THE MEDIA BOOK

ENGLISH & *MEDIA* CENTRE

EMC KS3 ENGLISH SERIES

Acknowledgements

Written by Jenny Grahame with Kate Domaille
Edited by Sabrina Broadbent and Lucy Webster
Design and layout by Fran Stowell
Cover by Blaise Thompson
Online editing by Hugh Morris
Published by English & Media Centre, 18 Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN
© 2001
ISBN: 0 907016 75 8

Many thanks to Alex Metcalfe, Maureen Blackwood, Amanda Sutton and Kirsten Sheridan for their valuable insights and generous support; to Isabel and Alice Fitzsimons for photographs and artwork; Becca Hunt, Lindsey Pinnick, Heidi Jacobsen, Kate Goldsmith, Di Marcus for comments and suggestions; members of the Diploma in Media Education course 2000 - 2001, and the many teachers and students who have piloted and evaluated the material.

Thanks to: Alex Metcalfe for his film *Out*, and his interview; BBC Worldwide for extracts from *Breakfast News* (21/11/00); *The Daily Mail* for 'Can Teletubbies really be good for young children?' (20.5.97); Maureen Blackwood and Sankofa Film and Video Workshop for *A Home Away From Home*; Harper Collins and Matt Groening for extract from *The Simpsons*: *a Complete Guide to our Favourite Family*; Dave Cobban and HHCL for *Juice Up*, *Fruit Shoot* and *Big Dave Pot Noodle* commercials; Amanda Sutton and Little Gem Poductions for *Photo You*; BBCWW Ltd for words and pictures © *star* the celebrity magazine and Kate Holton for her interview; Comic Relief for the transcribed extract from the Ali G interview with the Beckhams; UK Big Brother, produced by Bazal for Channel 4: *Big Brother* is an original format by John de Mol Produkties B.V.; Kirsten Sheridan for the use of her film *Patterns*, and her interview; the National Autism Society. The *ITC* for an extract from 'Emulation Fears and Understanding: A Review of Recent Research on Children and Television Advertising', October 1998, published by the *ITC*; the *Press Complaints Commision* for an extract from the Code of Practice; *The Guardian* and author for 'Hello for Teens'; *Britvic* for the description of 'Juice up' and the 'Britvic Drinks Cabinet'.

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Introduction

Aims

The Media Book is part of the new EMC KS3 Series for 11 - 14 year olds. Written to address the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Framework for Teaching English, Years 7 - 9, it is a pupil book which aims to provide a challenging range of controversial and thought-provoking media and moving image texts, and creative and active approaches to them. Activities are structured to fit approximately one hour lessons and each unit is designed to last three to four weeks. The units aim to foreground the following elements of effective teaching of media within the English curriculum:

- a fast pace and strong conceptual focus
- varied teaching styles and pupil groupings
- active pupil-centred approaches to moving image texts and their production contexts
- opportunities for shared and guided reading and writing
- support for oral work through production, role-play and simulation activities.

How to use the book

Most of the units in the book are based around the close study of moving image texts, with the exception of Celebrity. While two units (Studying *The Simpsons* and Tackling the *Teleubbies*) will require the teacher to record any episode off air, all the remaining units are supported by the relevant extracts on the accompanying video. These are indicated in the contents page and within the units themselves with the following icon:

Full details of video timings, support for viewing activities, and suggestions for supplementary viewing, resources and practical work can be found in the Teachers' notes, as can larger, full colour versions of the still frames reproduced from the films for analysis in the book.

Balancing range and progression

The book offers a choice of up to three units for each year. Taken as a whole, these texts and activities cover a wide range of media genres, concepts and teaching objectives. The units have been constructed developmentally over a three year course in terms of both media knowledge and analysis, and outcomes which demonstrate the English skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. While they do not necessarily have to be taught sequentially, the order of the units in the pupil book reflect this sense of progression. Although units have been devised to address the different objectives of Years 7, 8 and 9, no mention is made of the Framework is made in the pupil book and units are not allocated to a particular year. This information is provided in the Teachers' notes on the CD Rom.

Teachers' notes

To support the teaching of these units, teachers' notes consist of:

- long, medium and short term plans for each unit, written to the Framework
- additional support for classroom organisation, viewing and production acivities, and language notes
- pupil charts
- extension material
- copies of some key texts to allow for photocopying and annotation. These can also be made into OHTs for whole class work.

For maximum flexibility the notes are published on a CD ROM so that they can be printed off or amended as required. Updates in response to changes in national policy will be published on the English and Media Centre's website (www.englishandmedia.co.uk).

Out

In this unit you will learn to:
- recognise how print, sounds and both still and moving images combine to create meaning on film and television
- explain how stories change when adapted from one medium to another
- identify different techniques of camerawork, sound, lighting and colour, and evaluate their effects
- understand the importance of editing in moving image texts.

Telling stories

Preparation work Class work

■ Read this story carefully.

As a little boy, John is discouraged from reading by his step-father, who can barely read himself. One day John is caught by his step-dad reading a book by torchlight in the broom cupboard. Both he and his mum are beaten, and the book is torn up. This incident affects John deeply. He grows up to become a journalist and amateur boxer.

This is a very simple story, which poses lots of questions. Some of the things it might make you ask are suggested here.

