


FROM THE
NATIONAL FILM BOARD
OF CANADA
PACIFIC CENTRE

Live TV

Activity Guide



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have been produced by the National Film Board, Pacific Centre,
in association with Health Canada, Family Violence Prevention Division,
with the assistance of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

With thanks to
Vancouver  Aquarium

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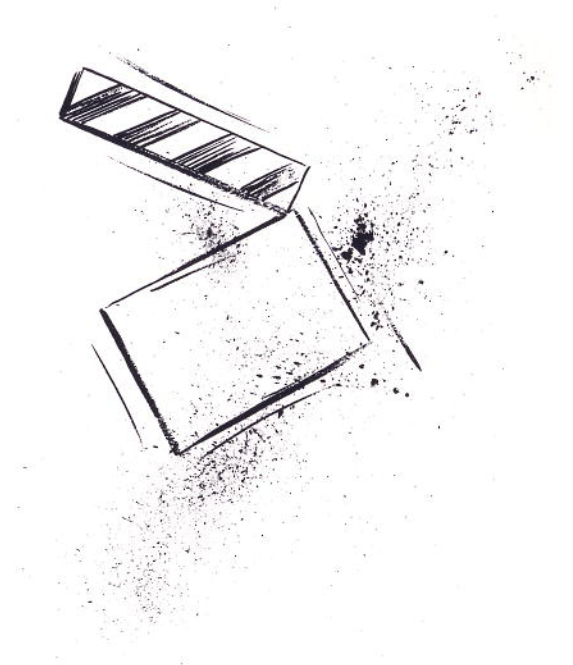
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Introduction

Live TV is about four kids, two rather large turtles and a television that comes to life. The turtles - which belong to the school - disappear while Jamie is supposed to be looking after them. To Jamie's relief, the live TV takes control of the situation and promises to solve the mystery. Ultimately, the children discover that the live TV is funny and entertaining, but not too well equipped for real-life situations. **Live TV** is intended to get kids thinking about how television and the movies influence them. This guide provides activities to extend and enrich this process.



Age/Grade Level

Live TV is aimed at children aged 6 to 11. Some of the activities in this guide will appeal more to the younger children within this age group. Other activities will work best with the older ones. Please select activities to match children's interests and abilities.

How TV Affects Us

TV is a big part of our lives. It can entertain, enlighten and educate us. It can also misinform, create stereotypes and distract us from other activities. Television's influence is strong and its effects are many. As parents, educators and citizens we have become increasingly concerned about the effects of media violence on children. Thirty years of scientific research have shown that television violence makes children:

- think that the world is a scary and dangerous place;
- think that violence is a normal part of life;
- think that violence is a good solution to many kinds of problems;
- less sympathetic to victims of violence;
- more interested in violence, both as a form of entertainment and a real-life experience.

Children who view tv violence can learn how to be aggressive in new ways. They can also draw conclusions about whether being aggressive towards others will bring them rewards.

Many researchers conclude that television violence alone does not make kids violent. Other factors in a child's life may be far more significant, such as real-life violence, abuse, poverty and neglect.

Becoming Media Wise Is Part of the Solution

Research has found that the more children watch television, the more it influences them. Researchers also tell us that developing media literacy skills reduces tv's impact on kids. The more kids think and talk about tv, the less influence it has on them.

Live TV is designed to be funny, entertaining and thought provoking. The process of working with it should be fun too. Our objective is not to get kids to turn off the tv, but simply to remember who is smarter.



You're
smarter
than
your tv



Viewing, Thinking, Forming Opinions

We want to encourage kids to form opinions about what they watch - to react to what they see on the screen. In these initial activities, children can begin to think about the differences between real life and tv's world, and to compare how problems are solved on tv and how they might solve them in real life. The goal is to inspire kids to question and challenge what they see on the screen.

Talk about it

Discuss **Live TV**. Ask some questions to get kids talking:

- ◆ Did you like it?
- ◆ What part did you like best?
- ◆ Which parts didn't you like?
- ◆ Were any parts confusing?
- ◆ How did the characters feel at the end?
- ◆ Would you like it if your tv came to life?
- ◆ What parts of **Live TV** could have really happened?
- ◆ Which parts could never happen in real life?
- ◆ If you lost the school's turtles, what would you do?
- ◆ How did you like the music?
- ◆ What special effects did you notice?
- ◆ Who was your favorite character?

Remembering Live TV

Kids can do one or more of the following activities:

- ◆ Draw a picture of your favorite part of the film.
- ◆ Imagine that you are one of the characters in the film (Jamie, Devon, Nila, Suzanna, TV or even one of the turtles). Write your journal entry for the day the tv came to life.
- ◆ Think of your favorite part of the film. What happened first? What happened next? What happened to end the sequence? Draw six or more frames of a strip cartoon to illustrate the sequence.
- ◆ Write a "beat sheet." A beat is a moment in the film. A beat sheet describes the sequence of things that happen in the story.



LIVE TV BEAT SHEET Example

Jamie's tv comes to life.
 Jamie thinks the live TV is cool.
 The school turtles disappear.
 TV thinks someone stole the turtles.
 TV thinks Suzanna might be in trouble.
 Dev gets mad when TV points its plug at him.
 TV tries to save the wrong girl.
 TV turns the window into a tv.

