

Scriptwriting Skill Module

Technical Effects

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Understand that technical effects are sound, light, and direction cues included in a script
- Use knowledge of technical effects to write more interesting scripts

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – Dialogue That Builds Characters

Additional Online Support:

- www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com
- www.BlueNoseEd.com

Teach the Skill

1. Introduce Technical Effects: Technical Effects are those parts of TV and film scripts that use the sight and sound to enhance human drama. Technical effects include sound effects, lighting effects, and other, more elaborate effects—such as computer-generated explosions, floods, locust storms, and alien attacks—that are a standard part of movies and television today. Ask the students to describe their favorite technical effects from recent movies. What did they like about them? Did the technical effects overshadow the drama of the movies? Or did they help the students identify more strongly with the characters?

2. Teach Technical Effects:

- Technical effects, such as sound effects and lighting effects, are most commonly used to highlight the drama of a situation. Write the following exercise on the board. Based on the examples, ask the students to imagine how different sound effects, lighting effects, and camera angles would have an impact upon the story being told.

EXAMPLE

Scene	Sound Effects	Lighting Effects
After three years of fighting pirates on the high seas, grizzled old Cap'n Montgomery spies his much younger wife, waving to him from the pier.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A brass band plays a jaunty tune. Crowds cheer. <i>Emotional Impact:</i> communal joy, a sense of wholesome gladness. 2. Raucous cries of seagulls. The creak of the ship. The vulgar laughter of sailors. <i>Emotional Impact:</i> a sense of foreboding. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Cap'n's wife stands off by herself. Clad in a modest dress, she is bathed in yellow sunlight. <i>Emotional Impact:</i> a sense of virtuous womanhood. 2. The Cap'n's wife, clad in a lowcut gown, is glimpsed in the garish light coming from a local bar. <i>Emotional Impact:</i> a sense that the Cap'n's wife has grown tired of waiting for him to come home.
New in town, a young couple from Wisconsin go to a table in a little café in a small southern town.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ <i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____ 2. _____ <i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ <i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____ 2. _____ <i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____

It's the seventh game of the World Series. It's the bottom of the ninth, the count is three and two, and Ryan Soto, a little-used rookie catcher, is up to bat. If he gets a hit, his team wins. If he makes an out, his team loses.	1. _____.	1. _____.
	<i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____.	<i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____.
	2. _____.	2. _____.
	<i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____.	<i>Emotional Impact:</i> _____.

- More spectacular technical effects include *special effects*. Special effects in movies and TV are used to convey not only extraordinary external events, but also to convey extreme emotional states in the characters' inner lives. A common and humorous way that special effects are included is the dream sequence. In a dream sequence, we see a character's hopes and fears in exaggerated form. Lead the students through the following exercise. Follow the example, and encourage them to imagine special effects sequences that will represent the characters' dream lives.

EXAMPLE

Character	Dramatic Situation	Dream Sequence, With Special Effects
Roberta Stack, M.D., 26	Roberta has fallen asleep while studying for the oral portion of her medical licensing exam.	<p>DREAM: Roberta, dressed in her pajamas, appears at the foot of an enormous chair. By clambering onto the chair, she can see a circle of giants sitting behind a table, each of dressed in green hospital scrubs.</p> <p>GIANT DREAM DOCTOR</p> <p>Where is Dr. Stack?</p> <p>ROBERTA</p> <p>I'm over here!</p> <p>GIANT DREAM DOCTOR</p> <p>If she doesn't show up for this exam, she will never become a licensed physician!</p> <p>Roberta keeps jumping up and down, but the giants in the scrubs only grow larger, and never hear her.</p>
Sir Droops-a-Lot, Basset Hound	After a hard day of giving "pony rides" to the next door neighbor's toddler, Sir Droops-a-Lot stretches out for a snooze in front of the family fireplace.	
Tony Mercutio, 3	Tired from a day of "pony rides" on the back of a neighbor's extremely patient basset hound,	

	Little Tony Mercutio finally falls asleep.	
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3. Apply Technical Effects: Hand out copies of the You Try It! Worksheet: “Technical Effects that Enhance The Story.” After reading the directions, have the students get into small groups to work through the exercises. When all are finished, have a representative of each group share their answers.

QUICK CHECK Ask students to define “technical effects” in TV and movies. Have them give examples of how technical effects are used, and what emotional impact they can have.

YOU TRY IT!

Technical Effects that Enhance the Story

GOAL

Technical Effects, such as sound effects, lighting effects, and special effects, can make a dramatic impact upon your script. As you compete in the Blue Nose Scriptwriting Contest, always be aware of how you can use such effects to make your script stand out from the crowd!

Technical Effects that Enhance the Story

DIRECTIONS Read each boxed description of a scene. Then, in the space beneath the boxes, write out the scene in script form, including sound cues, visual cues, and special effects that help enhance the story.

Exercise One

Daedalus has made wings for himself and his son Icarus to fly out of the labyrinth in which they are imprisoned. After warning Icarus not to fly too close to the sun, he flaps off. Icarus takes to the air, heedless of his father's advice, coming ever closer to the heat of the sun.

Exercise Two

During a normal day in chemistry lab, Bart Stubblefield, 16, looks outside and sees that his town is under attack by an army of ten-foot-tall mutant wasps. Before he can seize a weapon, a wasp is at the door to his classroom, trying to get in!

Self-Check

Did your focus on technical effects help you imagine in greater detail the scenes you wrote? As you work on your script for the Blue Nose Scriptwriting Contest, remember to slow down and include key sound, lighting, and special effects cues.