ENGLISH

Lesson 2

Year 9

Topic: Representations in texts

Examining representations in a film

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are warned that resources in this lesson may contain images, voices and names of persons who may now be deceased.

Today you will:

- understand how visual features of literary texts create representations
- understand structures and features of argumentative texts.

Resources

Digital

Slideshow — Reading visual language

Slideshow — Presenting a point of view

Find and prepare

Sheet 7 — Comprehending a film segment

Sheet 8 — Visual features

Sheet 9 — Write a point of view

Key terms

camera angle, framing, placement, representation, salience, shot size, stereotype, visual features

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the Glossary.

Lesson

Review understanding of stereotypes

You have been examining how representations are made in texts. The author's viewpoint, values, attitudes and beliefs can influence their language choices, which create representations. These representations can also influence the audience to adopt the same viewpoint as the author. That is why it is important to understand what representations are being made.

Some representations rely on stereotypes to convey meaning. This is particularly true in films such as Australian comedies. One aspect of being Australian is that we use comedy to mock our own culture. This self-mockery and the idea of the 'Aussie larrikin' are strong traditions in Australian film. Consider films such as *The Castle*, *Crocodile Dundee*, *Strictly Ballroom* or *Da Kath and Kim code*.

stereotype: when a person or thing is judged to be the same as all other of its type. Stereotypes are usually formulaic and oversimplified.

The problem is that stereotypes tend to reduce groups to very simple characteristics or behaviours. This is inaccurate and unfair because people are individuals and are much more complex and interesting than any stereotype could ever suggest.



While some films subscribe to and perpetuate stereotypes, others may challenge them. These types of films can represent ideas, places or groups of people in ways that broaden understandings and show that reality is more complex than common stereotypes.

1. List three stereotypical images that you associate with Australian people.

2. List three images of Australia and Australians that you see around you every day, on television or in the news.

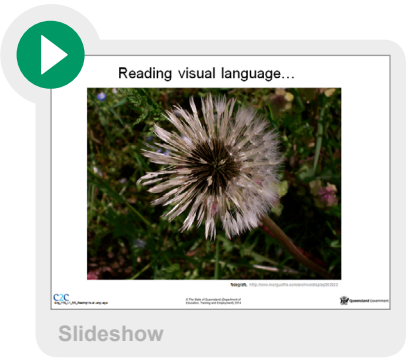
3. Compare the stereotypes to real-life examples and explain which images of Australia would challenge the word's view of our country, its peoples and our way of life.

Review understanding of visual features

Visual representations are defined as Australian by virtue of employing obviously iconic Australian objects such as slouch hats, native fauna, the Sydney Opera House or Uluru. These are quick and efficient ways to communicate the notion of Australia to an audience. However, there is more to creating a visual representation than just choosing a recognisable image.

4. View the **Slideshow — Reading visual language**.

   This slideshow explains important visual literacy terms, including shot sizes and camera angles.



placement: meaning is imparted by an object's position, for example, centre, left, right, bottom, top, foreground, mid-ground, background and whether the objects are close together or far apart

framing: the way in which elements in a still or moving image are arranged to create a specific interpretation of the whole. Strong framing creates a sense of enclosure around elements while weak framing creates a sense of openness

shot size: each shot size emphasises certain elements of a scene and can be used to prompt audiences into accepting particular meanings, for example, close-up, medium, long shots

camera angle: the angle at which the camera is pointed at the subject. Vertical angle can be low, level or high. Horizontal angle can be oblique (side on) or frontal

a high angle: camera is tilted downwards at the subject — the subject appears powerless or inferior

a low angle: camera is tilted upwards at the subject — the subject appears imposing or powerful

eye-level point of view: the subject appears to be equal

salience: a strategy of emphasis, highlighting what is important in a text. In images, salience is created through strategies like placement of an item in the foreground, size and contrast in tone or colour. In writing, salience can occur through placing what is important at the beginning or at the end of a sentence or paragraph or through devices such as underlining or italics

Comprehend a film segment that creates representations

5. View a film clip that conveys perspectives about representations of Australia's peoples and cultures. The film clip could be from movies such as *The Castle*, *Crocodile Dundee*, *Strictly Ballroom* etc.
6. Open **Sheet 7 —** Comprehending a film segment and refer to the film clip to answer the questions about representations in the text.

Examine visual features that create representations

There are a number of visual elements that work together to communicate a deeper meaning to audiences and create representations about Australia's peoples and cultures.

7. Open **Sheet 8 —** Visual features and refer to your chosen film clip to answer the questions about how the visual features create representations in the text.

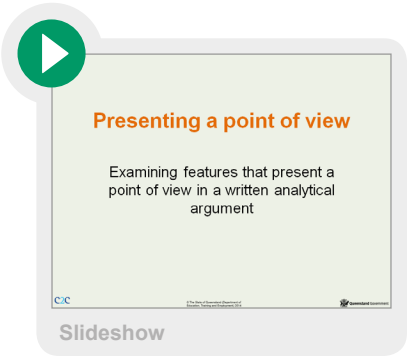
In this lesson you have:

- considered your understanding of stereotypes and how they influence the construction and interpretation of representations
- examined visual features in a text to see how they communicate meanings and influence an audience's interpretation of the Australian peoples and cultures represented.

Present a point of view about visual features and representations

8. View the **Slideshow — Presenting a point of view**.

   This slideshow reviews understanding of some of the text structures and language features of texts that can be used to present a point of view.



9. Open and complete **Sheet 9 —** Write a point of view.