- ◆ Make up a review of **Live TV**. Tell what happens in the film (but don't give away the ending). Explain why other people should or should not see it. Record your review on videotape or audiotape or tell it to your friends.

You talk
back to
your tv

TV's Slogans and Sayings

In **Live TV**, TV uses slogans and sayings from all kinds of programs and movies. Kids love to collect and identify them. Here are some things you can do with the slogans:

- ◆ Identify what tv shows or movies they are from. In the classroom, chart the number of children who have seen each show or movie. Does everyone recognize the same sayings? Why not?
- ◆ Listen carefully to how people in your life talk. Keep a list of the slogans and sayings from tv shows and movies that the people you know use. How many can you hear in an hour? In a day? Which slogans and sayings do you hear most often?
- ◆ What slogans and sayings from tv, movies and advertising are floating around in your brain? Draw a picture of your brain full of media slogans. Draw a second picture of your brain full of the slogans and sayings put there by real people, like your parents, teachers, coaches and friends.

MEDIA SLOGANS

REAL-LIFE SLOGANS





Exploring Some Filmmaking Techniques

Television and movies communicate part of their message without words. The "language" of film includes music, lighting, costumes, props, camera angles, editing and other techniques which we understand on an almost subliminal level. We can help children to recognize and to name these elements, and to discover how tv-show- and movie-makers use these techniques to create atmosphere and construct meaning.

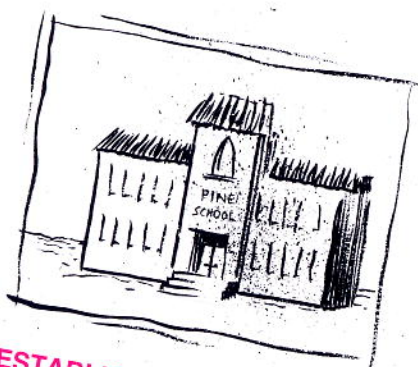
Everything
that gets
into tv's
world is
planned



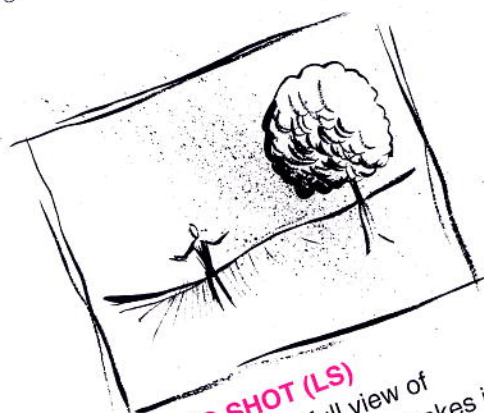
Live TV Technique Hunt

View the film a second time. This time, watch and listen closely for some specific choices the filmmakers made.

- ◆ TV shows and movies can often feel like “seamless” stories. Test this out: count the number of shots in two minutes of **Live TV**.
- ◆ Identify a wipe. How many different “wipes” between scenes can you spot? Why do you think they are used?
- ◆ Listen to the music. Find the places where the music reminds you of other shows.
- ◆ Cue the video up to the scene with a western feel. Watch again and identify the sounds and visuals that help create the Old West theme.
- ◆ Watch for a second time the scene in which the kids are sneaking into the school. Identify the sounds and visuals that help create the feeling of suspense. Pay attention to the lighting and cutting too. (A smoke machine was used to make the hallway look a little spooky.)



ESTABLISHING SHOT (ES)
Helps you identify the location or setting where the next scene will take place.



LONG SHOT (LS)
Shows you a full view of what's going on, but makes it hard to know what the character is thinking or feeling.

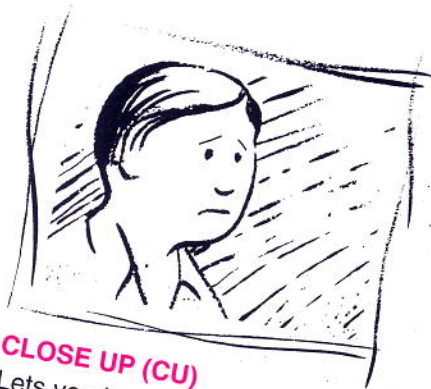
- ◆ Watch the way the camera is used. Look for close-ups, medium shots and establishing shots. Can you find a low-angle shot? (Looking up at Suzanna, when the kids confront her in her bedroom.) How about fast motion? (During the montage, when the kids are searching the neighborhood for the turtles.)

You can try technique hunting anytime you are watching the screen. The more you hunt, the better grasp you will have of the language of filmmaking.



MEDIUM SHOT (MS)

Gives you some idea about what's happening between two people.



CLOSE UP (CU)

Lets you know a lot about feelings.

LANGUAGE FOR TALKING ABOUT FILM

SHOT: A section of footage without a cut (lasting a fraction of a second to several minutes).

CUT: The point at which two different shots are joined (edited) together.

WIPE: When one shot seems to push or pull another shot off of the screen. There are lots of different kinds of wipes.