- Why is John's step-father so opposed to his reading?
- What makes him so angry on this particular day?
- What does John feel about the incident?
- How does he overcome it as an adult?

■ Talk about each of these questions and use your imagination to think about some possible answers.

Re-telling the story Individual and group work

■ In a group of three, each person should take on the role of one of the characters in the story – John, his stepfather (Gary) and his mother (Tina). Spend five minutes writing the story of the incident in the words of your character. Again, try and use your imagination to fill in some of the gaps. Before you start, decide as a group whether you will tell the story:
  - as if it is happening now, in the present
  - as if it has just happened
  - as if time has passed and you are remembering the event later in life
  - in the form of a diary, letter to a friend, or a conversation.

Sharing your stories

■ Read your versions to each other and compare the different ideas and feelings you have described. Then swap your three versions with those of another group, to see how differently you have chosen to interpret the incident.

Same story, different interpretations Class work

- Your teacher will ask several groups to read out their three versions of the story. As you listen, think about:
  - the different explanations you have given for the incident
  - the different ways you have chosen to describe it
  - the different forms you have used to tell the story.

Turning the story into a film

This story has been used as the opening of a short film. On the next two pages you will find 27 still photographs, each representing one shot of the film. They are not in any particular order. You will see that there are five people pictured in the photographs; the two extra characters are John as an adult, and his personal trainer.

- Before you start trying to match the pictures with your idea of the story, find out how much you already know about film-making and its own special language. Write down the numbers of all the pictures which you think are:
  - close-up shots
  - long shots
  - high angle shots, filmed from above looking down
  - low angle shots, filmed from below looking up
  - shots where the camera is moving.

An example of each type of shot is shown at the bottom of the page.

- What do you notice about the colour in these pictures? What do you think the colour differences might mean?

It might help you to know that:
- the images of the black boxer represent John as an adult
- in picture 20, the paper in the waste-bin is a notice for Gary's funeral.

- Make a note of any other images or ideas which surprise or puzzle you. Talk about what you think they might represent.

close-up shot

long shot

high angle shot

low angle shot

moving camera

1

2

3

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Telling the story on film Group work

Your teacher will give you a copy of the images to cut up and move around. You will be acting as film editors, putting the shots into an order which tells the story in the most effective way.

- Try and sequence the 27 images into your own film. Each shot represents a few seconds of film. You will have to think about the points listed here.

  - From whose viewpoint will the story be told?
  - Where will the story start and finish?
  - How will the film show the effects of the incident on John as an adult?
  - What is the significance of Gary's funeral notice?

- When you have created a sequence which you are happy with, paste it up onto sugar paper. Make sure you leave some space between the images for writing notes, captions, or speech.

- Now have a go at thinking about the soundtrack. Think about the following:
  - whether you will include dialogue in your film, and if so, who will be speaking to whom
  - whether there will be a voice-over or a narrator telling the audience what's happening, in the words of one of the characters
  - what other sounds should be included (for example, music or sound effects).

- Underneath each image, write details of any soundtrack you have decided on.

- Prepare to present your version of the story to the class.

Sharing your film stories Class work

By now, each group in the class should have produced its own storyboard for a short film. A storyboard is a script which uses pictures – either hand-drawn or photographic – and captions. It allows a film-maker to show what the finished film will look like using images rather than words.

- Compare different versions of the story. Talk about the differences between them, focusing on the following:

The order, or sequence, of your pictures:
– which pictures you chose to start your stories with
– which was the last picture in your stories
– how the opening and closing shots affect the meaning of the story

The development of the story
– how the 'middles' of your stories vary

The passing of time
– how you dealt with the idea of John as an adult (Does he start the story as an adult, and then look back into his past, or have you told his story chronologically, from childhood to adulthood?)
– how this might make a difference to the meaning of the story

The funeral notice
– how important this is in each of your stories

The soundtrack
– what different ideas each group had about the use of sound
– which was more important – words, music, or sound-effects
– which seemed to work better – dialogue (speech) or voice-over narration (a narrator telling the story)
– what different ideas you had for music to accompany the images.

In this activity you have worked as film editors do – in other words, you have created a story, or narrative, by selecting and weaving together a series of film clips. Many people think that the most exciting part of film-making is writing the script and recording the pictures. But in fact, as you have discovered, the hardest – and often the most creative – part of the job is editing the sound and pictures together to tell a story which makes meaning for audiences. Well done, editors.

Watching *Out*

First impressions Class viewing

The images you worked on are part of a short film called *Out*, directed by Alex Metcalfe from his own original screenplay.

- Watch the film without writing anything down.

- After you have watched the film, talk about your first impressions. Was it what you expected?

- How is Alex's version different from your storyboards?

- Why do you think Alex has included the following:
  - the discussion about John's newspaper
  - the boxing work-out session
  - the funeral programme.

- Why do you think the film is called *Out*?

Watching *Out* again Class viewing

- Watch the film once more, this time looking carefully at the way Alex has edited the film. Make sure you notice the following:
  - the speed and pace of the editing (how slowly or quickly do shots change at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end?)
  - the flashbacks – the way the film cuts between the present and the past
  - the sound-track – and the way the sound from one section carries over into the next section
  - the lighting and colour in the film – for example, the contrast between the warm colours of the gym, and the cool grey tones of the flashbacks into the past.

