

Fake Blood

by Jenny Powell-Chalmers

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Overview

This free-verse poem explores the process of creating illusions in films, especially the use of fake blood. These notes give suggestions for revisiting the poem for deeper analysis after students have already read it and understood the process it depicts. You can use the suggestions in these notes with a group or the whole class.

Suggested teaching purposes

- To support the students in developing the comprehension strategy of **analysing and synthesising**.
- To engage the students in thinking more deeply about the impact of the devices an author can use to convey their ideas.

Suggested learning goal

I am learning to identify and discuss devices used by the poet, illustrator, and/or designer have used in this text and how they have affected my thinking about illusions that are created in film-making.

Success criteria

I will be successful when I have:

- made connections to what I know about film-making to help me understand what the poem describes
- identified devices used by the poet, the illustrator, and/or designer convey their ideas
- discussed the effects of some those devices on my ideas about creating illusions in film-making.

Features of the text

What features of this text support the teaching purposes?

- The theme of illusion through references to film-making:
 - the movie vocabulary (“on cue”, “pull the wires”, “the safety harness you’ll never see”, “villain”)
 - the use of quote marks to indicate the “bullet” isn’t real
- The links to the idea and format of a recipe:
 - the simile “Like a cookbook recipe”
 - the “list” of ingredients in the first stanza
 - the recipe-like instructions “Stir well. Shake before use.”
 - the reference to “sauce”.

- The humorous play on words using the homophones “sauce” and “source”, and the repetition of “this is”
- The drama and impact of the middle two stanzas, created by:
 - the alliteration “blood to be burst from its bag”
 - the onomatopoeia “Bang! Snap! Splatter!” and its repetition
- The use of “they” (first and third stanza) and “you” (final stanza), which emphasises the position of the observer
- The open ending, indicated by the use of an ellipsis
- The visual features that support the author’s ideas:
 - the stereotypical representation of a villain in the illustration
 - the poem’s “stepped” layout, which suggests falling
 - the use of red print.

Readability

What prior knowledge or experience might help my students to read this text?

- Their familiarity with films, television programmes, or plays involving fake blood
- Their knowledge of poetic forms and devices
- Their knowledge of particular words and concepts, including “maple syrup”, “source”, “cue”, “safety harness”, “villain”, “ledge”, and the concept of illusions.

What text features might challenge my students and require a prompt or a brief explanation?

- The free-verse structure of the poem
- The need to infer some information, for example, where the poem takes place, who “they” are, and who “you” is
- The complex sentence structure of the final stanza.

Preparation for reading

The day before working with the students to analyse this poem, have them read the poem – or read it to them – and ask them to talk to a partner about what it describes. Encourage them to make connections with their experiences of film, television, or theatre and also to infer. Remind the students that poets/illustrators/designers use various devices. Ask the students to look for examples of some of these devices as they are reading and to think about why they have been used. (Making connections; analysing and synthesising)

A framework for the lesson

How will I help my students to achieve the learning goal?

Revisiting the text

Refer to Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8, pages 80–93, for information about

deliberate acts of teaching.

- Share the learning goal and success criteria with the students. Note that the students are likely to have already achieved the first point in the list of success criteria.
- Read the poem to the students again – or have them read it with you – to provide a model and help draw their attention to the effect of the line breaks. You may need to model the phrasing in the final stanza. Ask the students to share their understandings of the poem from their discussions of the previous day and to clarify the process the poem describes. Briefly discuss any devices the students have noticed. If you plan to include the visual aspects of the text in your analysis, you will need to clarify that the illustrations and design are interpretations of what the writer intended and not controlled by the writer. (Analysing and synthesising)
- Give out photocopies of the poem, one between two students. Have the students work in pairs to highlight some examples they have noticed and discuss their effects. Listen to their conversations as they work and provide support where necessary. For example, you could use prompts, questions, or models, such as:
 - “What do you notice about the layout/words/punctuation/sounds here?”
 - “I wonder why the poet has done this?”
 - “Would the poem have the same effect without this feature? Why or why not?” (Analysing and synthesising)
- Compile the students’ findings into a graphic organiser like that below. (Note that the table doesn’t list all the devices and that students’ responses may differ from those shown.) Clarify the names or categories of the devices and add them to the organiser (left-hand column).

Name of device	Example in poem	Effect
Free-verse structure	No rhyme pattern Unpredictable line breaks	Line breaks emphasise certain words and add surprise
Layout	Stepped	Creates a sense of falling
Simile	“Like a cookbook recipe”	Relates the topic to something we know Adds humour
Rhyme	“fires”, “wires”, “edge”, “ledge”	Draws attention to these words and lines

Homophone and play on words	“sauce”, “source”	Gets our attention Adds humour Reminds us that the blood is just sauce
Alliteration	“blood to be burst from its bag”	For emphasis Sounds good to read aloud
Onomatopoeia	“Bang! Snap! Splatter!”	Gives us clues about what exactly happens when a gun pops a bag of fake blood Dramatic!
Quote marks	“bullet”	Emphasises that the bullet isn’t real
Ellipsis	“high building ledge ...”	Makes us wonder about what happens next (“Does the villain really die or not?”) – like the suspense that films create with this sort of illusion

- Encourage the students to share what they liked and didn’t like about the poem and what they thought worked and didn’t work. Ask them to justify their opinions. (Evaluating)
- Review the learning goal and success criteria and reflect with the students on how well the learning goal has been met. For example, “How has finding and discussing poetic devices in this poem helped you to understand and appreciate the poem?” Note any teaching points for future sessions.

Links to further learning

What follow-up tasks will help my students to consolidate their new learning?

The students could:

- use their developing awareness of poetic devices and their effects to help deepen their understanding of other poems, for example, “Journey through the Stars”, SJ 4.2.04, “Dogs”, SJ 4.2.2005. These texts are supported by online teachers’ notes (Analysing and synthesising; making connections)
- refer to the graphic organiser as a prompt for including the devices in their own writing (Analysing and synthesising; links to writing)
- develop a chart for class display that describes language devices and includes effective examples (Analysing and synthesising)
- look out for other examples of homophones, add them to the class chart, and

explore their meanings by using them in ridiculous sentences. (Analysing and synthesising; building vocabulary)