REACTION SHOT: A shot that cuts away from the scene to show a character's reaction to it.

Get an Angle on Angles

- ◆ Try this with a partner: Stand a few feet apart and look at each other through a frame you've made with your hands. Now "zoom in" for a "close-up" by walking closer to each other until all that's in your view is your partner's face. Try stepping a little closer for an "extreme close-up." How do you feel about being so close to your partner?

"Zoom" back out to a "medium" shot so that you can see your partner from their chest to the top of their head. From this distance, try talking about how the different shots feel, and as you are talking, start zooming out again, this time to a "long" shot. How does this affect the conversation?



Choose
your camera
angle to help
you tell your
story



LOW ANGLE SHOT
Makes a character look more powerful.



HIGH ANGLE SHOT
Makes a character look weak.

- ◆ Try something different. Find a reasonable distance for talking to your partner and get a chair. Have your partner stand on the chair and look down at you, while you crouch on the ground and look up. How does your partner look from your low angle? Trade places. How does your partner look from this high angle?
- ◆ Draw a character of your own design. Try drawing your character from a low angle. Now draw it from a high angle. Which angle would you choose to illustrate a character who is large and powerful? Which angle is best for creating a character who is small and unimportant?

The angle of a shot
can affect our
perception of a
character's strength
or weakness

Sound Alert!

Music and sound can be powerful storytelling tools. Here are a couple of activities to sharpen your media ears.

- ◆ Listen to **Live TV** as you watch. Pay particular attention to the music. Do you like it? During what parts of the film is music used? Listen for music that makes a scene more exciting. Listen for music that makes you feel an emotion. Listen for music that tells you that something is about to happen.
- ◆ Find the scene in which the children walk through the school hallway. Watch the scene without sound. Can you figure out what is happening? Watch it again just to hear what the sound adds to the scene. At home, try "watching" tv without the picture. How well can you follow the story? Try again with the picture, but no sound. Can you follow the story?
- ◆ Cue the video to the beginning of the scene at the aquarium. Close your eyes and just listen to the beginning of the scene. How much is conveyed about the setting by the music and sound?

Dress for Success

- ◆ Think of something you could add to:
 - Jamie's costume to show that he likes to watch a lot of tv.
 - Devon's costume to show that he's a funny guy.
 - Suzanna's costume to show that she's an animal lover.
- ◆ Imagine you were going to put on a play about a tv that came to life. What kind of costume would the actor playing the tv wear? Draw your tv costume, or create one using materials available to you.





Considering How TV and Movie Violence Affects Us

Solving problems with violence is one of the most powerful themes communicated by television and movies. We can get children to think about what violence is and the different ways it is used on television. We can encourage kids to consider how violence on tv, in videos and at the movies makes them feel, and how it shapes their ideas about the real world.

starring Roles



- ◆ Talk about the scene in which Devon and Jamie fight. Do kids like it? Do they think it is realistic? Ask them why the boys fight. Is there one reason or are there several?
- ◆ Role play: Cast kids in the roles of Jamie, Devon, Nila, Suzanna and TV. Ask them to imagine the moment before they walk into the community library and answer the following questions:
 - What kind of mood are you in?
 - What worries you most about the turtles' disappearance?
 - Are you mad at anyone? If so, who are you mad at and why?
 - What do you think of each of the other characters right now?

Have the “actors” play out the scene - start when Jamie says that he was trying to take good care of the turtles and Suzanna points out that he left the gate open. After the scene, ask the kids playing the characters if they thought of any new reasons why the boys fight. Would real kids act that way?

- ◆ Get kids thinking about a different, less aggressive solution to Jamie and Dev’s conflict: Ask the actors to repeat the role-play, this time without fighting. How might their new solution change the story?
- ◆ Compare: What would happen if Jamie and Dev had had that fight in your house? In your school hallway? How is it different on tv? (No one gets hurt; some things are OK in tv’s world that aren’t OK in the real world.)

TV violence and Kids

In the film, **Live TV**, TV has a big influence on the boys. It tells them to fight and they do. If your television came to life and told you to fight, do you think you would?

- ◆ Many grown-ups believe that watching violent programs on tv has an effect on children. Ask kids if they agree. How has it affected them? Have they seen it affect other kids in other ways?
- ◆ Ask kids if they think they react differently to “pretend” tv violence (cartoons) as opposed to “real” tv violence (news).

What’s OK
in tv’s
world isn’t
necessarily
OK in our
world

Defining TV Violence

Sometimes people have different ideas about what violence is. Is a threat violence? What about an insult? Is telling someone to hurt someone else violence? Are some acts more violent than others?