Analysing and reviewing *Out* Group work

- Talk about what you have noticed from your second viewing. Then read the comments below, which were made by Alex, the film-maker.

> In short films you don't have much time to get the information over, and therefore anything that can be made as clear as possible helps.

> Generally, if a scene was not working I found that it was the script that was at fault or the pacing of the dialogue, as opposed to the camera moves.

> The story starts and ends slowly; the middle goes to madness. The rhythm took some time to get right. I wanted the slow start to emphasise the normality of the house when Gary was not there. The slow pace at the end is to allow the audience and John to reflect on past events.

> John's reaction to Gary's death is to relive this fight and put it behind him … I hope that the audience get a feeling for John's wish to move forward now.

> The film was shot over two days with one day, in total, for rehearsals. Picture editing took ten days; the sound edit took six months!

I made Gary white instead of black like Tina and John in a vague hope that it might break down any stereotypes that still exist.

The aim of the piece is not to provide a fully fleshed out drama but more to leave the viewer with a feeling for the crushing restrictions and unresolved nature of the relationship between John and his family.

- Choose three comments which you feel are particularly interesting or have helped you to understand more about the way the film was made and edited.
- Using your three comments as a starting point, write a group article reviewing *Out* for another Year 7 class who has not yet seen it. In your shared article, try and write about some of the following ideas, terms or phrases:

camerawork	sound effects	characterisation
colours and lighting	soundtrack	story
music	pace	flashbacks
atmosphere	conflict	resolution
the past	the present	the future
ending	editing	

Year 7 Unit 1: Out

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     Outline of the activity 'Retelling the story'
   - **Turning the story into a film** Page 4
     Outline of activities
     Using *Picture Power* for 'Telling the story on film'
   - **Watching *Out*** Page 4
     Outline of activities
   - **Analysing and reviewing *Out*** Page 5
     Points to raise in discussion
     Prompts for writing reviews
4. **Pupil resources:**
   - *Out* still frames In *Picture Power* folder
5. **Additional resources and activities:**
   - *Out* production details: synopsis Page 7
   - Principal characters Page 7
   - Shotlist Page 9
   - Alex Metcalfe talks about making *Out* Page 12
7. Using *Picture Power* Page 14

Short term plans for *The Media Book* are included in Excel format in the folder 'Short term plans – Media' on the CD Rom.

As with all the texts included in *The Media Book* and video, *Out* could also be used with much older pupils.

Video timings

Out by Alexander Metcalfe: 0:10

Overview

This unit aims to:

- introduce pupils to the language and terminology used to describe moving image texts
- suggest that narrative can be structured in different ways
- emphasise the importance of the role of editing in constructing meaning in narrative
- demonstrate the different non-verbal techniques through which mood and emotion can be represented in moving image texts
- show how different meanings can be inferred by different readers.

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Medium Term Plan

Year 7 objectives from the Framework for Teaching English

Word level
Pupils should revise, consolidate and secure:

Spelling
7. the spelling of key words in each subject

To continue developing their vocabulary, pupils should be able to:

Vocabulary
14. define and deploy words with precision, including their exact implication in context
21. read accurately, and use correctly, vocabulary which relates to key concepts in each subject, distinguishing between everyday uses of words and their subject specific use, e.g. *energy, resistance*

Sentence level
Pupils should be able to:

Sentence construction and punctuation
4. keep tense usage consistent, and manage changes of tense so that meaning is clear

Text level – Reading
Pupils should be able to:

Research and study skills
4. make brief clearly-organised notes of key points for later use

Reading for meaning
6. adopt active reading approaches to engage with and make sense of texts, e.g. *visualising, predicting, empathising and relating to own experience*
7. identify the main point, processes or ideas in a text and how they are sequenced and developed by the writer
8. **infer and deduce meanings using evidence in the text, identifying where and how meanings are implied**
11. recognise how print, sounds and still or moving images combine to create meaning

Text level – Writing
Pupils should be taught to:

Plan draft and present
1. plan, draft, edit, revise, proofread and present a text with readers and purpose in mind
2. collect, select and assemble ideas in a suitable planning format, e.g. *flow char, list, star chart*
3. use writing to explore and develop ideas, e.g. *journals, brainstorming techniques and mental mapping activities*

Inform, explain and describe
11. select and present information using detail, example, diagram and illustration as appropriate

Analyse, review and comment

19. write reflectively about a text, taking into account the needs of others who might read it.

Speaking and listening

Pupils should be taught to:

Speaking

1. use talk as a tool for clarifying ideas, e.g. *by articulating problems or asking pertinent questions*

2. recount a story, anecdote or experience, and consider how this differs from written narrative

5. promote, justify or defend a point of view using supportive evidence, example and illustration which are linked back to the main argument

Listening

6. listen for and recall the main points of a talk, reading or television programme, reflecting on what has been heard to ask searching questions, make comments or challenge the views expressed

Group discussion and interaction

10. identify and report the main points emerging from discussion, e.g. *to agree a course of action including responsibilities and deadlines*

12. use exploratory, hypothetical and speculative talk as a way of researching ideas and expanding thinking

13. work together logically and methodically to solve problems, make deductions, share, test and evaluate ideas

14. acknowledge other people's views, justifying or modifying their own views in the light of what others say

Teaching notes

Page numbers refer to the pages in the pupil book.

