



Presenting: Moving Images

LEVEL

1

2

3

4

5

The Hunt

WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Three carefully planned shots reveal the ants' survival strategy. The ants operate as a colony and therefore survive being hunted by birds.



In this work the students demonstrate:

- an awareness of conveying mood with carefully selected shots
- careful planning.

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

- Careful choice of an exterior location to create appropriate scale.
- Subject is only revealed gradually.
- Establishing tracking shot draws us into the situation.
- Effective held shot (shot two), to steady the movement of shots one and three.
- Purposeful zoom out to finally reveal the subject.
- Carefully paced narration.

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

The class used samples from their recent creative writing to focus on the mental images that readers might create while reading those samples.

The teacher then presented an intriguing question. "If words can create such vivid images in the mind of a reader, why do we need film or video?"

This caused lively discussion, one outcome of which was to really think about the contribution both words and images make to a video. How could they add to each other? Was it possible to determine the input of each? Would the sum of the parts be greater than the whole?

One group had been writing and reading about how various creatures are able to survive by adapting to their environments. The group thought it would be interesting to focus on how tiny creatures like ants could survive against much larger creatures like birds. The students then began to think about the role of words versus the role of visual images to convey this message in a video and compiled lists to show the possible contributions of each.

Verbal contributions	Verbal contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enclosed • overpowering structures • locked in tower • shadows like giants • slow movement • something is searching • survival chances slim • food at a low • will survive in a colony • perish if on own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • descending restless • low to the ground • under a bush • twiggy environment • twisting and weaving • movement • bird feeding in the grass • ants emerge • ants look small after zoom out (scale)

The group thought that although the words provided much of the information, the visuals made this much more specific. Attention would be more purposefully directed by shifting from a setting close to the ground, then identifying a potential danger, and finally zooming out.

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.

When the students reviewed their first filming:

Group: Well, all the shots are clear.

And the zoom out worked!

What if we tried to film just one bird, because one bird and the ants would make the contrast clearer.

Their size, do you mean?

Yes. In a way. One bird would make it more dramatic, because we see just one sparrow as being harmless to us.



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That would mean we'd have to be patient and wait till one bird was in our shot.

I was wondering about the start. I think it would be more scary if we tried to move the camera low to the ground, like it's hunting.

Could we do that smoothly?

Let's try that shot a few times and see what it looks like.

We might have to find another part of the garden so we can get the camera in.

The group then went on to shoot some experimental opening shots.

Once they had perfected this, they re-shot the video in light of their discussion after the first filming. They agreed that their second version was much more effective, and commented how with only three shots, each shot had to "pull its weight".

WHERE TO NEXT?

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

- Could the same approach be used to tell about humans – what variety of three shot storyboards emerge?
- If filming of these new storyboards could only take place within, or close to the school, how might they be amended?
- How might the visual and verbal aspects of this video be handled, if the idea was told from the point of view of the ants?

REFERENCE

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

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