

Flash Gordon (dir. Mike Hodges, 1980)

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Design & Technology Key Stage 2

In this lesson, students will watch a some of *Flash Gordon* to start a discussion on what types of technologies appear in the film and other sci-fi films more generally. After thinking about what they are and looking at stills showing some examples, students will be given a brief to make a new technology for the scary, evil overlord Ming. Students will work in groups to trial ideas against the brief and present their final idea to someone in role of Ming. Students' attention will be drawn to the fact that Ming is an evil character and perhaps the technology that they invent could help to stop Ming from ruling planet Mongo.

Lesson Objectives

- To be able to describe and explain the use of different technologies presented in *Flash Gordon*
- To design a new technology based on a brief

You will need...

Flash Gordon DVD
Still of Ming the
Merciless (provided
below)

Curriculum Links

- Designing and making products for imaginary or story-based users, relevant to their needs, wants, values, interests and preferences
- Generating, developing, modeling and communicating their ideas through discussion, annotated sketches, cross-sectional and exploded diagrams, prototypes, pattern pieces and computer-aided design

Activities

TRAILER: Spot the technology!

Screen the film or, alternatively, show the trailer included in the DVD extras.

Whilst watching the trailer, students should make a note what types of alien inventions they can see. As an extension, get them to consider the purpose of the technology – why do they think it is being used.

Pause the film or trailer to show some of the technologies students have spotted. Get students to describe and think about the uses of these technologies. If this isn't obvious, children can infer or use their imagination as to what the objects might do.

MAIN ATTRACTION: The Perfect Weapon

Show students the still of Ming (below) and tell them they have been commissioned to design and present a new technology for the Emperor.

As a class, devise some design criteria for Ming's technology. What kind of technology would he need and what characteristics would it require? Generate at least three criteria for the students to work to. Make sure students know that these criteria are the most important parts of their design for Ming.

Students are to work in groups to design four possible objects, using the criteria to justify their decisions. The teacher should circulate between tables, asking students to explain their designs.

Once all groups have done this, all groups need to choose their design that Ming is going to like best. An A3 version of this should be made by the group, labelled and coloured in. They will also need to make a short speech about this. Roles should be allocated to members in the group to ensure that all of this gets done.

END CREDITS: Ming's Den

The teacher/a student should be in role as Ming, with design criteria on the board. Groups to present their ideas – but remember you don't want Ming to know about the tricks and traps you might have set for him! After each presentation, tick off the design criteria if the group have met it. At the end of the presentations see which groups managed to get most/all of the boxes ticked.

Extras

Read

Flash Gordon comics – see flashgordon.com

Planet of the Apes by Pierre Boulle (1963)

Watch

Explorers (Joe Dante, 1985)

Tron (Steven Lisberger, 1982)

MING THE MERCILESS

Flash Gordon (Mike Hodges, 1980, Famous Films Productions)

