

## ***The Sandman* (dir. Paul Berry, 1992)**

**Lesson by Jenni Heeks, Teach First**

### **Key Stage 3 English or Drama**

An introductory lesson to the short animation *The Sandman*, where students watch the film and learn about the difference between narration and narrative.

#### **Curriculum Links**

- Understanding structure and narrative voice
- Producing creative, interesting texts suitable to audience and purpose

#### **Lesson Objective**

To understand the difference between narrative and narration through exploration of both in *The Sandman*.

#### **You will need...**

- **Trailer:** Internet connection and access to Screenonline to watch *The Sandman* - <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/media/stream.jsp?id=797263>



## Activities

### TRAILER: NARRATIVE

Watch *The Sandman* with students.

Ask if anyone can tell you the difference between narration and narrative voice... If not explain that narrative is simply the story of a piece of work; whereas narration refers to the person or thing that is telling the story. The first activity focuses on the narrative of *The Sandman*. Give this to the students as a timed exercise (or perhaps a competition):

- The students have a certain amount of time to explain the narrative of *The Sandman*. They must start by doing this in exactly 100 words. After they do this they must then do it in exactly 30. Then exactly 3.

By doing this the students will gradually have to focus more and more on the key points of the story – get the class to share their 3 word summaries to see how similar they are to each other, and what certain members of the class prioritised.

### MAIN ATTRACTION: NARRATION AND NARRATOR

Students' main task is to create a narration to go over *The Sandman*. Explain to students that a narration is when there is either a character or an objective voice telling the reader/audience the story. This happens in both books and films – a very accessible example of film with a narration is Lotte Reiniger's animated film of *Hansel and Gretel*, which uses the 'Once-Upon-A-Time'-esque fairy tale style narration.

Divide the students into groups, and give each group a narrator through which they have to tell us the story of *The Sandman* as a voiceover for the existing film. Narrators could include:

- A mother telling the story to a child as a bedtime story (once upon a time...)



- The child telling the story from the future, after the Sandman has blinded him!
- The Sandman himself telling the story
- The birds telling the story of how they are fed by the benevolent Sandman

### **END CREDITS: PERFORMANCE**

Get the students to perform their narrations over the film. For timing purposes, you may want to give each group of students a section each to narrate as their narrator.

Ask the students not to tell the rest of the students who their narrator is, and after they have performed get the rest of the class to guess.

Finish the lesson with a discussion of narration and narratives:

- Ask whether they thought the film was more or less effective with narration
- Check that the class understand the difference between narration and narrative



## Extras

### Other Ideas

- Introduce the lesson by giving each group of students a separate thing to focus on from the following:
  - Camera
  - Colour
  - Character
  - Story
  - Sound
  - Setting

Use these as the basis for a marketplace activity where students find out what makes *The Sandman* effective, or more generally what makes a horror film effective. Students finish by writing a 'guide'.

### Read

Gothic sagas:

- Darren Shan – either the *Cirque Du Freak* or *The Demonata* series
- Joseph Delaney, *The Wardstone Chronicles* series
- Derek Landy, *Skulduggery Pleasant* series
- Laini Taylor, *Daughter of Smoke and Bone* series
- Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of Mystery and Madness* (Illustrated collection, 2004)
- Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (1908)

Collections of Short Stories:

- Edward Gorey, *Amphigorey, 15 Books'* (1980)
- Mick Jackson, *Ten Sorry Tales* (2006)

- Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of Mystery and Madness* (Illustrated, published 2004)
- Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (1908)

## Watch

### Animated Gothic:

- *The Corpse Bride* (dir. Tim Burton and Mike Johnson, 2005)
- *Coraline* (dir. Henry Selick, 2009)
- *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (dir. Henry Selick, 1993)
- *Beauty and the Beast* (dir. Kirk Wise, Gary Trousdale, 1991)
- *The Black Cauldron* (dir. Ted Berman & Richard Rich, 1985)
- *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (dir. Nick Park & Steve Box, 2005)
- *Vincent* (dir. Tim Burton, 1982)
- Katy Towell's Animated Shorts (all are good: Try *The Little Girl Who Was Forgotten*, <http://skary.com/portfolio/the-little-girl-who-was-forgotten/>)