

## Lesson unit plan: Film Trailer Competition

Outcome: A 2-minute (maximum) film trailer that persuades others to read one of the BIG Book Award 2026 shortlisted books.

Audience: The final videos will be judged by the Shropshire Bookfest judging panel. The best films will be shown at the Awards Ceremony and on Shropshire Bookfest's website and YouTube channel.

### Learning objectives:

- Understand the purpose and features of a film-style book trailer.
- Select key moments, themes and hooks from a text to entice an audience.
- Plan a storyboard using cinematic techniques (camera angles, sound, pacing).
- Use digital tools to film, edit and add effects.
- Collaborate effectively and evaluate their own and others' trailers.

### X-curricular links:

- English: Reading comprehension, summarising and persuasive language.
- Drama: Speaking to camera, adapting speech for an intended audience.
- Computing: Digital media creation, editing, safe use of technology.
- Art: Visual composition, creating and making scenery/ props
- PSHE: collaboration and communication.

### Introduction:

Watch *Malamander* and 1 or 2 other short book trailers. Follow the hyperlink by clicking on the book title. Check you can access the links in school well before the lesson. Some school firewalls block YouTube or videos.

- [Malamander](#) by Thomas Taylor,
- [The Nowhere Emporium](#) by Ross Mackenzie
- [The Goldfish Boy](#) Lisa Thompson
- [The Skull in the Wood](#) by Sandra Greaves
- [The Last Wild](#) by Piers Torday
- [Cosmic](#) by Frank Cottrell Boyce
- [Moth](#) by Isobel Thomas
- [Rumblestar](#) by Abi Elphinstone

Ask children to make notes on what grabbed their attention and what made them want to read the book. Share their responses with the class.

Introduce key trailer features: fast-paced cuts, dramatic music, teasers – not spoilers, key lines or quotes, mood and atmosphere, a clear sense of the genre.

Rewatch Malamander spotting where the features have been used. Write the features in a checklist adding any others that they spot. Identify cinematic techniques that have been/ could be used: close-ups, zoom, fade, slow motion, panning left to right...

Create a Book Trailer Success Criteria. Example [here](#).

**Model** the planning process using a recent class novel that they are all familiar with.

- Identify the core hook in the story – this is usually highlighted in the blurb.
- Together create a hook sentence e.g, ‘What if the world you knew...wasn’t real?’
- Choose 3-5 key moments from the story that they will hint at – remember no spoilers.
- Decide on an appropriate tone (mysterious, exciting, funny).

Model how to create a simple storyboard. Click [here](#) for an example. Think in key shots/frames rather than paragraphs. Note on the storyboard cinematic techniques and where their use will be most effective (close-ups, zoom, panning etc).

### **Planning:**

Now it’s their turn. Children work in small groups to plan their book trailer. Keep in mind that each school can submit up to 3 film trailers.

In their groups create:

A hook sentence

A storyboard with 6-10 frames

A shot list (camera angles, props, locations...)

Notes on music and how they will create atmosphere.

During this planning stage encourage them to consider whether they will include voice-over narration, actors speaking in character or text.

### **Filming and editing:**

Use tablets, iPads or laptops with simple editing software e.g. iMovie.

Film each frame using techniques that they have decided on in their storyboard. It is also fine to use stills/ animation if they choose to.

Edit their film to include titles/ credits, transitions and effects. Layer sound effects and music to create atmosphere. Adjust the pace of their film to build tension. Finally include a ‘Call to Read’ slide. Refer to the success criteria throughout the creative process to focus their attention.

**Differentiation:**

- Include fewer frames and reduce the success criteria. Children identify from the success criteria those areas they would like to include and construct a smaller list while still encouraging aspiration and an appropriate level of challenge.
- Children identify and use fewer cinematic techniques. Allow them the opportunity to try techniques with support before choosing which to include. Show concrete examples of techniques from Malamander. Talk with them about how they can use the same technique in their trailer.
- Within the group, allow for different roles e.g. not everyone needs to be in front of the screen.
- Allow the option to choose animation or live-action film according to interest and experience.

**Plenary:**

Share film trailers. Look at the success criteria and ask children to identify where they have included techniques effectively. Discuss reasons for choices.