What the Dickens?

Lesson 5: From page to screen

Key Stages: KS2 – Yr 5 & 6, KS3

Term: Spring

Timing: 60 mins

This Lesson Plan has been designed to be used with either Year 5 or Year 6 at Key Stage 2 or with Years 7, 8 or 9 at Key Stage 3. Content can be adjusted according to the range of abilities within the class, to provide sufficient challenge for the most able students and to accommodate individual school lesson plan requirements. Lesson timings are approximate and can be easily adjusted.

Prior knowledge:

Some knowledge of Charles Dickens’ life and work.

Objective:

By the end of the lesson students will:

* gain an appreciation of the process of adapting a novel for the screen;
* have an awareness of the various changes novels undergo in the transition from page to screen and why these changes are necessary;
* be able to distinguish between interpreting and developing aspects of a novel with permission of the author and plagiarising content.

Main curriculum links:

Key Stage 2En1 Speaking and listening: 1a,b, 2a-e, 3a,b,c, 4a

* En2 Reading: 2a,b,d 3g, 4a,b,c,e,g,h, 6
* En3 Writing: 1a-d, 2a,b,c,e,f, 7a-c

Key Stage 3

* En1 (a) Gaining a sense of the English literary heritage and engaging with

important texts in it.

* 1.3 Cultural understanding
* 1.4 Critical understanding
* **3.2 Reading**

Other curriculum links:

Key Stage 2

* PSHCE: 1a, 4b, 4f
* History: 1a, 2a, 2b, 3, 4a

Key Stage 3

* Citizenship: Rights and responsibilities

Equipment and resources:

* Per project: IWB/projector
* Per student/group: computer access as appropriate

Preparation required:

Access to a computer, speakers and IWB/ screen to show Video 3.

Settling activity/Starter:

Timing: 10 mins *(Timings adjustable according to teacher preferences)*

* Students research background on BBC screenwriter, Sarah Phelps. An interesting interview with Sarah can be found at: <www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/writers-lab/be-inspired/sarah-phelps>
* Teacher leads class brainstorm activity in which students suggest ways in which a screenplay based on a novel/story differs from the original work. The teacher might put a few key terms on to the whiteboard e.g. scenes, stage directions, action, the close-up, shot descriptions.

Main teaching phase:

Timing: 35 mins

Students watch Video 3 featuring Sarah Phelps, a screenwriter who has adapted *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* for television. Sarah discusses the process that she goes through to adapt a novel for the screen.

The teacher leads an exploration of one (or two) key extracts from stories of their own choice (teacher or student). Extracts should preferably be selected from novels which have not yet become films.

Students, in pairs or small groups, create a short screenplay for these scenes.

The teacher then selects a scene from a Dickens novel and tasks the class to create a screenplay for the scene, setting it out properly as shown in the example on Activity Sheet 5. They may find it useful to storyboard their screenplay first using the space provided on the activity sheet.

The teacher introduces the concept of ‘out of copyright’ and explains that this is why Dickens’ novels are able to be adapted freely for the screen. (For an explanation of ‘out of copyright’ go to: <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/copy/c-duration/c-types.htm>)

The teacher points out the acknowledgement on Activity Sheet 5, for use of the extract from Sarah Phelps’ screenplay. Discussion follows about why it is important to get permission from the person who owns the copyright to a work before you reproduce it and what acknowledgements and credits mean.

Extension:

Students can create a short screenplay version of a scene from the story they are creating.

Plenary:

Timing: 15 mins

Students are encouraged to share their screenplays with the whole class.  
It may also be possible to briefly explore two treatments of the same story in two different films.

Homework/Extension:

Students continue work on their story.