

The ad campaign

PTV learning outcomes

- Students are aware of opportunities to use public transport
- Students understand why their actions are important to being safe on and around public transport
- Students know how to be safe on and around public transport

Duration

Sequences are intended to be delivered in 2–4 lessons.

Overview

In 2012, Melbourne Metro released its *Dumb Ways to Die* animated video campaign, followed by an app (game) in 2014. The campaign has been highly successful in engaging young people with rail safety. The aim was to change behaviour, particularly the behaviour of risk-taking youth.

Change campaigns rely on social media and screen media to be co-created and communicated by its users. Once viewed, it is 'shared' and/or used to re-create additional and alternative versions.

This learning sequence invites students to analyse the *Dumb Ways to Die* animation and/or app game, and other advertising campaigns, to identify technical and symbolic elements about the text and how the key messages are communicated to the audience. Students can consider the next iteration of the *Dumb Ways to Die* campaign that could engage a young audience and provide messages about travel safety not covered by the original campaign, or they can devise their own advertisement focusing on an aspect of public transport safety of their choice.



Curriculum alignment

Level 6 English

VCELA339

Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects

Level 6 Critical and creative thinking

VCCCTQ023

Identify and form links and patterns from multiple information sources to generate non-routine ideas and possibilities

Level 6 The Arts, Media Arts

VCAMAP031

Plan, produce and present media artworks for specific audiences and purposes using responsible media practice

Level 7 English

VCELA370

Analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, including gaze, angle and social distance

VCELY387

Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and audio features to convey information and ideas to a specific audience

Level 7 Critical and creative thinking

VCCCTQ034

Synthesise information from multiple sources and use lateral thinking techniques to draw parallels between known and new solutions and ideas when creating original proposals and artefacts

Level 7 The Arts, Media arts

VCAMAR038

Analyse how technical and symbolic elements are used in media artworks to create representations influenced by genre and the values and viewpoints of particular audiences

Engage

In a class discussion, gather ideas from students about what they see as the dangers of travelling on and being around trains, trams or buses, and the consequences of not being alert or careful. Encourage students to share their personal experiences or that of others they know.

Organise the classroom chairs into two rows facing each other with an aisle in the middle. Make sure that there are fewer chairs than the number of students. Explain that they are going on an imaginary excursion and catching a bus/tram/train. Some students will be seated and some standing.

Identify some students to take on different characters who would also be travelling, eg, a pregnant woman, elderly person, tourist, visually or physically impaired person, adult worker, student, mother with pram, young worker (with mobile phone and head phones) etc.

Prepare short scenarios that reflect travel experiences (some based on the personal experiences offered earlier by the students), eg, not holding on to a support when the transport stops suddenly, standing to allow the elderly and physically impaired to sit, assisting the elderly to alight and step down, continually viewing a mobile phone when getting on and off transport, using level crossings, reacting to discriminatory language and behaviour etc.

At the end of the enactments, discuss which were the most dangerous or harmful situations, and what ethical and safe behaviours are appropriate when confronted by the various situations.

Using the Think, Pair, Share strategy, ask students to form pairs to recall and list any safety messages they adhere to when travelling on public transport. Ask the pairs to share these with another pair, then with the whole class, in order to build a class list of points that identify particular dangers, and the safety strategies students could and should adopt.



Explore

View and analyse three or four public transport safety video clips from Australian or international transport agencies. Some examples include:

- Rail Safety Week 2017 (UK) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAar-aZlc8TQ>
- Passing or overtaking trams <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMLetNq1IYY>
- V/Line – *Train Safety* cartoon for primary school aged children https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugjs-mr_2s4

Using a Bingo board template populated with a variety of safety procedures, have students mark off which safety messages they hear and see in the videos. Compare these messages with the class list of dangers and safety strategies. Identify any messages that are missing.

In small groups, have students select one of the safety video clips and propose responses to the following questions:

1. What was the main message of the safety clip?
2. How did the clip communicate the message to the audience?
3. Who is the main audience for the clip?
4. What technical and/or symbolic elements did the producers use to enhance the message?
5. How effective was the video clip in teaching the audience what to do?

Combine groups that selected the same video clip, and have them compare their responses. The combined groups elect a student to report their findings to the class. Poll the class to see which of the video clips they preferred. Discuss the level of engagement and persuasion these advertisements provided. Now ask the students to view the [Dumb Ways to Die](#) video advertisement then revisit the five questions to analyse the text.

