

The Big Picture

by Mary Bennett

photographs by Beth Jenkins



Book Summary

It takes many months and hundreds of people to make a television drama series. This book joins the cast and crew of *The Tribe* to find out what life is like on a filmset and how the series is transformed from the written script to the screen.

Features of the Book

- The features of a non-fiction text – contents page, glossary, and index
- The use of bold and italicised text
- Large, labelled photographs
- The extra information in the fact files and captions
- Daily schedule to show the sequences involved
- Quotes from production crew and actors
- Procedural text
- The varied format – patterned backgrounds, facsimiles of documents, film frames as borders

Purpose

The Big Picture can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** formulating questions to help locate relevant information;
- S** summarising information using key phrases;
- S** using an index to navigate text;
- S** reading and writing procedural text;
- S** creating effective flow diagrams;
- S** exploring different ways of presenting information.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Formulating questions to help locate relevant information
- S** Summarising information using key phrases
- S** Using an index to navigate text

Introducing the text

Discuss the sorts of TV programmes that the students watch. List these in categories, such as cartoon, comedy, sci-fi, and drama.

- Which sort of programme would involve the most work?
- How long do you think it would take to make one episode? How many people would be needed apart from the actors?
- How would child actors get their school work done?

Ask the students to tell you the names of the people who work to make TV programmes, for example, producer and director. List these so that they can refer to them and make additions as they read.

Look at the cover of the book and discuss the text and images.

- Who are the people on the cover? How can you tell?
- What kind of costume are they wearing?
- When might this story take place?
- Which TV series is this book about?
- What is the author's intention in writing this book?

Ask the students to each write one "I want to know" question about the topic of TV production.

Look at the photograph on the title page and talk about who the people might be. Then read the first page of chapter 1 together and discuss the information that it provides.

- How many facts can we find on this page?
- Has anyone's "I want to know" question been answered yet?

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the rest of chapter 1 independently.

- *As you read, look for the part of the text that summarises the way that a TV drama is made.*

When the students have finished reading, discuss the three stages in the production of a TV drama – pre-production, production, and post-production.

- *What do you think “pre” and “post” might mean?*
- *What does each of the parts of pre-production involve?*
- *Can you explain what preparing, planning, and rehearsing mean?*

The students could now read chapter 2 independently. Ask them to think about the following question:

- *What are the main steps in the pre-production process? Use sticky notes to mark a key phrase for each part of the process.*

When they have finished reading, look at the bold headings on pages 8 to 15. Under each heading, write one of the student’s key phrases to provide a summary of the pre-production process.

Ask the students to read the rest of the book independently.

Look at the questions that the students wrote before reading the book. Those who have found answers could share them with the group. Those who were unable to answer their questions could ask the other students for help.

- *If you still can’t answer your question, where could you go for more information?*

Suggest that they visit the website address on page 29.


Revisit the use of an index by asking the students to write questions for a partner to answer. They should then use the index to locate the information they need to answer their partner’s questions. They may have to check several of the index references before they find the appropriate text.

Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Reading and writing procedural text

The book describes procedures that are made up of a sequence of specific actions. Ask the students to find a piece of text that describes, step by step, how something is done. Discuss the clear and concise way that the process is described.

 Now ask them to choose another section of text and rewrite it as a set of instructions, for example, “How to cast characters for a drama”. The students can use the blackline master on page 77 to record the set of instructions. They could exchange and critique each other’s work.

- *Could someone else follow these steps to do the task successfully?*

S Creating effective flow diagrams

A flow diagram clearly shows the different parts of a process in the correct sequence.

Ask the students to identify the key steps in each of the three parts of drama production, as outlined on page 6 of *The Big Picture*. They could then transfer the steps onto a chart, making sure that they are concise and in sequence. Review the chart and determine whether it provides an accurate summary of the text in the book.

S Exploring different ways of presenting information

Ask the students to look through the pages of the book to find different ways that the author and designer have presented information. For example:

- facts in the text
- small fact boxes with photographs attached
- lists in film frames
- bulleted and numbered lists
- large, labelled photographs
- schedules
- glossary and index.

- *Why have the author and designer used so many different ways to present information?*