Telling stories (page 5)

Re-telling the story (page 5)

Although this is a writing task, it should be a fairly brief introductory activity. Its main function is to generate imaginative talk around:

- the given scenario and pupils' different readings of it
- narrative point of view, and the ways this changes according to the narrator
- different ways in which the passage of time can be dramatised.

Turning the story into a film (page 6)

The introduction to this activity is a way of familiarising pupils early on in Year 7 with the short-hand terminology of camera shots and angles, and the atmospheric use of lighting and colour to represent the present and the past. This technical vocabulary (LS, XCU, etc.) will recur throughout the book, and provides pupils with useful short-cuts in written work.
A glossary of moving image terminology is included on this CD Rom (glossary.doc). The images on pages 7 and 8 are reproduced in full colour in the *Picture Power* programme on the CD Rom. These could be printed out if required.

Telling the story on film (page 8)

This is a familiar sequencing activity which can be undertaken on paper, as suggested in the book, but would be particularly rewarding as a screen based activity. The images are included in the Picture Power framework on this CD Rom. This allows pupils to:

- physically sequence and manipulate the images in colour on screen
- crop specific images to emphasise details within individual pictures
- choose whether to cut, mix or dissolve from one image to the next, and to vary the time each image appears on screen
- add dialogue, music, sound-effects or captions to the images
- print out annotated versions of their sequences, explaining the chronology and editing decisions they have made.

In debriefing, pupils should be given generous opportunity to compare their different versions, whether in print or on screen, and should be made aware that there are no definitive right or wrong answers. Indeed, the film maker himself will have experimented with a range of different edits and sequences much as the pupils will have done.

Watching *Out* (page 9)

This is a very short film, focussing on the interplay between two very short and intense moments in time. It is very tightly edited.
Because of the speed of the editing, full concentration will be required; if blackout is available in the classroom, it will focus attention wonderfully.
Make sure no writing is done during the first screening.
The prompts for discussion should draw pupils' attention to the symbolism of the following narrative devices:

- the newspaper (John's rebellion against his father's illiteracy)
- the boxing sequences (his personal response to his father's aggression)

- the funeral programme (mid-life crisis? The close of a chapter in his life? Unfinished business?)

Watching *Out* again (page 10)

Because it is so concise, the film should ideally be screened several times; however, this will depend on the attention span of your pupils, given that they will already have studied the images very closely.
If your VCR has good freeze frame and slow motion facilities, it would be worth scrolling shot by shot through the middle section, which cuts between present and past almost subliminally.
You might want to allocate one of the four prompts to different groups for them to focus and report back on.
While the listed film techniques may seem obvious, it is unlikely that pupils will have been required to articulate their effects in such detail before. The aim of the discussion is to initiate the sort of close reading, isolation of different techniques, and use of example and quotation they will be familiar with in print texts.

Analysing and reviewing *Out* (page 10)

The comments from the director are intended to offer an additional perspective to the class discussion. The full text of Alex Metcalfe's interview is reproduced on pages 12 and 13 of these notes. Points to pull out here might include:

- editing decisions are made consciously rather than randomly
- in terms of creating meaning in a film, what is shot is often less important than the way it is edited
- the editing process takes longer and is more complex than the initial shoot.
- the intentions of the director are illuminating but may not always be fully realised in the text
- audiences may read the text in ways *not* intended by the director.

As with the earlier writing task, the shared production of a review is intended more to allow pupils to share and reflect on their understanding of the film than as a piece of polished writing. However, you may wish to use this opportunity to highlight some of the following main textual features of review writing:

- **The words in film reviews usually include:**
  - lots of adjectives
  - lots of nouns
  - lots of specialist vocabulary.

- **The sentences in film reviews usually:**
  - use the present tense
  - are often written in an informal tone
  - include facts about the film
  - briefly summarise the film
  - contain personal opinion
  - offer an evaluation or rating.

- **The whole text of a film review:**
  - often uses bold print and headlines
  - often includes a visual image
  - is short, usually 200 – 800 words
  - may be written in columns
  - has a clear idea of who the audience is
  - allows the writer to show-off his or her own knowledge.

These points are further developed in a complete unit on review-writing in Unit 5: Did you see…? in the companion volume in this series, *The Non-Fiction Book*.

The prompts for the writing activity have been selected to encourage pupils to focus in some detail on the narrative and visual techniques used in the film rather than offering a generalised re-telling of the story. These issues will be revisited at various points in subsequent units. It is hoped that the writing outcomes can be used with other Year 7 classes when they undertake this unit.

Production information

The production information on *Out*, included on page 7 of these notes could be used as an example of this aspect of film making when studying other units in *The Media Book*, for example *Patterns* or *Home Away From Home*.

Out – Production details

Working Title: OUT
Duration: 5 minutes
Originating format 35mm film.

Synopsis

The story is based on the real life experience of a now successful author who was banned from reading during childhood. The ban was instigated by the child's stepfather, who felt intimidated by the child's confidence in literacy.