Poll the class again to find which of the safety advertisements they preferred, and which was most effective for a young audience. Ask students to develop a list of 3–5 criteria they could use to evaluate safety advertisements aimed at young people. For example:

- content – plot/story, appropriateness for audience (aged 12–18 years)
- technical elements – genre, use of sound, title/text, imagery, character, setting etc
- symbolic elements – use of metaphor, repetition, parody, allegory etc to communicate point of view
- audience engagement – the unexpected, use of humour etc.

Now view and analyse the video clip [Smart Ways to Live](#) in a similar way. Generate a class discussion about the point of view of each film clip. Have students justify which perspective of the road safety message is more acceptable and ethical, and which would be more effective for a variety of audiences in respect to culture, age and values.



Explain

Identify forms of mass communication (Instagram/Facebook/Twitter, print, television, film, music etc) that influence young people today to change behaviour, e.g., the culture of promotions by personalities, environmental campaigns/issues, technological awareness/advances etc. And, have students name the advertising campaigns that have influenced them to buy something, form an opinion or act in response to its message, eg '[Quit anti-smoking](#)', '[Clean-Up Australia Day](#)', '[Reduce. Reuse. Recycle](#)', '[War on Waste](#)' etc. Students can then do one of the following activities.

1. View two 'One House' Gruen Pitch advertisements and identify the technical and symbolic elements that the advertising agencies chose for their advertisements, and how these elements applied to the audience, visual and graphic elements, concepts/ideas, etc. See Gruen, ABC: 'One House Policy': (1) Inside the Pitch Ep 3 – Big Fish, and (2) Inside the Pitch Ep 3 – Braincells: <https://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/gruen/> (FUSE: *The Gruen Transfer*).
2. Students can suggest an effective advertising campaign to analyse and identify how the message is conveyed by the advertiser and interpreted by the audience. Discuss with the students and list the various persuasive types/devices used in the advertisements, and explain how they influence the audience, eg, through emotion, humour, information, instruction etc.

In small groups, students further investigate the issue of safety, looking for information and/or statistics about accidents in Victoria, involving a train, tram or bus. Each group prepares an information sheet of three or four factual points to share with the class.

Alternatively, the groups could use *Dumb Ways to Die* or *Smart Ways to Live* as a starting point, and extend it to include two or three more safety messages, or suggest a new interpretation of the original advertisement.

Elaborate

Each group brainstorms a safety message advertisement for train, tram or bus travel (as a parody). They could develop a slogan or message to influence or inform others about how to avoid one of the 'statistics' they have just researched. The group suggests ideas for how this message could be successfully conveyed to a mass audience.

To create a storyboard, the group can begin by developing a concept map of the message, and then collaborate on the design of the setting, characters and plot that will best communicate that message. The plot narrative should follow a standard story arc: introduction, rising action, climax and resolution.

Students within the group can design different parts of the story, with the group then negotiating on how the cohesive story idea will become a whole. Students might find storyboarding resources (<https://www.acmi.net.au/education/online-learning/film-it/storyboards/>) useful.

Display the storyboards in the classroom and ask each group give a 30–60 second 'elevator pitch' about why their idea is worthwhile, how it fits the brief and how it will be effective in persuading a young audience (or other specified audience) about transport safety. The group could also justify their choice of media genre, and the approach they've adopted to be persuasive.



Evaluate

Present the class with a survey that uses the assessment criteria used to rate the professional advertising campaigns, to now rate each student group's presentation. Use a scale of 1–5 (highest):

1. What was the main message of the safety clip?
2. How did the clip communicate the message to the audience?
3. Who is the main audience for the clip?
4. What technical and/or symbolic elements did the producers use to enhance the message?
5. How effective was the video clip in teaching the audience what to do?

A simple online survey or quiz tool could be used to generate the results synchronously for the class, or a printed survey could be shared with students. Feedback will be provided to each group. For extension, students could produce their animated advertisement and possibly submit it to Public Transport Victoria.

After each presentation, other students can question the group about their use of media and narrative elements to clarify their understanding of each group's pitch.

Useful resources

- *Dumb Ways to Die* creator explains quirky clip (AUS): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_H8blstl4w4
- Popplet (FUSE): <http://popplet.com/>
- Kahoot: <https://kahoot.com/welcomeback/>
- Quizlet: <https://quizlet.com/en-gb>