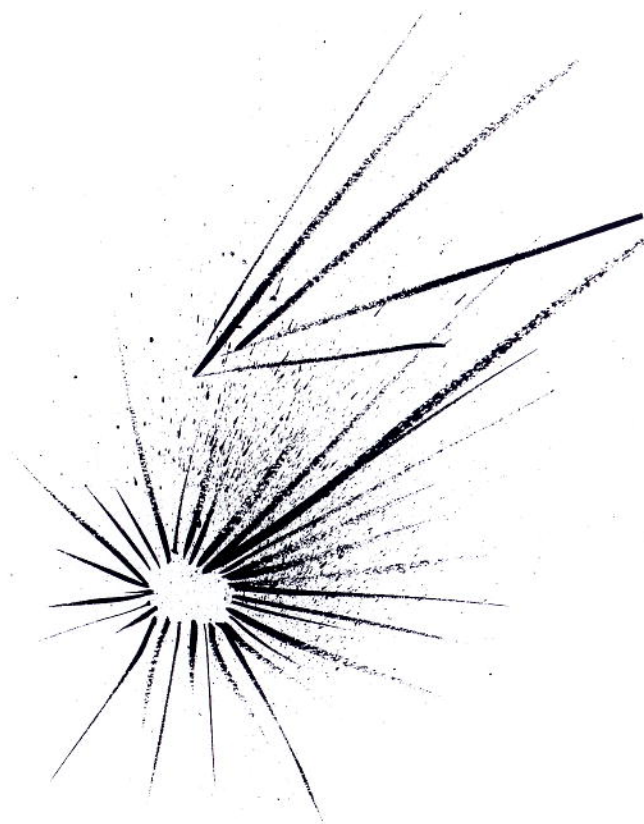
- ◆ Try to come up with a definition of violence. Do friends and family members agree with your definition?

“Violence is action which intrudes painfully or harmfully into the physical, psychological or social well-being of persons or groups. Violence may be obvious or subtle.”

Used by The 1977
Royal Commission on Violence in the
Communications Industry.

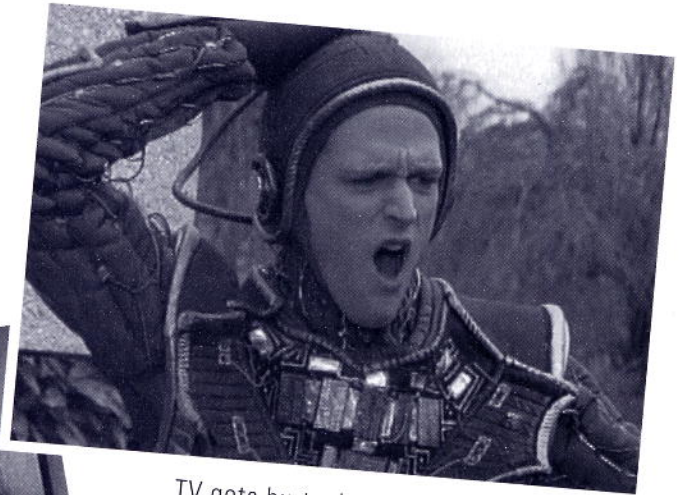
“Behavior that is abusive, threatening or hurtful to people through physical, mental, verbal or regulatory actions.”

From **Challenging Ourselves**,
a handbook published by the
Metropolitan Toronto School Board, p.52.



Picture Study

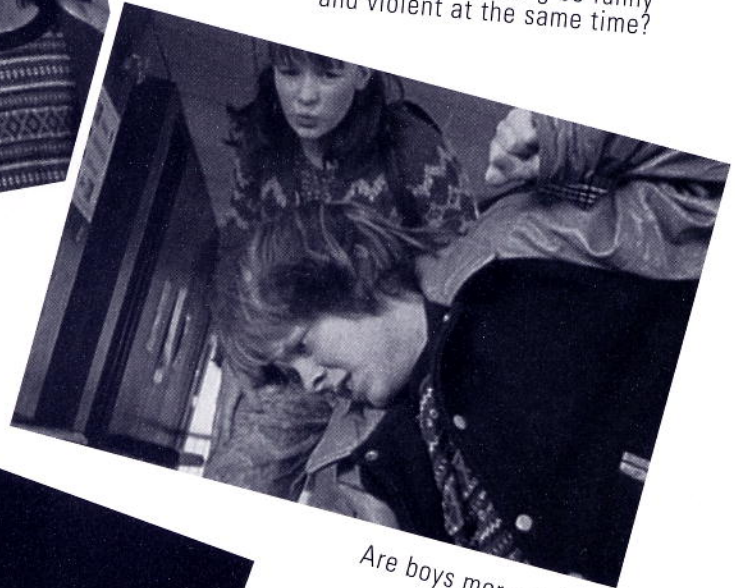
Look at the pictures



TV gets hurt when a book hits him on the head. Is it funny? The book fell by accident. Is that violence? Can something be funny and violent at the same time?



Does TV make kids violent?



Are boys more violent than girls?



Can sports be violent? Why? Why not?



Thinking about Stereotyping

We want kids to think about whether television and movies reflect the world as it really is. We want children to consider whether the media give equal treatment to all kinds of people. We want them to recognize that the media can shape how we think about groups of people and how we value personality traits, physical attributes and problem-solving techniques.

Can tv and movies make us think some people are more important than others?

Who's on TV and Who Isn't...

