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| **Visual Literacy Glossary** | |
| **allegory** | A story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning. A common technique of allegory is personification; thereby abstract qualities are given human shape. An allegory may be conceived as an extended metaphor. | |
| appropriation | Appropriation is taking an image, character or technique from one context and placing it in another. This happens quite a lot in many different text forms. Often the appropriation will occur when a character is taken out of their time. A 21st century boy, for example, might be placed in the context of the Dark Ages or conversely (the opposite) a boy from Ancient Rome might travel through time and be forced to attend a 21st century school. While this can often have humorous results, it can also be used to highlight the differences between two eras in history. Other forms of appropriation include taking a stereotyped character out of their context. An example of this is Crocodile Dundee or, more recently, Legally Blonde. Refer to the animation Appropriation for an example.  Visual texts can also be re-composed into different formats. Examples of these include films such as theX-men trilogy, Spiderman and the Batman films where the plot and characters from a comic strip have been used to re-create the text in a different text form. This is an effective form of intertextuality as it uses the responder's expectations as a basis for meaning. When a responder views a film adaptation of a comic strip he/she knows more or less what to expect. What do you expect to see in a comic strip? Action, witty one-liners, good versus evil, a love interest and eventually good will overcome evil.  Texts can also be re-composed into modern contexts. Some examples of these include the Luhrmann version of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, the play A West Side Story which is also a modern adaptation of Romeo and Juliet and Clueless which is a modern version of Jane Austen's Emma. When a responder views a text that has been recomposed into modern contexts he/she will expect to see certain themes played out. The fact that it is in a modern context has the effect of validating themes as being timeless as well as expressing the importance of these themes in contemporary times. | |
| **angle** | Angle is often used to convey a point of view. In order to make something look powerful and commanding the eye or the camera is positioned below the subject in a low angle shot, looking upwards. To create a sense of equality between the subject and the viewer, the camera is positioned at eye level. In a high angle shot, the camera is above the person or object, often making the person or object appear weak, inferior or under pressure. | |
| **audience / responder** | Those who read, view or hear a text. Target audience is a specific audience that an author is hoping to reach. | |
| **body language and gaze** | Examine facial expressions, gestures, stance or position as these features can convey the attitude, feelings or personality of the individual being drawn or photographed. Take note of the direction of the subject’s eyes. | |
| **comparison and contrast** | Composers of visual texts use these techniques to draw the reader’s attention to differences and similarities. | |
| **Composition or layout** | Composition refers to the layout or the way that the whole text has been put together and the arrangement of elements withina visual text. For example, by using images, borders and various features. | |
| **colour** | The use of particular colours in a visual image may represent particular moods or feelings. Colour can change the way we think and behave, for example, making us happy or sad, irritated or enthusiastic. Colour can therefore be used in visual texts to create meaning. The symbolic meanings that we attach to particular colours may change according to context. In one visual image, red may suggest passion or suggest danger in another. Colour can also be described in terms of tone and saturation. Tone is the degree of lightness or darkness of a coloured area. Saturation is the degree of purity in a colour. Bright colours are often used to convey a sense of fun and happiness. Dull colours can convey gloom and sadness. For example, red can communicate danger and white is a symbol of purity.  Typically it is assumed in Australia, and many countries around the world, that the following colours signify the following things:   * Red: anger, passion, danger, stop * White: peace, purity, cleanliness, life * Black: death, sickness, evil * Green: go, nature, happiness * Blue: peace, serenity, boys * Pink: love, girls * Grey: tedium, boredom, depression, confusion   Composers will use colours to indicate different meanings as above. It is also important to note that composers will often use colours that stand out in order to attract the attention of the audience. | |
| **context** | Cultural, historical, social, situational and personal circumstances in which a text is composed and responded to. | |
| **deconstruct** | Respond to a text in an analytical manner by pulling it apart and critically examining each component. | |
| **dialogue and word choice** | Language of narrator and/or characters, or speech bubbles in cartoons. | |
| **exaggeration** | Deliberately enlarge, or make effect dominate or emphatic. Exaggerated language can be described as hyperbolic. | |
| **eye level (angle)** | To create a sense of equality between the subject and the viewer, the camera is positioned at eye level. | |
| **framing** | This is the way that the subject is placed in the photograph, painting or film frame. What goes into a frame is carefully planned. The same camera shots and angles relevant to film are applicable to visuals. Close ups, extreme close ups, medium shots, long shots, tilted up or down shots and so on are  relevant | |
| **imagery and symbolism** | Relying on associations with particular colours, signs, symbols and images to enhance significance or works implicitly by intensifying our response. | |
| **intertextuality** | Appropriating or referring to images or ideas from other texts to make an important point. | |
| **irony** | The meaning that the audience is to understand differs from what *seems* to be shown. | |
| **juxtaposition** | To differentiate ideas, attitudes or objects by placing them in proximity. | |
| **language (persuasive)** | Any language that triggers an emotional response in, or attempts to change the attitudes of, a viewer reader or listener. | |