The film is set in present day with flashbacks to a decisive moment in his childhood. We open in flashback where we see what appears to be a normal household. Very soon we understand that something is not quite right as the child (John) is hiding in a darkened space and reading by torchlight. This cuts to John in present day preparing for a session with his amateur boxing trainers. We return to flashback to greet the stepfather (Gary) who is now back from work. He has had a day of paperwork which he finds frustrating due to his poor education. John is discovered by accident and a torrent of abuse is triggered from Gary as he is reminded of his own weaknesses. This escalates to a physical attack on Tina (John's natural mother), culminating with John's book being torn up in front of him and the first strike of what we believe might be many. During the latter part of this flashback we intercut snatches of John in present day training with a punch bag. At the point of the strike we return to John in present day as he loses all control, hammering the punch-bag repeatedly with every ounce of strength he has, resulting finally in exhaustion. Later, as John recovers, it is revealed that today was the day of his stepfather's funeral, and so a chapter of his life has been closed.

The aim of the piece is not to provide a fully fleshed out drama but more to leave the viewer with a feeling for the crushing restrictions and unresolved nature of John and his family. The emotions will be expressed not only by Gary's actions but by use of startling visuals and heavily dubbed and layered audio.

Principal characters

John (Age 11)
The son of Tina and her former lover. He is bright but shy. Having nothing in common with his mother Tina and stepfather Gary he has found himself more and more living in his own world. Solace has been found in his great love of reading.
Appearance: Afro Caribbean. Thin, uneasy with his looks.

John (aged 35)
Now grown up and, having escaped the day-to-day life with his mother and stepfather he has matured into a self-assured and popular man. He is educated and is regarded as a reasonably successful features writer. He is a loyal person and still sees his mother often, but his relationship with her is skin deep, distanced further by the distrust that his stepfather hold for him.
Appearance: As above, but now confident about his physique.

Gary
Stepfather to John and husband to Tina. He is uneducated and barely literate. He has become a foreman for a general builders' company. He is getting older (early 40s in the time that we see him), deeply unresolved and liable to mood swings. He thinks he believes that education doesn't get you anywhere whilst the way to survive is to get 'out there' and fight your corner. On closer inspection he feels threatened by education, especially John's (age 11) love of, and ability in reading. He is acutely embarrassed by the difficulty that he has with the minimal paperwork he

has to do as a foreman and fears the greater responsibility he will have as computers become commonplace. He married Tina as she reassured him of his worth, but has no respect for her. Appearance: Caucasian, well built. Weathered face.

Tina
John's mother and wife to Gary. She enjoys the uncomplicated things in life and is generally happy. She is house-proud and popular in her local community. She doesn't understand Gary's frustrations but loves him as he provides well and meets her standards as a husband. She is protective of John, a little worried by his withdrawn nature, but frightened by Gary's bullying attitude towards him.
Appearance: Afro-Caribbean, brightly dressed, age mid-30s.

Shot-list for *Out*

1. MS hands washing up; pan up to CU of young woman's profile at the sink
2. CU mugs and teapot – pouring tea
3. CU profile – Tina leaves frame then re-enters. Cut to
4. MS John as a boy in cupboard reading with a torch
5. Cut to Tina in hall calling John
6. Cut to John in cupboard as 4
7. Cut back to hallway as Tina climbs stairs looking for him
8. Cut back to John in cupboard looking up
9. Cut to Tina looking round bedroom door searching for him, then leaving
10. Cut to John again
11. Cut to CU adult John in foreground changing; trainer (Mac) comes in behind him; pulls out to medium shot
12. Cut to hand on bag, bum on chair
13. Cut on beat to John and Mac seated next to each other; Mac reads paper, John laces trainers
14. CU John, with Mac in background; they rise
15. CU Mac walking out of frame followed by John; tracking camera follows him
16. CU Mac walking through the door, followed by John; tracking shot to punchbag; men face each other, punchbag between them; John starts punching
17. Cut to kitchen – MS Tina reading paper (note Charles and Di feature, indicating time-frame). Gary enters from left, sits down.
18. Cut to two-shot – MS Gary, Tina to left
19. Reverse mid-shot, Tina turns off radio
20. XCU Gary discussing time sheets
21. CU Tina to left, gazing vacantly, looks down
22. CU Gary's boots, low angle, under table. Look at the floor
23. Cut to John in cupboard
24. Cut back to boots
25. Cut to John

26. Cut to LA Tina walking to cupboard
27. CU int. cupboard, dustpan on door, hand knocks it off hook
28. John looking up HA
29. LA CU Tina looking down, she recoils – Nothing!
30. CU to adult John in profile punching from right
31. LA, Gary appears behind Tina in doorway – Get out, what are you doing? Reading?
32. MCU adult John in profile punching from left
33. LA XCU Gary shouting
34. Jump cut to LACU Gary shouting – you ain't gonna learn nothing like that
35. Cut to John on punchbag
36. LA XCU Gary shouting – 'Get out!'
37. Jump cut CU Gary – 'Get out – out!'
38. Jumpcut rear view of Gary pulling him out , pushing Tina out of the way – 'out out!'
39. Adult John at punchbag
40. LA XCU Gary – 'you've got to fight your corner, you've got to be fighting to live, do you understand?'
41. Jump cut CU Gary – 'do you understand?'
42. Jump cut MCU Gary– 'gimme that – do you understand?'
43. Adult John fighting
44. MS Gary snatching book –Tina: 'Gareth, Gary! No!'
45. John fighting
46. CU Tina from left trying to protect boy;
47. Jump cut, Tina recoiling backwards – camera moving?
48. HA Tina falling to floor in corridor
49. Cut to MS men facing each other across punchbag
50. MCU adult John left profile punching
51. MCU hand reaching for book – blurred shot
52. Gary's hand grabbing book; moving camera pans up to show his contorted profile – book gets ripped
53. John looking left to right

54. LA John and Gary struggling – ‘Do you understand?’

55. Adult John punching furiously

56. Book getting ripped MS

57. Adult John punching

58. John and Gary struggling

59. Adult John punching, collapsing into the punchbag – soundtrack: ‘you’ve got to be fighting your corner, you’ve gotta be fighting to live, do you understand? Do you understand? Gimmee that – Gary, Gary no!’

60. MCU pages of book being ripped and thrown to ground – sound of tearing carries over into ...

61. … HA MS John hugging punchbag weeping. Camera pans downwards, he lets go and moves away into MS – ‘John – are you OK mate?’ Camera pans back up, ‘Sorry mate, I’ll talk to you about it next week.’ John walks out of shot, leaving Mac in right of shot . ‘I’m here all day if you want me’

62. MLS tracking shot - John walks through doorway into changing room. Slow zoom into MS, camera pans slowly round John as he takes his gloves off. He reaches into jacket pocket and takes out paper, reads, nodding, leans left towards bin

63. XCU funeral programme dropping into bin

64. Cut to static LS John seated in chair head on to camera. He rises, camera pans up to frame him as he starts changing

65. Cut to credits.

Alex Metcalfe talks about making *Out*

Where did the idea for the film come from?

The idea came from Andera Ashworth's autobiographical work *Once in a House on Fire*. She related the story of her father ripping up her favourite book and it just seemed such a painful and powerful act. I was in awe of the fact that somebody could persevere through such a difficult start in life and become so successful. What appealed about this particular event was that it showed her stepfather's contempt in such a direct way, and Andrea's ability to rise above it has been demonstrated by her writing. For the film I changed the sex of the child to allow the audience to have some understanding of the stepfather's behaviour (however enlightened people are, it still seems more acceptable for a girl to read and not play outside than a boy).

Why did you choose to make Gary white while John and Tina were black?

I used a mixed race family to make it absolutely clear that Gary is not John's natural father. In short films you don't have much time to get the information over and therefore anything that can be made as clear as possible helps.

It is also worth remembering that in London there was a lot of racial tension in the early 80's culminating in the Brixton riots (the time of the flash back period) which in the backstory puts added stress on the family. I made Gary white instead of black like Tina and John in a vague hope that it might help break down any stereotypes that still exist.

Why did you choose to tell the story through flashbacks into the past?

The flashback process was used to make a direct link between this event and John's present day state. John's reaction to Gary's death is to relive this fight and put it behind him. He is released from the negatives of his past and we hope that he might be able to build stronger relationships with his mother again. This is not specifically dealt with in the film, but I hope that the audience get a feeling for John's wish to move forward now.

When you wrote the script, did you have any particular audience or channel in mind?

This has always been a personal project, with the main aim for it to go to film festivals. The story was in my mind for 2 years before I scripted it and therefore writing it was reasonably straightforward. It took 2 or 3 sittings to complete. I then pared it down over a three week period. The film was clear in my head and therefore I didn't need to storyboard it.

How was the film produced?

Pre-production was 4 weeks. The film was made on a very low budget so I had to get people hooked on the idea. All equipment was donated after copious begging letters; the crew were paid on expenses only. The film stock was scrounged from various production companies. My art director and costume designer scoured second hand shops for 80s stuff. The Art Department had to go to Brighton to source much of it.

The film was shot over two days, with one day in total for rehearsals. Picture editing took 10 days; the sound edit took 6 months! This took a long time as there were a lot of sound effects to generate, and the sound designer donated access to his sound suite and his time, so we had to fit around him. Nothing got left out, but the scene where Gary finds John in the cupboard (possibly the most important scene in the film) was shot in two takes in a total of five minutes just before we were to be thrown out of the location.

The understairs cupboard was physically built by the art director. We used camera shutter effects (as seen in *Saving Private Ryan*) for the boxing stuff to emphasise the turmoil in John's mind.

Editing decisions: These were all about rhythm. The story starts and ends slowly, the middle goes to madness. The rhythm took some time to get right. I wanted the slow start to emphasise the normality of the house when Gary was not there. The slow pace at the end is to allow the audience (and John) to reflect on the past events. The jump cuts and pace of the middle are for contrast.

Soundtrack: For the music I chose a slow melody to start which fits into the 80's era, and crashing music on the radio to emphasise the scene and emotional change. The final track is related to the subject – 'you can't hit what is not there'. Its kind of indie bluesy feel fits with the slightly uneasy quality of the film. Lots of the audio in the final piece is coming from inside the actors' heads. It is distorted and repetitious at times. The punch sound is actually a bass drum from a reggae track (an irony that I liked). I did this as it had an all round depth to the punch sound that we couldn't get from recorded punches.

As a TV Lighting cameraman I direct pictures constantly and therefore had few problems with camera moves. Generally if a scene was not working I found that it was the script that was at fault or the pacing of the dialogue as opposed to the camera move. I have directed 14 short dramas for channel 5 so was broken in by that. There are a few things I would change but I am too close to the film to really know now. The things I'm unhappy with seem to change regularly. Hopefully I will be able to answer this more completely in a few months time when I'm not so close to it.

Using Picture Power

Full instructions on the use of the *Picture Power* framework are included for downloading in the **Read Me** file in a folder entitled **Copy Contents to Hard Disk**. It will be useful to print these out as they contain all the relevant information you need to get the most out of the application.

The version of *Picture Power* included here does *not* provide you with the pre-existing photo-stories provided on the original *Picture Power II.* CD Rom. Instead, we have provided the blank Do-It Yourself framework, into which you can import a number of different sequences of stills from the various units in the Media Book, listed in detail with some suggested activities below. The blank framework can also be used to import images of your own choice, either using a digital camera or using 'found' images scanned in onto your hard disk, from the Internet, or from your VCR. The **Help This Story** file in the Do-It-Yourself menu explains this in more detail, as do the **Read Me** notes.

Importing images into Picture Power

- Double click on the ***Picture Power* projector** icon.
- When the first screen appears, double click on **Do It Yourself** in the centre. You will then see a blank grid.
- Go to the **File** menu, and select **Import batch**. Navigate to folder called **KS3 Media**.
- Select the folder you require (names correspond to the appropriate units) and double-click.
- Select the first image, and then click **Open.** The images will then flow into the blank grid.

Why use Picture Power with these texts?
The close reading of moving image texts in class is a tricky procedure. Unless you have a very large monitor screen in your classroom, much of the visual detail of individual shots and editing effects can get lost for all but those nearest to the screen; unless your classroom has blackout blinds, a sunny day can bleach out the impact of the images; and of course the seamless flow of images onscreen is seductive and can deflect concentration. *Picture Power* can compensate for these problems by:

- reviewing particular sequences in pairs or threes close-up around a single computer screen.
- defamiliarising the narrative by slowing it right down to a series of stills, each of which can be examined and analysed full screen.
- allowing pupils to experiment with the connotations of individual shots or key narrative moments by lingering on them, cropping and framing selected details, or adding captions which explain their significance. It could be argued that this is the visual equivalent of word-level work.

More importantly, *Picture Power* allows pupils to investigate the editing process by interacting with the material. Instead of assuming that the moving image sequences they have watched are pre-ordained and immutable, they can physically manipulate them to explore the many editorial decisions taken by the director, and their impact on the final meanings of the text. They can:

- change the sequence of individual shots, and thus of the narrative as a whole.
- crop and reframe the images to emphasise different elements within each frame.
- insert titles, captions or black or white frames to anchor particular meanings.
- experiment with timing and pace by varying the length of different shots.
- play with the transitions between shots, to see how the insertion of a slow mix or fade differs from a short sharp cut, and so on.
- show how different sound-tracks can entirely change the impact or meaning of the images.
- print out a sequence of their own, annotated with explanatory captions.

Using the same literacy analogy as above, these hands-on editorial activities serve similar functions to sentence-level work.

The aim is not only to give pupils active ways of investigating existing texts, but also to arm them with understanding of the techniques and decisions they may later draw on in their own production work. While the ultimate goal may be to offer pupils 'real' production opportunities in video or still photography, this may be an unrealistic expectation for large KS3 classes; if nothing else, the use of *Picture Power* does offer a limited taste of the production process, and one which can be built on in later years.

Making the most of Picture Power
The *Picture Power* exercises can be used in a number of ways:

On a single computer in the classroom. If you are lucky enough to have a data projector, the whole class can be shown how the programme works, and can then be set to work on a sequence in groups of two or three, using the images from the book. Each group in turn can then demonstrate their outcomes on screen to the class, allowing for comparison, discussion and shared reflection.

On a single computer elsewhere, e.g. in the library. If the system is loaded in advance, each group in turn can be sent off to work on it for 15 – 20 minutes while the rest of the class works on something else. As each group finishes, its version can be saved, or printed out so that at the end of the lesson there will be a number of versions saved for comparison.

In an ICT suite. If a copy of *Picture Power* is loaded onto the main server, it should be possible to copy the relevant folder onto each machine so that groups of pupils can work on it simultaneously.

Using hard copies only. If you are unable to access a computer in lesson time, you could print out one copy of the stills for the chosen exercise for each group, and ask them to cut and paste it as a storyboard.

Whichever form you use, pupils should work in groups of no more than three, to ensure full participation.

The activities described below are suggestions only; you will probably have ideas of your own. The blank *Picture Power* grid can of course also be used with images imported from elsewhere, as in the *Photo-You* photo-documentary exercise.

Out

These images are reproduced in the same sequence as pages 7 and 8 in the book, with a few extra images at the end. As in the book, they are not in the order in which they appear in the film, as part of the exercise involves creating the narrative.