- ◆ Ask kids to consider:
 - In **Live TV**, are any of the characters like them, or like their friends? How? How are they different?
 - Does **Live TV** look like it might have been filmed near their neighborhood?
 - Do they see people who are like their family in any of the tv programs they watch? Which programs?
- ◆ Does television treat all people equally?
 - What kind of roles do thin people get? What about fat people?
 - What kinds of roles do young boys play? What about young girls?
 - Who has more fun on tv and in movies: boys or girls?
 - Do you see the same numbers of people with red, black, brown and blond hair? What about bald people?

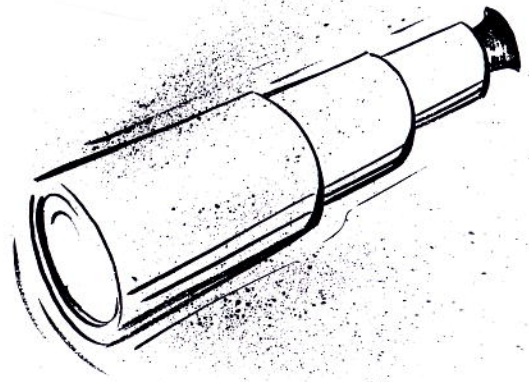
“**Y**ou gotta do something
about that attitude
toward girls.”

- ◆ Why does Nila say that to TV? Find examples in **Live TV** of TV's attitude toward girls. Does television have a different attitude toward girls than it does toward boys?
- ◆ Ask kids if they think the way tv shows men and women is the way it is in the real world. Ask for some examples to support their view. Does tv shape the way people think about men and women? How?

ASK KIDS what stereotypes they can find in **Live TV**. Have them watch for stereotypes when they watch their favorite tv programs.

Hero Watch

- ◆ Ask kids to make two lists
 - Heroes they watch
 - Heroes they knowthen compare their characteristics. How are they the same? How are they different?
- ◆ Talk about what makes a hero cool. How many of their tv and movie heroes use violence to solve problems? When a tv hero uses violence, does that make violence cool? Why? Why not?



A stereotype is a mistaken belief or idea based on generalization or incomplete or wrong information. For example, "girls are sweet," "boys like to fight" and "grown-ups don't listen to kids."

And Now a Word from Our Sponsor...



TV, movies, videos... in fact stories of all kinds are filled with messages. Some of these are morals or lessons, and some are commercial messages or ideas that the filmmakers and their financial partners want you to take away from your viewing experiences. We can help kids start to look for the messages or ideas that filmmakers tried to convey. We can also help kids to recognize that many of the messages in tv and movies are attempts to sell them things.



My Live TV

Imagine your television came to life at breakfast time and offered some advice on what you should eat. What would your tv say? What would your mother want you to eat?

- ◆ Using pictures from magazines and advertising flyers, make a collage of foods TV would suggest eating for breakfast. Make a second collage of foods your mother would recommend. How many foods are in both collages?

We'll be right back after these important messages...

From **Little Red Riding Hood**, we can learn not to tell strangers where we are going. From **Snow White**, we can learn that kindness and goodness are rewarded in the end.

- ◆ Are there messages in **Live TV**? Think about what Jamie learns during the film. Does TV learn anything? How about Suzanna?
- ◆ Create a television commercial or magazine ad for **Live TV**. How would you change your ad or commercial if it was supposed to convince teachers to buy the film to show to their classes? Kids to watch at home? Parents to watch with their children? Grown-ups to watch with their friends?

Turtles



TV, movies and other media can spark our interest in all kinds of subjects and ideas. We want kids to know that when media experiences pique their interest in something, they can learn more about it by reading, asking questions or using other research techniques. The values and problem-solving techniques expressed on tv are worth further exploration too. Kids can think about them, talk about them and come up with their own.

Turtle Search

What are the names of the turtles in **Live TV**?

Do you recognize these names?

Where do they come from?



- ◆ Try looking up the turtles' names in a reference book, on-line or on a CD ROM reference.

“Not Those Turtles, Real Turtles”

The turtles in **Live TV** are red-eared sliders, a popular breed of turtles for pets.

- ◆ Learn more about them by researching these questions:
 - What is the natural habitat of red-eared sliders?
 - How big are they at birth? How big can they grow?
 - What do they eat?
 - What animals eat them in the wild?
 - Is it legal to sell them as pets in your community? If not, why not?
 - Can keeping them as pets endanger their lives?

Turtles Too

In **Live TV**, the children find a home for the two large red-eared slider turtles in a Reptile Refuge.

- ◆ Research and report on what might be the pros and cons of releasing them there.
- ◆ What would you do if you found out that an animal that belongs to your school was dying because of the conditions at school? Think of five solutions. Draw a picture of each one and the consequences of carrying it out.



Telling Your Own Stories

Have kids try out some of the media-making techniques they've been exploring in order to tell their own stories.



"I'm in control now."

- ◆ Make a storyboard (with six or more pictures) telling what would happen if a television came to life in your house. What would it do on Saturday morning? What would it do at supper time?
- ◆ Ask kids to write:
 - Their own "animal in distress" story for a television program or movie plot.
 - What would a television do that came to life in their story?
 - What if a computer came to life? What would it do? What about a radio?

Have kids make up a story using one or more of the lines from **Live TV** that are listed below. They can use the line in whatever way they like - as a title, as dialogue, as a moral. It can even mean something completely different than it does in the film. Kids can tell their stories in written words, in pictures, on video or on audiotape.

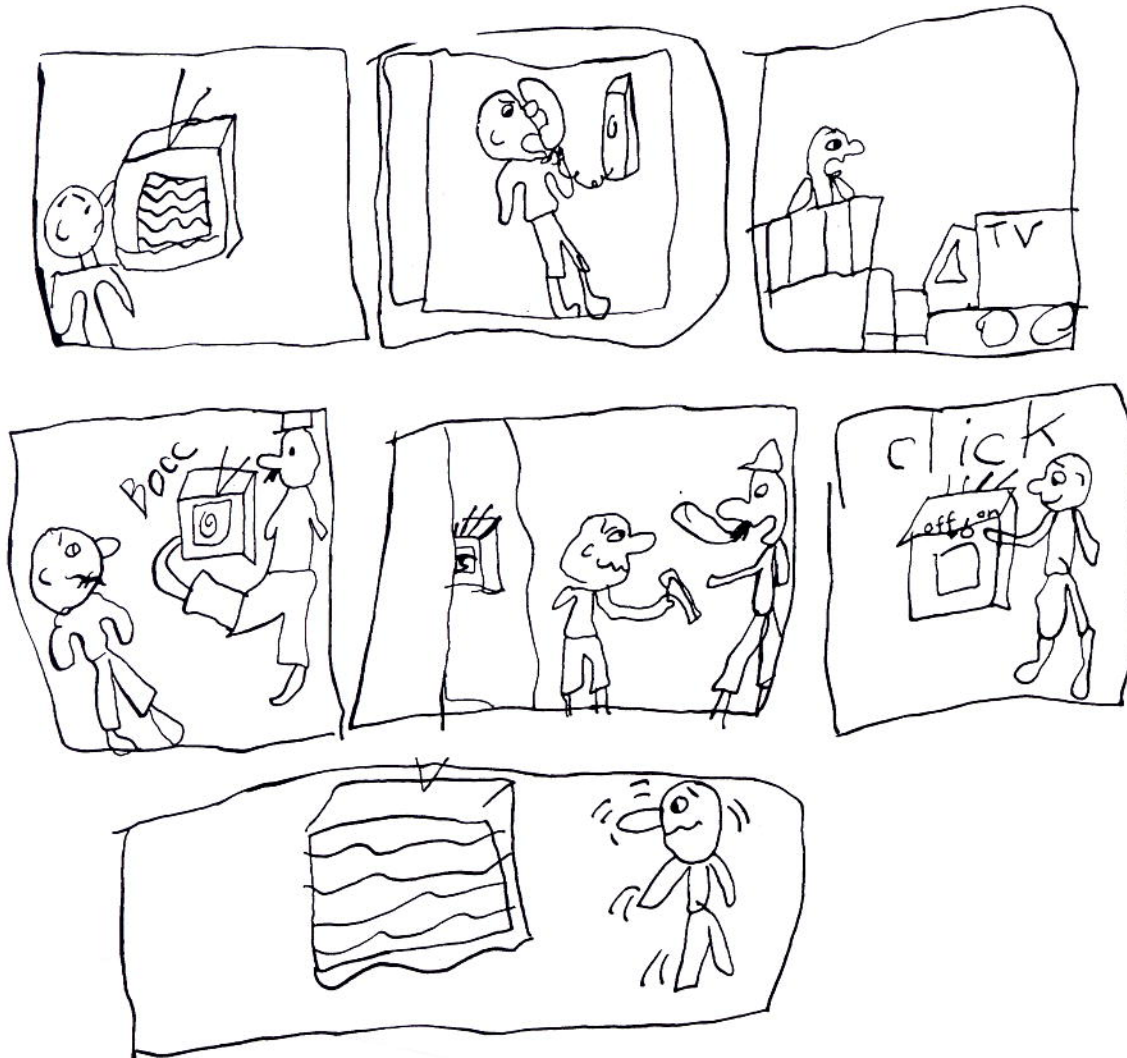
- Everyone is a suspect.
- I'm in control now.
- To the bat cave.
- This is real life.
- He doesn't belong here, Jamie.
- Good old TV.
- This is truly a battle of champions.
- Answer that door before it zaps again.
- Wow, snow.
- You go that way and keep to the shadows.
- Nothing is too dangerous for girls.
- From here on, I'll do the thinking.



*“From
here on, I’ll
do the
thinking”*

Storyboarding

A storyboard can be a shorthand way of telling a story. The drawings capture the main ideas of the story. Key dialogue can be written below.



Appear to Disappear

If you can get hold of a video camera, have kids try creating their own special effects and simple animations:

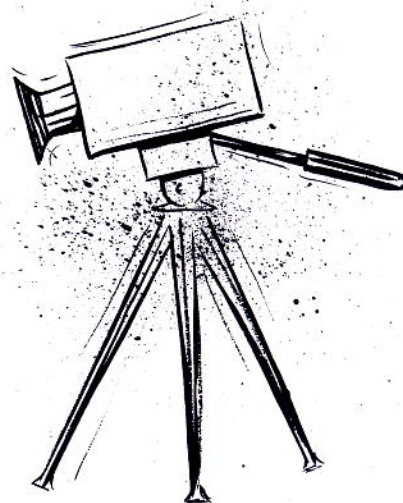
- ◆ **Vanishing act:** Making someone disappear is about the easiest special effect you can create. As you film, have someone walk into the frame. When they reach somewhere close to the middle of the frame, stop shooting but continue to hold the camera in exactly the same spot.

