual/action in the square.

Audio:



Draw or describe the visual/action in the square.

Audio:



Draw or describe the visual/action in the square.

Audio:



Draw or describe the visual/action in the square.

Audio:



Draw or describe the visual/action in the square.

Audio:



Draw or describe the visual/action in the square.

Audio:



Draw or describe the visual/action in the block.

Audio:



Draw or describe the visual/action in the block.

Audio: