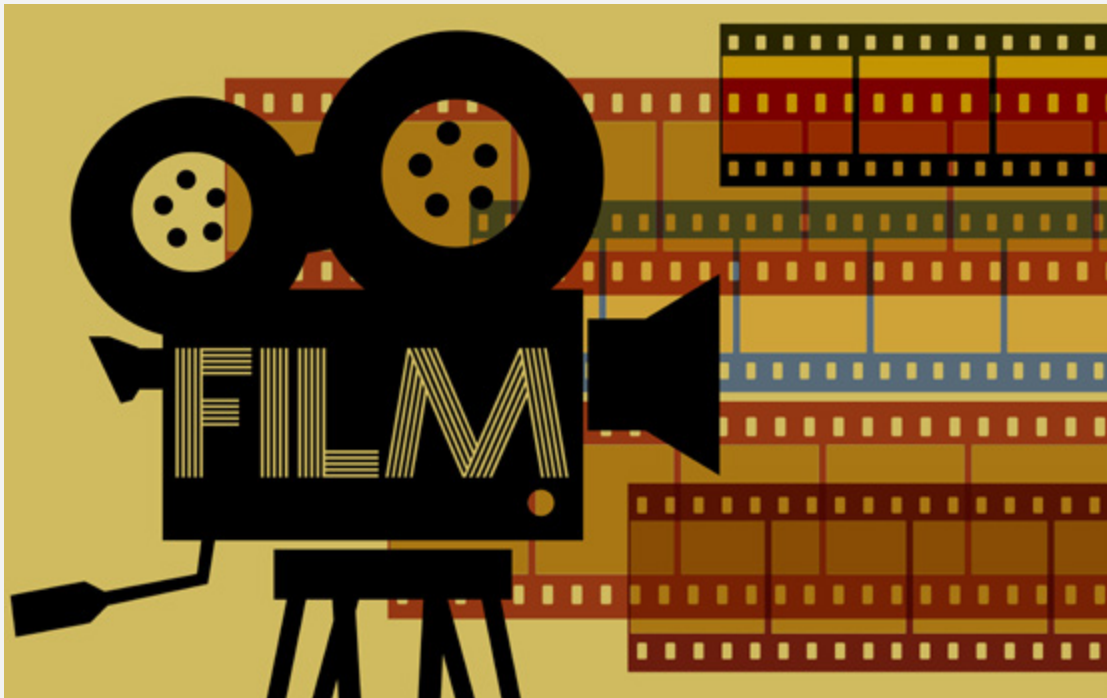


Coming Soon to a Theater Near You



LEVEL: Intermediate to Advanced

TIME REQUIRED: About 60 minutes

GOALS: To create and orally present a movie trailer (advertisement) that introduces key movie elements such as the main characters, setting, and plot; to listen for information about these elements in other movie trailers

MATERIALS: Three small containers such as bags or boxes (additional sets of three may be needed for large classes); sample movie trailers (see Figure 1 on page 44); a movie trailer checklist (see Figure 2 on page 45); pencils or pens and paper; scissors; chalkboard and chalk

or whiteboard and markers; a clock or timing device; poster paper (optional)

PREPARATION:

Prepare for the students' tasks—listening to and creating movie trailers—by doing the following:

1. Sample movie trailer texts are provided in Figure 1, and a trailer-creation checklist is in Figure 2; decide how you will present these materials to the class. You can prepare them as handouts, or you can display them on the board or on poster paper during the activity.

2. Create movie-element “grab bags”: label three small containers *character*, *time*, and *place*. Create a list of options to include in each of these three categories. Use the ideas below or develop your own. For the *place* and *character* items, think of options based on your local context or related to your students’ interests. Write each option on a slip of paper, fold it in half, and place it into the appropriate grab bag. If you have a class of more than 30 students, you may want to make several sets of grab bags in order to speed up the selection process.

- Suggested options for **character**: teacher, student, parent, sister, brother, shopkeeper, doctor, librarian, chef, scientist, taxi driver, firefighter, fortune-teller, sailor, archaeologist, thief with a good heart, mysterious man or woman, explorer, teenage boy or girl, zookeeper, young woman or man, wise old woman or man, prince or princess, alien(s), tiger (or another animal), pet goldfish, dragon, zombie, pirate, ghost (if appropriate for your context)
- Suggested options for **time**: 2,000 years ago, 500 years ago, the 1800s, 100 years ago, 50 years ago, the present, 10 years in the future, 50 years in the future, 200 years in the future
- Suggested options for **place**: a small town, a big city, a beach, a desert, an island, the Arctic, a boat on the ocean, a spaceship, another planet, a jungle, an ancient city, a haunted house, a castle, your hometown

PROCEDURE:

1. Tell students that you are going to discuss movies as a class and that they will have a chance to create their own idea for a movie. Start by telling students about a specific movie that you enjoyed watching; you might also mention the kind of movie you like best. For example, you might

say, “I really like happy, funny movies that make me laugh. For example, [movie title] is one of my favorites.”

2. Ask one or two student volunteers to tell you about a favorite movie by answering the following questions (in **bold**) as you write them on the board. If your students are unfamiliar with the underlined words, you can explain each question by using the language in parentheses. Students may need a minute or two to think about movies they have seen and to prepare their answers.

- **What is the movie’s title?** (“What is the name of the movie?”)
- **Who are the main characters?** (“Who is the movie about?”)
- **What is the setting?** (“When and where does the movie take place?”)
- **What is the plot?** (“What happens in the movie? What is the main story about? Summarize in one or two sentences. But don’t tell us the ending or give too much detail about the movie in case anyone wants to see it!”)

Remind the class that the title, characters, setting, and plot are important elements that make up a movie (and any kind of story).

Have students pair off and take turns telling each other about a favorite movie by answering these four questions.

3. Write “movie trailer” on the board. Explain or elicit the phrase’s meaning (“an audio or video advertisement for a movie”). Tell the class that a good movie trailer introduces some or all of the movie’s key elements, but it doesn’t share too much information. The purpose of the trailer is to get people interested in the movie so they will go to see it to find out what happens. Tell the students that they will listen to a

movie trailer (or two, if you have time) and decide if they would like to see the movie(s). As they listen, students should answer the four questions you wrote on the board in Step 2. Ask students to take out a pen or pencil and paper so that they can take notes as they listen.

4. Read one of the sample movie trailers in Figure 1 to your class. Feel free to be dramatic and use your best movie-trailer announcer voice. Read the trailer two or three times so that students can catch most of the information they need to answer the questions on the board.
5. Have students review their answers with a partner. Then bring everyone back together and, for each of the four questions, have a different student volunteer share an answer with the full class. If necessary, reread parts of the trailer aloud to help students find answers to questions they had difficulty understanding or answering.

Possible answers for Sample Movie Trailers 1 and 2

What is the movie's title?

- Trailer 1: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- Trailer 2: *The Gift of the Magi*

Who are the main characters?

- Trailer 1: a boy and a runaway slave
- Trailer 2: a poor, married couple

What is the setting?

- Trailer 1: the southern U.S. state of Mississippi, 20 years before the Civil War (1840s)
- Trailer 2: Christmastime in New York City

What is the plot?

- Trailer 1: The boy and the runaway slave fight for freedom. It seems they may be running away on the Mississippi River.
- Trailer 2: The husband and wife sacrifice something for each other's happiness.

6. Tell the class you want them to analyze the movie trailer more carefully. Display or distribute the trailer text to students, as you planned in Preparation Step 1. Ask the questions below to guide students' analysis. Let student volunteers answer each question. Possible answers for both sample trailers are in parentheses.

Sample Movie Trailer 1

It's 20 years before the American Civil War, in the state of Mississippi, in the southern United States. One bold boy will come to discover the true meaning of justice as he fights for the freedom of a runaway slave who calls him a friend. What challenges and surprises wait for them during their journey on the mighty Mississippi River? American English Productions presents the great American classic: Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Sample Movie Trailer 2

It's Christmas in New York City. Money is tight, but one devoted husband and his loving wife are about to sacrifice what little they have for each other. What are *you* willing to give to make the person you love happy? O. Henry Studios presents award-winning actors Sarah Starlet and Lucas Legend in *The Gift of the Magi*.

Figure 1. Sample movie trailers

- a. “How long was the trailer?” (less than a minute)
 - b. “Was there a lot of detail in the trailer? For example, did you learn the characters’ names?” (The trailer only gave general information. It did not include the characters’ names.)
 - c. “What did the movie trailer make you want to find out or think about?” (Trailer 1: What might happen on the journey?; Trailer 2: What sacrifice will the main characters make? What sacrifice would I make for love?)
 - d. “Besides plot, character, and setting, what other information did the trailer give?” (Trailer 1 gave the name of the production company and the author of the book that the movie is based on; Trailer 2 gave the name of the starring actors.)
 - e. “Do you want to see the movie? Why?” (Have the class vote with a show of hands, and then ask a few students to explain their preferences.)
7. If time permits, you can repeat Steps 4 to 6 with the other sample movie trailer provided in Figure 1 for more practice.
8. Tell the students they will create and present a trailer for a new movie.
- a. Put students in pairs (create a group of three if you have an odd number of students). Ask students to gather a pen or pencil and paper and get together with their partner.
 - b. Show the class the *time*, *place*, and *character* grab bags you created in Preparation Step 2. Tell the class that each pair will pick out one *time* slip, one *place* slip, and two *character* slips. Explain that pairs will write a movie trailer that incorporates the elements they select; they will also need to think of a title for their movie and include it in the trailer. You can demonstrate the selection process by drawing a set of options yourself and brainstorming a potential plot for the movie.
 - c. Distribute (or display) and explain the checklist for creating movie trailers (see Figure 2) you prepared during Preparation Step 1. You might work together as a class to find details in one of the sample trailer texts that correspond to the checklist items; depending on how you shared the trailer text, ask students to underline the checklist details on their handout, or you can underline them in the text displayed on the board.
- For extra support as students prepare to use the checklist, you might want to provide—or

Movie Trailer Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	One word or a short phrase to describe the movie’s time
<input type="checkbox"/>	One word or a short phrase to describe the movie’s place
<input type="checkbox"/>	A sentence to describe the plot, including adjectives to describe the main characters
<input type="checkbox"/>	A question that creates suspense or interest in the plot
<input type="checkbox"/>	A sentence to introduce your movie’s title and any remaining details, possibly including these details:
<input type="checkbox"/>	The name of the movie’s production company
<input type="checkbox"/>	The author of the book the movie was based on (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/>	The actor or actors who star in the movie (Use your imagination! Who would star in your movie?)

Figure 2. Movie trailer checklist

brainstorm as a class—lists of adjectives that students can use to describe characters (*brave, funny, loving, brilliant, creepy, fearless*), plots (*hilarious, terrifying, adventure-packed, romantic, thrilling, exciting*), and settings (*spooky, exotic, desolate, crowded, isolated, beautiful, tropical*).

- d. Tell students that their trailer should be less than one minute long and that they will have 15 minutes to create it.
 - e. Tell students that after they write the script, each student in the pair should write down the script on a separate piece of paper. Explain that after the pairs have finished writing their trailers, partners will split up to present their trailer to a small group of classmates.
9. Have each pair make grab-bag selections: each pair picks one *time* option, one *place* option, and two *character* options. One student can draw options from the grab bags while the other writes them down. Students should refold, return, and mix up the paper slips to the appropriate grab bags before the next pair chooses. If you have a class of more than 30 students, assign some pairs to use the additional grab-bag sets you created in Preparation Step 2.
 10. Ask students questions about the directions or have them restate the key steps so that you know they understand the assignment.
 11. Allow students to work on their trailer creation for 15 minutes. Set a timer if desired. Circulate to assist students as needed.
 12. When time is up, explain that each partner will present the pair's trailer to classmates. Have partners identify themselves as Student A and Student B. Have all A students go to one side of the

classroom and B students to the other side, bringing their trailer script with them. Have the A students form small groups of up to five students. Have the B students do the same. (If you used a group of three, the third student—Student C—can join any group that his or her partners are not part of.)

13. Ask students to take turns presenting their trailers in these small groups. After everyone has presented, groups should answer the following questions:
 - a. Which plot sounds most like the plot of a real movie?
 - b. Which movie would your group like to see the most? Take a vote for “Best Picture”!
14. To wrap up the activity, have a student from each group read the group's favorite trailer aloud. If you want, you can give an award (a small prize of your choice) to the authors of the trailer for the “Best Picture” selected in each group.

EXTENSIONS

1. Have students draw a poster to advertise the movie they introduced in the trailer they created. Posters should include the movie title along with visuals to represent the characters, setting, and plot.
2. Have the small groups who presented their trailers to one another write and act out a scene for the movie they selected as “Best Picture.”

VARIATIONS

1. To add complexity for higher-level students or to extend the amount of time dedicated to this topic, include content related to movie *genres* (in this case, *genres* refer to types or kinds of movies) in the activity.



a. Before class, prepare for a discussion about movie genres by writing each genre and its definition on a separate piece of poster paper. Hang the posters around the room before the activity. You could also write the definitions on different sections of a whiteboard or chalkboard. Common genres include the following:

- **Action/Adventure:** an exciting movie in which hero(es) use strength or skills to overcome challenges. Action movies often include fight scenes or fast chases. Adventure movies usually include exciting journeys that may take place in exotic locations.
- **Comedy:** a movie that is meant to make the audience laugh

- **Drama:** a movie that tells a serious story and is generally *not* meant to make the audience laugh. For example, a historical drama tells the story of events or people from the past.
- **Horror:** a movie that is meant to make the audience afraid, possibly by including monsters or other unnatural things
- **Romance:** a movie that tells a love story

You should create an additional *genre* grab bag that includes the five genres listed above.

b. During Procedure Step 1, introduce the concept of movie genres. As you tell the class about one of your favorite movies,

mention the genre and use the definition of that genre to support your explanation. You might say, “I really like happy, funny movies that make me laugh. For example, [movie title] is one of my favorites. I love comedies. Comedy is my favorite movie genre.” Go to the poster paper or section of the board where you have written the definition of *comedy* and read it aloud.

- c. Invite a student volunteer to read each genre and definition to the class. With each definition, check for understanding by having a few students share the title of a movie in that genre. Ask the class for a show of hands to see who likes or dislikes the genre. Invite students to describe any other movie genres they know (e.g., science fiction and thriller).
- d. In Procedure Step 2, add another question to the list on the board: **What is the movie’s genre?** (“What kind of movie is it?”). For the movie-trailer listening questions in Step 5, the genres for the two sample trailers are adventure (Trailer 1) and both romance and drama (Trailer 2).
- e. Add a genre-analysis question in Procedure Step 6. For example, you might ask, “What words in the trailer helped you identify the movie genre?” (Trailer 1: *challenges, surprises, journey*; Trailer 2: *husband, wife, love, sacrifice*).
- f. In Procedure Step 8b, instruct students to also select one item from the *genre* grab bag in addition to the other selections they will make in Step 9. Students will incorporate the genre they choose into their movie trailer.

- 2. Instead of having students choose movie elements from the grab bags as described above, have pairs select a story that they’ve read in class or a favorite book and imagine it is going to be made into a movie. They can create a trailer to advertise it.

This activity was written by **Katie Ryan**, who has taught English to young learners in Thailand, adults in Washington, D.C., and international undergraduates at the University of Pennsylvania, where she is now a program administrator. She has also developed materials and training programs for EFL instructors around the world.