Stage 4 unit starter
Maleficent: Why is Disney changing the story?

Rationale

This unit is based on the study of the Disney film *Maleficent*. The story is a reworking of the classic fairy tale Sleeping Beauty but it provides a very different story explaining why the curse was put on the princess in the first place and exploring two very different worlds. The text provides an opportunity to discuss the way context plays a part in the transformation of classic texts and the ways that cultural values and ideas are embedded in the new text as well as considering the way our own experiences and values influence our responses. This film blurs the lines between good and evil and also provides a new gender depiction with Angelina Jolie's portrayal of the fairy Maleficent. Through an analysis of the narrative structure, connotation, imagery and symbol and the context students will see new meanings emerge from the text and will be able to answer the question 'Why is Disney changing the story?'

Concept/s

Connotation, imagery and symbol: Students understand that imagery is aesthetically pleasing and persuasive. Students learn that
• words invite associations (connotations) in responders which bring related ideas and feelings to a text
• imagery and symbol communicate through associations which may be personal, social or cultural.
Context: Students understand that meaning changes with culture, time and technology. Students learn that
• they need to consider the context of composition as well as the context of response to a text
• they exist in different cultures and subcultures
• texts are composed in the context of other texts
• culture is inscribed in texts through choice of language, forms, modes, media and other features of texts
• different cultures and times may be associated with specific modes and media
Narrative: Students understand that narrative shapes and is shaped by one's view of the world. Students learn that
• their own experience and culture influence their responses to stories
• the conventions of narrative are combined to engage the responder emotionally and intellectually with events and characters depicted in the story and with ideas and values implied by the story
• conventions of narrative are adapted to different modes and media to achieve these effects
• close consideration and analysis of stories can bring to light subtleties in the text

Texts

- Film - *Maleficent,* Disney, 2014
- [Maleficent and the Big Problem With Disney's Fairy Tale Reboots](#) by Devon Maloney, WIRED, 6/2/2014
- Film trailers [Maleficent Official Trailer #3 - Legacy (2014) Angelina Jolie HD - Maleficent Official Wings Trailer (2014) - Angelina Jolie Disney Movie HD - Maleficent Official Dream Trailer (2014) - Angelina Jolie Disney Movie HD –](#) YouTube (various sources)
- [Maleficent (2014) Teaser - Disney crossover](#) by Joleen Alice, YouTube, 5/12/2013
- [Angelina Jolie / Maleficent - Speed Art (Photoshop By Garson](#) by Garsonmusic, YouTube, 16/10/2013
- ['MaleFiftyCent'](#) by Juliet Paylor, Daily Mail, 7/6/2014

Focus questions for responding and composing

- How do our experiences and culture influence our reading of stories?
- How do narrative conventions aim to involve us in film?
- How can culture, time and technology change the meaning of a text?
- How do words, images and sound combine to persuade and please the audience?

Prior knowledge

- ✓ Film techniques
- ✓ Fairy tale genre conventions

Assessment

Students write an essay answering the question posed in the unit title, '*Maleficent*: Why is Disney changing the story?' In their response students should make reference to the influences of changing context, the power of connotation, imagery and symbol and the narrative form and use specific examples to support their argument.

Key to table processes icons

Understanding	Engaging Personally	Connecting	Engaging Critically	Experimenting	Reflecting

Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	English Textual concept(s)	Processes
S4O1EP03 explore and appreciate the aesthetic qualities in their own and other texts and the power of language to communicate information, ideas, feelings and viewpoints S408UA7 understand and explain how combinations of words and images in texts are used to represent particular groups in society, and how texts position readers in relation to those groups (ACELT1628) S4O1UA01 apply increasing knowledge of vocabulary, text structures and language features to understand the content of texts (ACELY1733) S4O1EP01 recognise, reflect on, interpret and explain the connections between their own experiences and the world in texts	Use the written text from the opening voice over to explore the power of the language to communicate information, ideas, feelings and viewpoints. • What does this text remind you of? • What is the narrator telling us about this story? • How does the narrator involve us as the viewers in the story? • In which land do we belong? Is this a good or bad thing? How have we been positioned to think this way? • What language evokes an old world atmosphere? • What words suggest the fairy-tale genre? • Can they identify links to other films/ stories which influence their understanding and expectations of the text? Then re-watch the opening scene and identify the sounds and visual elements that reinforce these words. Explain symbolism to students and ask them to identify symbols that represent the different kingdoms and the ways the text attempts to influence us. *Narrator:* [voice over] *Let us tell an old story anew and we will see how well you know it. Once upon a time there were two kingdoms that were the worst of neighbors. So vast was the discord between them that it was said only a great hero or a terrible villain might bring them together. In one kingdom lived folk like you and me with a vain and greedy king to rule over them. They were forever discontent and envious of the wealth and beauty of their neighbors. For in the other kingdom, the Moors, lived every manner of strange and wonderful creature. And they needed neither king nor queen but trusted in one another.*	Connotation, imagery and symbol Context	
S4O1EP03 explore and appreciate the aesthetic qualities in their own and other texts and the power of language to communicate information, ideas, feelings and viewpoints S401UA07 identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry,	Compare scenes with interactions between Maleficent and Stefan from the beginning, the middle and the end of the film. Consider the use of colour, costuming, camera work and language in symbolising the changes in their personalities and the relationship between them. Identify the devices used to create the atmosphere in each	Connotation, imagery and symbol Narrative	

Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	English Textual concept(s)	Processes
humorous prose, drama or visual texts (ACELT1630) S401RC05 recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)	scene, for example the dialogue, vocabulary, sound effects, lighting, settings etc. and specific examples of each. Rank each of the devices in order of contribution to the feel of the scene. Do students have the same opinions about the importance of different elements of the text? Ask students to justify their opinions and try to come to a class consensus. Students then write about the best ways to create atmosphere in film, using metalanguage and textual examples to strengthen their argument.		
S401RC05 recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)	Look at some of the minor characters such as the three good fairies, Diaval, and the Queen. What do their characters add to the story? Why are they important in the narrative? They all appear in the curse scene. What do they each represent here? What part do they play? How are their actions important to the story? Students choose one of the minor characters to write a profile about. This should include their personalities, physical description, costumes, lines, roles, the major events they are involved in and settings where they are found. A final paragraph should explain the purpose and appeal of this character based on the way they have been presented in the film.	Narrative	
S405DA5 critically consider the ways in which meaning is shaped by context, purpose, form, structure, style, content, language choices and their own personal perspective	Choose a favourite scene from the film and analyse it with the students modelling how to critically consider the ways in which meaning is shaped by context, purpose, form, structure, style, content, language choices and your own personal perspective. Then ask students to do the same for another section of the film. (There are many short scenes available to watch on YouTube or choose a scene to watch with the whole class.)	Context Narrative	

Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	English Textual concept(s)	Processes
S405RC13 discuss aspects of texts, for example their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage (ACELT1803) S406RC9 identify and explain the links between the ideas, information, perspectives and points of view presented in a range of different texts S406RC10 identify, compare and describe the connection between texts with similar subject matter, such as a book and its film adaptation S408EP2 explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups (ACELT1619, ACELT1626) S408DA5 explore the ways recurring stories, e.g. legends and fairy stories, have been written and rewritten for different contexts and media	Use Wikipedia to briefly show students the historical development of the story from the 1300s and the multiple adaptations of the story over time. Discuss the popularity of fairy-tales and the ways they represent the cultural values at different points in time. Choose a traditional picture book version of Sleeping Beauty to compare and contrast to the film. Consider the events occurring in each of the texts and the main characters, the cultural symbols and values that are evident. Discuss the context of the different texts and the ways they reflect changes in our culture. Read and discuss Maleficent and the Big Problem With Disney's Fairy Tale Reboots. What are the positives and negatives they see connected to the film? What have they noted about the context of 2014? Make connections between the students own views of the film and the article and their responses to each text. Then ask students to write a personal response to the film discussing both its aesthetic and social value.	Context Narrative	
S401RC01 respond to and compose imaginative, informative and persuasive texts for different audiences, purposes and contexts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure S406RC11 compose texts that make creative connections with, adapt or transform other texts, such as the preparation of promotional material for a film or book or a narration for a documentary S405DA8 use imaginative texts as models to replicate or subvert textual conventions to create new texts S402RC14 use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722) S409RC6 use and reflect on metacognitive processes used for planning, including brainstorming, mind mapping, storyboarding, role-play and improvisation	In small groups students choose another fairy tale and consider either the depictions of gender or good and evil to analyse. Then students decide how they would adapt this tale for a modern audience and write a film pitch to share with the class. Provide the students with the SCAMPER scaffold to help generate ideas. (See the Experimenting Graphic organiser downloadable on the website.) After the idea generating activity is completed, ask students to answer 3 questions about their use of the table: 1. What technique in the scamper table did they find the easiest for generating new ideas? 2. What technique in the table did they find the most difficult to use? 3. Explain what they think this exercise tells them about their own strengths and preferred ways of learning?	Context Narrative	

Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	English Textual concept(s)	Processes
S403EP1 engage with the language and structures of texts in meaningful, contextualised and authentic ways S403DA4 - describe and analyse the purpose, audience and context of texts S404DA2 explore and analyse the ways purpose, audience and context affect a composer's choices of content, language forms and features and structures of texts to creatively shape meaning S403EP2 identify, discuss and reflect on the ideas and information in a range of texts	Look at the 3 official trailers for the film. What is common to all three? What are the differences between them? What is the overall effect of each trailer? Ask students to identify the possible purposes for the different choices and who the intended audience might be. Which do they think is the truest representation of the film? Place the numbers 1, 2 and 3 on different walls in the classroom and ask students to stand under the trailer they think best reflects the film. Then ask students to justify their choice whilst trying to persuade other students to change their minds and move to their chosen trailer. Official trailer - Maleficent Official Trailer #3 - Legacy (2014) Angelina Jolie HD Maleficent Official Wings Trailer (2014) - Angelina Jolie Disney Movie HD Maleficent Official Dream Trailer (2014) - Angelina Jolie Disney Movie HD	Context Narrative	
S404RC12 creatively adapt and transform their own or familiar texts into different forms, structures, modes and media for a range of different purposes and audiences S404RC13 - respond to and compose new print and multimodal texts, experimenting with appropriations and intertextuality S401UA05 use increasingly sophisticated verbal, aural, visual and/or written techniques, e.g. imagery, figures of speech, selective choice of vocabulary, rhythm, sound effects, colour and design, to compose imaginative texts for pleasure S404UA4 combine visual and digital elements to create layers of meaning for serious, playful and humorous purposes S405DA8 use imaginative texts as models to replicate or subvert textual conventions to create new texts S405RC9 compose texts using alternative, creative and imaginative ways of expressing ideas, recognising, valuing and celebrating	Share a range of other texts which have adapted Maleficent in some way, such as unofficial trailers (Maleficent (2014) Teaser - Disney crossover), posters, blogs, a lesson in Photoshop (Angelina Jolie / Maleficent - Speed Art (Photoshop)	By Garson) a spoof trailer 'MaleFiftyCent' Discuss the reasons people create these texts. Link this conversation to purpose, audience and context for each of the examples you provided. Now ask students to use their imaginations to create their own multimodal text. Complete an analysis sheet explaining their choices in relation to their purpose, audience and context and providing a detailed explanation of 3 techniques used to create layers of meaning and the intended effects on the audience.	Context Connotation, imagery and symbol Narrative	

Outcomes	Teaching and learning activities	English Textual concept(s)	Processes
originality and inventiveness			
S4O1EP03 explore and appreciate the aesthetic qualities in their own and other texts and the power of language to communicate information, ideas, feelings and viewpoints S401RC02 explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener (ACELY1735) S403DA7 recognise and use appropriate metalanguage in discussing a range of language forms, features and structures S404DA2 explore and analyse the ways purpose, audience and context affect a composer's choices of content, language forms and features and structures of texts to creatively shape meaning S404RC8 create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate (ACELY1736)	Assessment: Students write an essay answering the question posed in the unit title, '*Maleficent*: Why is Disney changing the story?' In their response students should make reference to the influences of changing context, the power of connotation, imagery and symbol and the narrative form and use specific examples to support their argument.	Context Connotation, imagery and symbol Narrative	

The intention of this unit starter is to illustrate teaching and learning activities for each of the processes.

The processes may be taught in any order to cater for the needs of all learners and further differentiation can be included in your full version of the unit.