

Lights, Camera, MEDIA Literacy!  
Lesson Plan # 21

**Topics:**

**Journal Writing**  
**Communication in the 1930's**  
***POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL (1936)***  
**History of Radio**  
**Creating a Radio Show**

**Outcomes:**

Students will follow organizational procedures.  
Students will see, hear, and use applicable vocabulary.  
Students will identify communication devices in use in the 1930's.  
Students will view a film highlighting radio as an advertising medium.  
Students will react to a 1930's radio program.  
Students will begin producing a group radio show.

**Materials:**

Writing journals  
LCD projector  
Chart paper  
Post-its  
Individual student pocket folders  
Computers

**HANDOUTS:** **Communication in the 1930's**  
**Creating a Radio Show**

**DVD:** ***THE POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL (with Shirley Temple, 1936)***

**New Vocabulary: "talkies"**

## Sequence of Events:

### I. Journal Writing (15)

1. Prompt:

How did you feel about showing your animated film?

### II. Communication in the 1930's (95)

1. Now that the course is half-completed, remind students of the units they have experienced and how much differently people were able to communicate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century compared to the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Tell students that they are going to be seeing a film created in 1936, but before they do, they are going to individually make educated guesses as to what communication existed at that time. Give each student the following worksheet and review directions.

#### HANDOUT: Communications in the 1930's

2. Allow time for students to make their guesses from the alphabetized list.
3. Ask if anyone is aware of Mary Pickford's 1917 silent film *THE POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL*, an adaptation of a book by Eleanor Gates. Tell students that this same book was adapted again into another terrific film in the first decade of "TALKIES" ...movies with synchronized sound... at a time when the United States was experiencing The Great Depression. Ask students what they know about The Great Depression. Allow time for discussion.
4. Tell students that in the 1930's more people attended movies then than today. Many sought movies as a means of escape from their difficult everyday life. In that "Golden Age of Film," there was an amazing child star named Shirley Temple. Show students Dakota Fanning's 2-min. SAG award speech and a grown Shirley Temple in the audience.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1cbTpgZGyo>

5. Tell students that Shirley Temple was just seven years old when she made the film they are about to see. Remind them that they are looking for communication devices of the time and to have their worksheet ready.

**DVD: *THE POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL***

6. After watching the film, review answers and discuss their reaction to the film.

*Note that:*

- 1) *Radio broadcasts were live...no taping at the time;*
- 2) *Radios were encased as pieces of furniture;*
- 3) *Apartments often shared one pay telephone;*
- 4) *The Barry and Peck Soap Companies used the slogan/jingle technique to sell their products.*
- 5) *Phones were not portable as they were not wireless*
- 6) *Early phones' speakers and receivers were separate, not in one unit.*
- 7) *Switchboards operators and long-distance operators were needed to connect phone lines.*
- 8) *Phones numbers were shorter and were preceded by their location ("Columbus 1584"...Columbus is an area in New York City).*
- 9) *Radio shows were reviewed in the newspaper just as television shows are reviewed today.*

**III. A "Golden Age of Radio" Experience (30)**

- 1) Ask students to imagine what it would be like to listen to a 1930's radio show. Have them recall the beginning of ***THE POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL*** when little Barbara was sent to her room with no television, no computer, no electronic games. Imagine a radio guide, similar to a TV Guide, with listings of all types of shows...variety, comedy, dramas and sci-fi. Often these shows were connected to popular comic strips in the newspapers, such as FLASH GORDON, found in the Hearst newspapers.
- 2) Show students examples of the FLASH GORDON comic strip.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash\\_Gordon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_Gordon)

Read together the section "Characters and Story."

- 3) Tell students that they will be experiencing an episode of the popular 1935 sci-fi radio show *FLASH GORDON*. They will need to imagine themselves in the 1930's with no entertainment electronics other than their radio.

<http://www.otr.net/?p=flsh>

#17 "*Tal Tries to Capture Zarkoff*" (15 minutes)

- 4) Discuss the experience with students afterward. How different was it to listen to a story for fifteen minutes without being able to see pictures or the actors. Did their "mind's eye" take over and start making up their own visuals in their mind? What helped keep their interest? What hindered their interest?

#### **IV. Creating a Radio Show (45)**

- 1) Tell students that they are going to create their own short radio show episode based on *FLASH GORDON*. Review with students the steps for creating their radio show.

**HANDOUT: Creating a Radio Show**

- 2) Groups work on their productions. (continued next session.)

#### **V. Reflection (15)**

1. Direct students to the hanging chart paper labeled:

**What did you learn about early radio?**

2. Hand out Post-its on which students write and post.
3. Review the comments on the Post-Its with the class, so students have a sense of what was learned. Make sure to clear up any misconceptions.