Suggested activities

- After creating a sequence from the print images, but before watching the whole film, pupils can recreate it on screen, experimenting with the effects of transitions such as mixes and fades, and the addition of their scripted soundtracks using the recording studio facility. They can then compare their own audio-visual versions with the finished film.
- After watching the film, they can re-tell the story from the mother's point of view, using the recording facility to create a voice-over.
- They can print out a sequence of images with captions which explain the techniques used by the director to create atmosphere and impact.

Short term plan
Out – Reading moving images

Title of unit: Out – Reading moving images					
Year:	**Objectives: word: 14. define and deploy words with precision, including their exact implication in context;** 21. read accurately, and use correctly, vocabulary which relates to key concepts in each subject, distinguishing between everyday uses of words and their specific subject use, e.g.*energy, resistance*				**School priorities**
	Objectives: sentence: 4. keep tense usage consistent, and manage changes of tense so that meaning is clear				
Term:	**Objectives: reading:** 4. make brief clearly-organised notes of key points for later use; 6. adopt active reading approaches to engage with and make sense to texts, e.g. *visualising, predicting, empathising and relating to own experience;* 7. identify the main point, processes or ideas in a text and how they are sequenced and developed by the writer; **8. infer and deduce meanings using evidence in the text, identifying where and how meanings are implied;** 11. recognise how print, sounds and still or moving images combine to create meaning				
Week:	**Objectives: writing:** 2. collect, select and assemble ideas in a suitable planning format, e.g. *flow chart, list, star chart;* 3. use writing to explore and develop ideas, e.g. *journals, brainstorming techniques and mental mapping activities* ; 11. select and present information using detail, example, diagram and illustration as appropriate; **19. write reflectively about a text, taking into account the needs of others who might read it**				
Teacher:	**Objectives: speaking and listening: 1. use talk as a tool for clarifying ideas, e.g. *by articulating problems or asking pertinent questions;*** 2. recount a story, anecdote or experience, and consider how this differs from written narrative; 5. promote, justify or defend a point of view using supportive evidence, example and illustration which are linked back to the main argument; **6. listen for and recall the main points of a talk, reading or television programme, reflecting on what has been heard to ask searching questions, make comments or challenge the views expressed; 10. identify and report the main points emerging from discussion, e.g. *to agree a course of action including responsibilities and deadlines;*** 12. use exploratory, hypothetical and speculative talk as a way of researching ideas and expanding thinking; 13. work together logically and methodically to solve problems, make deductions, share, test and evaluate ideas; 14. acknowledge other people's views, justifying or modifying their own views in the light of what others say				
	Word	**Introduction**	**Development**	**Plenary**	**Homework**
Lesson 1 Telling stories		Read the synopsis of a story and use the questions to stimulate and focus discussion.	In groups of three, writing individually: tell the story from the point of view of the characters involved. Make decisions about the way the story will be told, for example, point of view. Read the stories to the other people in the group and compare which thoughts and feelings different people have chosen to focus on. Swap stories with another group and see how differently people have interpreted and re-told the story.	Listen to several stories from each of the three different points of view. Talk about the reasons for these differences and which point of view (if any) pupils think makes the most effective story.	
Lesson 2 Turning the story into a film		Short activity revising the language of film.	Reading the still images. Focus on the use of colour in the images. Talk about any surprising or unusual images and what they might represent. In groups: sequence the still images and decide on the soundtrack.	In groups: take it in turns to present the storyboards to the rest of the class. Use the framework to help focus the discussion on the similarities and differences.	[Write a short commentary on the group storyboards, highlighting some of the key similairities and differences.]

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Short term plan
Out – Reading moving images

Year:	**Objectives: word:**				**School priorities**
	Objectives: sentence: 4. keep tense usage consistent, and manage changes of tense so that meaning is clear				
	Objectives: reading: 4. make brief clearly-organised notes of key points for later use; 6. adopt active reading approaches to engage with and make sense to texts, e.g. *visualising, predicting, empathising and relating to own experience;* 7. identify the main point, processes or ideas in a text and how they are sequenced and developed by the writer; **8. infer and deduce meanings using evidence in the text, identifying where and how meanings are implied;** 11. recognise how print, sounds and still or moving images combine to create meaning				
Week:	**Objectives: writing: 1. plan, draft, edit, revise, proofread and present a text with readers and purpose in mind; 19. write reflectively about a text, taking into account the needs of others who might read it**				
	Objectives: speaking and listening: 1. use talk as a tool for clarifying ideas, e.g. *by articulating problems or asking pertinent questions;* 6. listen for and recall the main points of a talk, reading or television programme, reflecting on what has been heard to ask searching questions, make comments or challenge the views expressed; 12. use exploratory, hypothetical and speculative talk as a way of researching ideas and expanding thinking				
	Word	**Introduction**	**Development**	**Plenary**	**Homework**
Lesson 3 Watching *Out*		As a class: watch the film without writing anything down and talk about first responses. Talk about the ways in which this film is different from the storyboards. Consider possible reasons for the director's decisions to include particular scenes and the reasons why the film might be called *Out* .	Watch *Out* again, using the prompts to focus analytical viewing and note making. In groups: talk about what was noticed on a second viewing. Read the comments by the director. Choose three comments. Use these comments to help write a group review of the film.	Listen to some of the group reviews.	Individually: re-draft group review. Or, read additional material on the production process. Resources provided on the CD Rom.