When the person has finished walking out of the frame, shoot a few more seconds of the scene without the person in it. Watch the shot. Did it look like the person disappeared in the middle of the frame?

Have kids figure out how to make someone “appear.”

- ◆ Try changing someone’s hat in the middle of a scene, having people “pop in” and “pop out,” move closer to the camera without appearing to walk. Or, have your shoes walk into the scene ahead of you.

- ◆ What other “effects” can you create by stopping and starting the tape without moving the camera?



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OTHER NFB FILMS FOR CHILDREN AND MEDIA

Animando

13 minutes

Order number: 0087 021

With the help of fast-motion camera work we see an animation artist bring his imaginary character to life - on cels, on glass with watercolors and with sand, with plasticine, with string, and by painting and scratching directly onto film. For all ages.

Look Again

Six ten-minute films, in two video volumes, with guide.

Order number: 0089 066/067

This award-winning series without words opens the door for children to explore, experiment, solve problems and explain the world they live in. Stimulates critical thinking in science and environmental studies, language arts, and media studies.
Ages 6 to 12.

Ready When You Are

13 minutes

Order number: 0175 002

In this film about trying to make a film, a thousand enthusiastic ukelele-picking school children play together on a noisy Halifax pier for director John Smith and his crew. Old, but still funny.
Ages 10 to 13.

Visually Speaking

Six short films on one video

Order number: 0186 153

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SOME ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTACT OR JOIN

Canadian Association for Media
Education Organizations (CAMEO)
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Toronto, ON M4N 1X2
(416) 488-7280
(416) 488-8360 (Fax)
E-Mail: pungente@epas.utoronto.ca

Alberta Association for Media Awareness
(AAMA)
c/o Wayne Blair
The ALTIS Group
605 Milbourne Road East
Edmonton, AB T6K 3N3
(403) 944-9667
(403) 463-0109 (Fax)
E-mail: wblair@supernet.ab.ca

Association for Media Literacy
Barry Duncan
40 McArthur St.
Weston, Ontario M9P 3M7
(416) 394-6992
(416) 394-6991 (Fax)

Association for Media Education in
Quebec (AMEQ)
Faculty of Education
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
McGill University
3700 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2
E-mail: INWE@music.b.mcgill.ca

Canadian Association for Media
Education (CAME)
c/o Dan Blake
North Surrey Secondary School
15945 - 96th Avenue
Surrey, BC V4N 2R8
(604) 581-4433
(604) 581-1150 (Fax)

Jesuit Communication Project
John Pungente, SJ
300 - 47 Ranleigh Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4N 1X2
(416) 488-7280
(416) 488-8360 (Fax)
E-Mail: pungente@epas.utoronto.ca
JCP Home Page:
<http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/JCP>
HomePage

Manitoba Association for Media Literacy
c/o Brian Murphy
St. Paul's High School
2200 Grant Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0P8
(204) 888-1605
(204) 832-8279 (Fax)

Media Literacy Nova Scotia
c/o Eileen O'Connell
PO Box 1594 Central
Halifax, NS B3J 2Y3

Media Literacy Saskatchewan
c/o Mick Ellis
Saskatoon Board of Education
405 - 3rd Avenue South
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 1M7
(306) 934-2334
(306) 665-0107 (Fax)

Alliance for Children and Television
205 - 344 Dupont Street
Toronto, Ontario M5R 1V9
(416) 515-0466
(416) 515-0467 (Fax)

The Media Awareness Network
A clearinghouse for information on media
issues.
Director: Anne Taylor
(613) 992-5380
(613) 947-2537 (Fax)
Internet address: [http://schoolnet2.
carleton.ca/MediaNet](http://schoolnet2.carleton.ca/MediaNet)

MediaWatch
Ste. 204, 517 Wellington St. W.
Toronto, Ontario M5V 1G1
(416) 408-2065
(416) 408-2069 (Fax)

The Centre for Literacy
3040 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec H3Z 1A4
(514) 931-8731 ext.1415
(514) 931-5181
E-mail: [LITERACY_CNTR@dawsoncol-
lege.qc.ca](mailto:LITERACY_CNTR@dawsoncollege.qc.ca)

Center for Media Literacy
1962 South Shenandoah
Los Angeles, California 90034
(310) 559-2944

Citizens for Responsible Television
P.O. Box 24040 Bullfrog Mall
Guelph, Ontario N1E 6V8

P.E.A.C.E.
Positive Entertainment Alternatives for
Children Everywhere (T.R.O.P. Travail de
Réflexion des Ondes Pacifiques)
2341 Duberger Ste. 109
Quebec, Quebec G1P 3N6
(418) 622-8383
(418) 622-3654 (Fax)

