

THE TIME MACHINE

Resource:

DVD of The Time Machine (1960) starring Rod Taylor directed by George Pal (PG rating)

The Time Machine was written by HG Wells during the Victorian era

Scenes to show to the class

6 minutes 40 seconds – 13 minutes: Explanation scene (the fourth dimension)

Scene 7-8 up to 29 minutes and 30 seconds (when he arrives in 1917)

You may prefer to start with the later scene (scenes 7-8) and show the explanation scene afterwards if necessary.

You may want to explain to the children the significance of 1917 if they don't know already.

Activity:

Make your own time machine using the film version as a model. This will then become the 'hot seat' for any people that you bring into the classroom from the past.

Use the curriculum to determine which characters from history you bring into the classroom for 'an interview'. Options for this activity:

The teacher could role-play the characters in order to explain the facts surrounding the particular character.

Alternatively the teacher could have a paragraph or two prepared and then read out when they bring them into the classroom using the time machine.

Alternatively, the teacher could teach the facts about the character then the children have to come up with a list of questions that they would like to ask the character. The character is brought forward in time and the children interview them.

(My favourite option) You could also get one or two children to role-play the character themselves. They should be given a crib-sheet of facts to learn or refer to so that they can be interviewed by the rest of the class. Different children could be given a different crib-sheet based on different characters from the past.

Philosophy of time and time-travel questions:

- ✓ Would it be possible to travel to a time before you were born?
- ✓ Does the past exist?
- ✓ Does the future exist?
- ✓ Is the future already there?
- ✓ What is the present?
- ✓ How long is now?
- ✓ What is time?
- ✓ Would it be possible to travel into the past and change the past?

Time travel and technology

This exercise has been taken from a session based around a Sinbad story from The Arabian Nights in which Sinbad finds himself on an island of people without the technology of 'the saddle'. In return for being looked after by the people of the island Sinbad builds and gives them a saddle as a gift. The Victorians were also very keen on introducing new technologies to other, in their view more 'primitive', cultures. This session also raises the question of whether it is right or acceptable to 'improve' other cultures with technologies. The moral questions as to whether it is okay to interfere with the past transfers nicely to the question as to whether it was okay for the Victorians to interfere with other cultures in the way that they did.

Read or tell the following to the class:

I want you to imagine that you have a time machine and that you have travelled back in time and have been welcomed by a people that live on an island but without many of the technological advancements that have been made in our own time. For instance, there are no cars or computers.

Can you think of something that you could introduce to them? Remember: it must be something that you could build or describe how to build. Cars or computers are too complicated for us to be able to build or describe in detail. What would you be able to introduce?

Good examples might be (but only introduce examples if they really struggle to think of something simple enough to build:

A paper clip

The wheel

Fire

Task Question 1

- ✓ Are we all able to claim the credit for the achievements of humankind?

Nested Questions

- ✓ Would we be right to interfere with societies of the past?
- ✓ Are we right to interfere with other societies in the present?

Task Question 2

- ✓ Cars have brought a great deal of benefits to the people of the world. Can you list some benefits that cars may have brought to the world?

For example:

1. On demand transportation
 2. Independence
 3. Mobility
 4. Convenience
- ✓ Cars have also brought some problems to the people of the world. Can you list any bad things cars have resulted in?

For example:

- ✓ Land use
- ✓ Pollution
- ✓ Public health (1.2 Million people each year are killed in car accidents)
- ✓ Disposal

Task Question 3

- ✓ Knowing what you do about the benefits and bad things that cars have brought to the world, if you did know how to build a car and you went back in time, would you introduce the car to the world?

Victorian character to bring forward in time:

Karl Benz (inventor of the modern car in 1886)

You could ask Karl Benz what he thinks of how the car has developed and the impact it has had on the world, good and bad (see above).