



# Presenting: Moving Images

LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5

## Couch Potato

**WHAT THE WORK SHOWS:** Clever contrasts of action and inaction suggest positive alternatives to watching television.



In this work the students demonstrate:

- a strong appreciation of how animation can be used to persuade
- an understanding of set-up and scale
- a conscious decision to have only "enjoyment" sounds for verbal elements.

Communicates clearly an important idea or mood by combining visual features with verbal features:

- The uncluttered set makes strong use of perspective to contrast the television watcher with life outside (seen through the window).
- Stage layers (spaced sheets of glass) create an illusion of depth.
- Stop motion and real-time filming are used.
- An understanding that safe title area means that screen text is within the viewing frame.
- The simple title is the only direct comment in the video.
- Overlapping sound elements provide a bridge between shots.
- Persuasive use of sounds that do not match any of the screen images.

### THE LEARNING CONTEXT

Students in this class were familiar with using animation as a presentation option. When using persuasive language on the topic of "TV watching", they chose animation to make their case against excessive television viewing.

Once they had their initial idea of the fun things that might be going on outside while the television was on, they realised that their text was not really necessary. Instead they used natural sound effects to create the mood. They also decided to show things happening inside the house.

The original title, *TV Watching is Bad*, was changed to the more emotive *Couch Potato*. They thought this gave a more open start to their video, but still suggested a sense of "wrongness".

### Teacher-student conversations

These conversations show the students can:

- justify the selection of an important idea or mood to be communicated
- explain one or more of the following points:
  - how the visual and verbal features combine to convey the idea or mood
  - how the visual and verbal features help to achieve the purpose
  - how the visual and verbal features used show some awareness of audience
- use appropriate terminology to plan for and/or explain the techniques used.

During set preparation:

Group: We've got the room set looking good, but we need to think about the size of the people. The ones outside will have to be smaller than our couch person.

And if the balloon's too big, it won't all fit into the window space. People will need to see all of it so they know what it is.

It's behind the outside people – more in the background.

We have to be able to move the outside cast so they don't get tangled with each other.

During narration rehearsal:

Group: That was a bit messy! We need a list, or something that reminds us when we have to make the sounds. We know what they are, but the audience might get confused.

The sounds could be spaced out more too. They could get louder and quieter like turning a volume control.

Teacher: You mentioned a list. Would you use numbers?

Group: We could use times to tell us when to do things. But we can still watch the TV pictures for clues. Perhaps we need a director for the sound – like a conductor!

Some sounds could overlap, like having more than one at once, but planned, not like we just did it!

Teacher: Have you thought about using something like a history timeline? You know what the problem is. Try some of your ideas and see what works best.

The group developed a time listing plan that also had screen action clues. They used a conductor to bring in each person at the right spot. The conductor also indicated the balance and volume of sound output from each member of the sound effects team.



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### CURRICULUM LINKS

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum*

#### Achievement Objectives

##### Level 4: Viewing and Presenting Functions

**Viewing:** Reading visual and dramatic texts, including static and moving images, students should respond to and discuss meanings, ideas, and effects, identifying the purposes for which the verbal and visual features are used and combined.

**Presenting:** Using static and moving images, students should combine verbal and visual features to communicate information, ideas, or narrative through drama, video, computer, or other technologies and media.

##### Levels 3 and 4: Viewing and Presenting Processes

In achieving the objectives of understanding and using visual language:

**Exploring Language:** Students should identify important features of verbal and visual language and use them to create particular meanings and effects.

**Thinking Critically:** Students should show identify and discuss ways in which verbal and visual features can be combined for a particular purpose and audience.

**Processing Information:** Students should view and use visual texts to retrieve, interpret, organise, and present information coherently; use appropriate technology, including fluent handwriting, for effective presentation.

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 40–41*

### WHERE TO NEXT?

To move these students towards the next learning step, the teacher could encourage them to consider questions such as:

- How might the television screen in the set have displayed more continuous action?
- What is the person on the couch holding? (The animators say it is a TV guide.)  
How could this be made more obvious?
- What wrong impression might we form about the couch potato if we are unaware it is such a magazine?
- How might cuts to show contrasting action have added to impact?

### REFERENCE

Ministry of Education (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.