

Media Lab

ADVANCED DOCUMENTARY

TEACHER GUIDE

AFTRS

AUSTRALIAN FILM TELEVISION & RADIO SCHOOL

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OVERVIEW

This unit looks at both the theoretical and practical aspects of documentaries and documentary filmmaking. It is an advanced unit for secondary school students. Students may have prior knowledge, but this is not necessary to undertake this unit.

This unit develops student's understanding of the history of documentary film, documentary styles and genres and the practical aspects of creating and making a documentary. Students will undertake critical and creative work, including close textual analysis of documentary and conceiving, writing and making a documentary.

USING THIS UNIT IN THE CLASSROOM

This unit consists of ten self-contained sections, each one examining an aspect of documentary. It is designed to be taken sequentially, however sections one-to-five can be taken individually depending on student ability and interest. Sections six-to-ten are practical and need to be taken in sequence.

Each of sections one-to-five can be undertaken in one or two periods. Sections six-to-ten need more time and may need time out of class. Depending on the school's internet policy, student may not be able to access some clips. Clips can be shown to the class from the teacher's computer or downloaded. If working in groups, it is recommended that all members of the group – either teacher or self-selected – complete the pre-production work, and then pitch their idea to the group. The group will then choose one idea for production. Every student should also complete the evaluation at the end.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Teachers may assess this in a variety of ways. Each section contains learning activities of varying complexity. Teachers may elect to use some of these as assessment tasks. The completed documentary could be considered a major assessment task. As this is likely to involve working in groups, it is recommended that individual assessments be based on the pre-production work, the role the student takes in the group's work and the written evaluation. A rubric for the practical work can be found below.

RESOURCES

There are a number of things students will need to be able to complete this unit, though the exact specifications will vary across schools. The suggested list of equipment is:

- Digital video or DSLR camera, tablet or smart phone
- Tripod per camera
- Computer with editing software (suggested software iMovie or for more advanced students Adobe Premiere Pro)
- Sound equipment: boom poles, microphones and if necessary iRigs to connect to tablets.

MAP OF CONTENT AND ASSESSMENT

SEQUENCE	CONTENT	ACTIVITY	LEARNING ACTIVITY	OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT
Sequence 1 Introduction to documentary	In this section, students are introduced to the concept of documentary film. Student analyse the story structure of film and are introduced to the key concept of Representation: i.e. that media products are a process of selection, omission and construction.	Students will watch a short documentary and analyse it for content, technique, point of view and audience. Students provide an alternative voice over. Outdoor Australia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5k1wtbj43Y	Written analysis Creative activity	
Sequence 2 History of documentary	This section allows student to place documentaries in a historical context and look at way's reality has been/can be presented. They are introduced to two schools of documentary.	Students view early documentaries and complete questions https://archive.org/details/ThomasEdisonCo.FredOttSneeze https://vimeo.com/279306902/dbdb5b725c https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtTlgxtoqhg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOUxWVC90Fk	Written critical analysis	
Sequence 3 Documentary genres and styles	In this section, students examine the role of genre and style documentary. They examine narrative conventions, technical codes and stylistic features of documentaries.	Student critically analyse genre and style	Written critical analysis Creating a voiceover for an imaginary documentary	Written voice-over for school documentary
Sequence 4 Documentary and truth	Students look at the concept of truth and truthfulness in documentary. They examine the documentary filmmakers' responsibilities to their subject and their audience.	Students will view Errol Morris clip "The ugly truth in documentary" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-XIKHTRfn4	Written critical analysis Choosing a soundtrack for a given situation	

SEQUENCE	CONTENT	ACTIVITY	LEARNING ACTIVITY	OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT
Sequence 5 Mockumentary	Student examine the concepts behind mockumentaries. They examine the documentary styles and techniques applied to fictional stories.	Students view clips and analyse them in terms of style and technique This is Spinal Tap https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N63XSUpe-0o Best in Show https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94y9n9INy2Y What we do in the shadows https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAZEWtyhpes	Close textual analysis of clips Script a one minute opening sequence	Script a one minute opening sequence for a mockumentary about their school
Sequence 6 Why am I making this?	This section begins the production process. Student look at obtaining ideas for a documentary and then refining that idea.	Students will watch a short secondary student made documentary: https://youtu.be/LQFzxTkYyoQ They will look at brainstorming and refining ideas	Completing templates for brainstorming, developing and refining documentary ideas	Student work sheet 2 refining their idea
Sequence 7 Planning your documentary	Students will look at the various stages of pre-production.	Documenting an idea	Completing templates for script and production schedule	The completed templates for script and production schedule are very suitable for an assessment task
Sequence 8 Shooting your documentary	This section gives student valuable tips to use when they are in the production phases of their documentary.	Students examine camera techniques and how they may use them in their shoot	Student fill out template of camera shots and start their filming	

SEQUENCE	CONTENT	ACTIVITY	LEARNING ACTIVITY	OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT
<p>Sequence 9</p> <p>Post-production: what happens after the shoot</p>	<p>Student look at editing, constructing a paper edit and the ethical issues that can arise.</p>	<p>Making a paper edit and then editing their production</p>	<p>Student complete a paper edit, then complete a rough cut of the production</p>	<p>Paper edit can be assessed if desired</p>
<p>Sequence 10</p> <p>I think I'm finished, now what?</p>	<p>Feedback, screening and awards</p>	<p>Students gather feedback and adjust their edited production to incorporate that feedback if desired. Student evaluate the production process.</p>		<p>The final cut of completed documentary after feedback has been obtained. The self-assessment important and should be part of any assessment process.</p>

ASSESSMENT DETAILS AND MARKING RUBRICS

Students may complete a series of formative assessment tasks to track their understanding throughout the unit and present these as part of their final assessment, compiled into a production folder. The folio will contain the pre-production work, the final cut of the production and the self-assessment.

1 PRE-PRODUCTION FOR A DOCUMENTARY

Using the worksheet and class discussion information, write an analysis of a short film shown in class

TASK: PRE-PRODUCTION 20%	IN PROGRESS	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Student can identify the stages and components of documentary pre-production				
Student has understood the concept of and completed the required work on synopsis and treatment				
Student has understood the concept of and completed the required work on the creation of a script and the script follows appropriate conventions				
Pre-production work uses appropriate media arts language				

2 PRODUCTION OF A SHORT DOCUMENTARY AS PER SECTIONS 8 AND 9

Teachers can decide if this is an individual project or a group project

TASK: DOCUMENTARY FILM 70%	IN PROGRESS	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Focus of the documentary is clear and communicated well				
Narrative conventions of story are clear and the narrative flows well				
Student has understood the role of camera and shots are appropriate for the production				
Sound is clear and dialogue is clearly audible				

TASK: DOCUMENTARY FILM 70%**IN PROGRESS****BASIC****PROFICIENT****ADVANCED**

Music is used appropriately

The film is well lit and lighting is consistent

Film is edited carefully, accurately and in a way that highlights the story

Film is well presented with no errors in spelling on screen or in the credits.
Credits are accurate and all music, footage is accurately acknowledged

Student has understood, completed and incorporated (if desired) feedback

Film reflects the pre-production folio

3 SELF-EVALUATION**TASK: SELF-EVALUATION 10%****IN PROGRESS****BASIC****PROFICIENT****ADVANCED**

Student completes a self- evaluation using the appropriate template

Student can identify and comment on the filmmaking process and describe the steps clearly

Student can critically examine the techniques, conventions and stylistic elements of the production

Student can articulate their own learning experience and comment on weaknesses, strengths, failures and successes