CREDITS

<hr/> <p>CAST in order of appearance</p> <p>JAMIE Myles Ferguson</p> <p>SUZANNA Crystal Crete</p> <p>DEV Chad Dormer</p> <p>TV Shawn Macdonald</p> <p>NILA Jane McGregor</p> <p>SCHOOL CUSTODIAN Christine Lipa</p> <p>AQUARIUM NATURALIST Ellie Harvie</p> <hr/> <p>DIRECTED BY Annie O'Donoghue</p> <p>WRITTEN BY Jill Golick</p> <p>CINEMATOGRAPHER Danny Nowak C.S.C.</p> <p>EDITOR Alison Grace</p> <p>ART DIRECTOR David Roberts</p> <p>COSTUME DESIGNER Nancy Bryant</p> <p>LOCATION SOUND RECORDIST David Husby</p> <p>COMPOSER George Bondheim</p> <p>SOUND DESIGNER Gael MacLean</p> <p>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Bonnie Benwick</p> <p>SCRIPT SUPERVISOR Beth Mercer</p> <p>LOCATIONS MANAGER Don Knoedel</p> <p>PRODUCTION COORDINATOR Wendell Harlow</p>	<p>CAMERA ASSISTANT Holly Gregory</p> <p>2ND CAMERA ASSISTANT Sean Esler</p> <p>CAMERA TRAINEE Tracy Jacques BOOM OPERATOR Martin Borycki</p> <p>ADDITIONAL EDITING Jeanne Slater</p> <p>SET DECORATOR Kate Marshall</p> <p>MAKE-UP Jackie Wilkinson</p> <p>HAIR STYLIST Sherry Anne Ross</p> <p>PROPS MASTER Brian Kane</p> <p>SET COSTUMER Debbie Schreiber</p> <p>ASSISTANT SET DECORATOR Wendy Harke</p> <p>GAFFER Paul Slatter</p> <p>BEST BOY George Campbell</p> <p>GENNY OPERATOR Paul Bougie</p> <p>LAMP OPERATOR Dana Corrigan</p> <p>KEY GRIP Timo Juonolainen</p> <p>BEST BOY Tony Whiteside</p> <p>GRIPS Chris Price Corey Lambert</p> <p>2ND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Sheila Carpenter</p> <p>3RD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Kathy Houghton</p> <p>CAST COORDINATOR Patti-Jo Wiese</p> <p>LOCATIONS ASSISTANT Tom Hoeverman</p>	<p>PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS Chris Ballum Chris Lanning Scott Smith Susan Tucker Kathryn Boese</p> <p>CONSTRUCTION CO-ORDINATOR David Dorrington</p> <p>CARPENTER Jim Munro</p> <p>SCENIC ARTIST Karen Hill</p> <p>PAINTER Keith Gow</p> <p>ART DEPARTMENT TRAINEE Bill Pechet</p> <p>TITLE DESIGN Deb Dawson</p> <p>CEL PAINTERS Ray Tremblay Clive Jackson</p> <p>STILL PHOTOGRAPHER Neil Lucente</p> <p>STUNT CO-ORDINATOR Inocalla Shishire</p> <p>TURTLE HANDLER Animal Exchange Daniel Northern</p> <p>CATERER Critics' Choice</p> <p>CRAFT SERVICES Evelyn Dawn Friesen</p> <p>PRODUCTION SECRETARY Janie Toivanen</p> <p>PUBLICIST Jill Webber-Habrinisky</p> <p>SPECIAL EFFECTS Image Engine Design and Effects Robin Hackl Christopher Mossman</p> <p>STOCK FOOTAGE RESEARCH Fabulous Footage Quest Robert MacLeod</p> <p>HOCKEY FOOTAGE Springfield Indians Hockey Club Springfield, Massachusetts Continental Cablevision</p>	<p>SOUND POST PRODUCTION Airwaves Sound Design Ltd</p> <p>RE-RECORDISTS Brian Campbell Steve Smith</p> <p>SOUND EDITOR Ewan Deane</p> <p>LABORATORY Alpha Cine Service</p> <p>POST PRODUCTION VIDEO Pacific Video Canada/ Post Haste</p> <p>MEDIA CONSULTANT Arlene Moscovitch</p> <hr/> <p>WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO: Bob Barton, Ferne Cristall, Paul Carreiro, Shari Graydon, Pat Kipping, Linda Pogue, Dede Sinclair, Anne Taylor, Charis Wahl Charles Dickens School The Vancouver Aquarium H.R. MacMillan Planetarium and all those who contributed their time, efforts, and thoughts to make this film possible.</p> <p>Produced in association with Family Violence Prevention Division Health Canada and with the assistance of the Department of Canadian Heritage</p> <p>LINE PRODUCER Scott Weber</p> <p>PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR Kathryn Lynch</p> <p>UNIT ADMINISTRATOR Bruce Hagerman</p> <p>PRODUCERS JoAnn Harrison George Johnson</p> <p>EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Svend-Erik Eriksen</p> <p>LIVE TV A production of the National Film Board of Canada, Pacific Centre</p>



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L I V E T V

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