| **light and shade** | This refers to the brightness and it can include elements such as shadows. | |
| **metalanguage** | Metalanguage is the language of a particular subject. | |
| **mood/tone** | Colour can set mood: bright colours are often used to convey a sense of fun and happiness while dull colours can convey gloom and sadness. | |
| **perspective** | This refers to the angle from which you view a text. For example, some visual texts force the responder to look at the subject from a certain viewpoint or angle**.** Often this perspective suggests a certain attitude or tone. | |
| **positioning** | The placement of a particular feature in relation to other elements. | |
| **reading paths** | In general, the Australian reader will read a page from left to right and from top to bottom. This is the standard reading path. This is no different for visual texts. The next time you pick up a magazine, notice that the *logos* for the advertisements are on the bottom right hand corner of each page. This is the last place that the eyes look when they are reading a visual text. Because of this *culturally assumed* reading path, composers of visual texts, in particular graphic designers, will compose a visual text to incorporate this information. | |
| shot andanglesshots and angles cont. | Camera shots are used most often for analysing films. They are, however, also a really useful place to start when analysing any visual text. The size of the shot is determined by how much space or landscape is in a particular frame, or put another way, how closely the audience is positioned to the subject in the visual text. Let's look at some examples: Long shot (establishing shot) The effect of a long shot is to give the audience an idea of place. A composer of a visual text will use a long shot to establish a setting. Long shots are often used in advertising. Full shot Composers of visual texts use full shots to give the audience an overall impression of the people in a shot. Generally, a full shot demonstrates the type of people and general social interaction between them. This is called **proxemics**. The closer together the characters are in a frame, the closer their relationship. Consider a romantic dinner, to show the closeness of the characters you would probably place them close together. Consider then if two characters are positioned so that there is a lot of space between them. This implies that they are not closely linked Mid-shot or Social shot It is sometimes called a social shot because it demonstrates, in more detail than a full shot, the relationships between characters. Composers of visual texts often use mid-shots so the audience can understand and empathise with the characters in an image. Close-up or personal shot IIt is sometimes called a personal shot because it reveals to the audience the emotions of a particular character and creates a direct link between text and audience. Camera angles Again, camera angles are also a very useful starting point for analysing a visual text. You need to ask yourself: 'How is the audience positioned to respond to the text?' High angle A high angle is when the audience looks down on the scene or picture. Because the audience is looking down on the subject, the effect of a high angle is to either empower the audience (make the audience feel powerful) or to make the subject seem vulnerable, or both. Imagine it like this: from the audience's perspective, you are much taller and bigger than another person. From the subject's perspective, you are much smaller than another person. Eye-level shot An eye-level shot is used by composers when the intended effect is to position the audience to feel equal with the subject in question. Low angle A low-angle shot is the exact opposite of a high-angle shot. A composer will use a low angle to make the audience feel vulnerable or in awe of the subject or to emphasise the subject's power and strength | |
| **size** | Consider the size of various features often in terms of the whole or other parts. | |
| **symbol** | Picture, colour, language or diagram used to represent something else, or to evoke certain imagery. | |
| **text style** | Consider the font, colour, size and placement used in the text. | |
| **texture** | The roughness or smoothness of an image. Often lines are used to create depth, perspective or dimension. | |
| **title** | Consider the significance of the text and language of the title. | |
| **tone** | This refers to the attitude, voice or overall feeling of the composer. The overall atmosphere or mood being conveyed. | |
| **vector** | The direction of the sight-lines which the eyes are drawn to follow. Vectors lead the viewer from one element to another. They may take the form of lines, visible or otherwise, created by such elements as a gaze, pointing fingers, extended arms, and an object held in a set direction, animal/foot tracks. | |
| **rule of thirds** | Divide an image into thirds from the top and sides and look at the placement of people and/or objects. An object in the top third is usually empowered whereas anything in the bottom third is disempowered. | |
| **salient image / salience** | The salient image in a visual text is the first image that a viewer sees when looking at an image. Salience is important as it is where the audience will begin their reading path. To correctly find the salient image when analysing a text, close your eyes when you first look at the text and when  you open them take note of the first thing that your eyes are drawn to.  There are a number of reasons why a feature of a visual text may be the salient feature:   * The colour is bright and therefore stands out. * The image is particularly eye catching. * The layout - or where the image has been placed. | |

**Visual Technique Brainstorm**

* Colour
* Composition (layout)
* Graphics/images
* Size
* Style
* Font size / style / colour
* Use of celebrity
* Identification (facial expression)
* Use of space (rule of thirds)
* Proportion
* Symbolism (top/bottom and left/right/symbols)
* Vectors
* Balance
* Eye contact
* Logos/slogans
* Symbols and icons
* Camera shots and angles
* Product placement
* Free offers/competitions/call to action
* Language (of information / of persuasion / of description)
* Word choice
* Emotive language/images to create tone
* Rhetorical questions
* Humour (satire/irony)
* Play on words (puns/homonyms)
* Perspective/point of view
* Positioning/framing/foregrounding
* Rule of thirds
* Contrast/juxtaposition (colours, size, facial expression, shading, textures)
* Lighting and shading
* Gaze/body language/gestures/stance
* Salient object/focal point