

Lesson Plan: Blue Planet - You're the Director!

Materials Needed:

- A device with an internet connection to watch a video clip (laptop, tablet, TV)
 - A notebook, paper, or digital document for taking notes
 - Pen or pencil
 - **Optional:** "Be the Director" worksheet (content provided below)
 - **Optional for Extension:** Drawing paper and markers, or a digital design tool (like Canva) for storyboarding
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. **Analyze** how filmmakers use camera work, music, and narration to tell a story and create emotions.
 2. **Identify** and describe at least three unique adaptations of marine animals shown in a video clip.
 3. **Create** a concept for your own short ocean documentary segment, applying storytelling techniques.
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Lesson Activities

Part 1: Introduction (5-10 minutes)

Hook: The Filmmaker's Challenge

Let's start with a question. Imagine you're a director for a show like *Blue Planet*. Your job is to film a blobfish. How do you make the audience feel that this strange-looking creature is fascinating and important, not just weird or funny? What tricks would you use to make the audience care about its story?

Today, we're going to pull back the curtain on how shows like *Blue Planet* work their magic. We'll look at the story behind the camera, analyze the science, and then you'll get the chance to be the director yourself.

Let's Go Over the Plan:

"First, we'll learn about the filmmaker's 'toolbox.' Then, we'll watch a clip together and act like detectives, spotting the tricks they use. Finally, you'll design your very own mini-episode concept."

Part 2: The Body of the Lesson (30-40 minutes)

Activity 1: The Filmmaker's Toolbox (I Do - 10 minutes)

To tell a powerful story without the animals ever saying a word, filmmakers rely on three key tools. Let's break them down.

- **Camera Shots:** The camera is your eye.
 - **Wide Shot:** Shows the whole environment (the vast ocean, the entire reef). This makes an animal seem small, lonely, or shows the scale of its world.
 - **Medium Shot:** Shows the animal and some of its surroundings. It's great for showing an action, like how a creature hunts or moves.
 - **Close-Up Shot:** Zooms in on a detail, like an eye, a claw, or a weird tentacle. This creates a personal connection and makes you feel like you're right there. It builds emotion—fear, curiosity, or empathy.
- **Music & Sound:** This is the 'feeling' of the scene.
 - Think about a chase scene. The music is probably fast, tense, and dramatic.
 - When a beautiful whale appears, the music might be slow, grand, and wondrous.
 - Silence can be powerful, too! A sudden lack of music can create suspense.
- **Narration:** The voice that guides the story.
 - **Word Choice:** Are they using words like "deadly," "monster," and "hunter," or "gentle," "graceful," and "mother"?
 - **Tone of Voice:** The narrator can sound excited, serious, calm, or sad. David Attenborough is a master of using a calm, knowledgeable tone that makes you trust him.

Activity 2: Deconstructing the Deep (We Do - 15 minutes)

Now, let's be film critics and marine biologists at the same time. We're going to watch a clip together from *Blue Planet*. I recommend the "Bobbit Worm" clip or the "Deep Sea" episode for great examples of drama and unique animals.

As we watch, let's fill out a chart. You can draw this in your notebook. We'll pause as we go to discuss.

What's Happening? (The Action)	Filmmaker's Tool (Camera, Music, Narration?)	How Did It Make You Feel? (The Effect)
<i>Example: A small fish swims near the sand.</i>	<i>Tense, quiet music. A medium shot follows the fish.</i>	<i>Nervous, like something is about to happen.</i>

Science Check-In: While we watch, let's also be on the lookout for adaptations. An adaptation is a special feature or behavior that helps an animal survive in its environment. Let's aim to spot at least three. (Examples: camouflage, bioluminescence, unique hunting methods).

(Educator Note: Pause the video at key moments to discuss camera angles, music shifts, and to identify animal adaptations together.)

Activity 3: You're the Director! (You Do - 15 minutes)

This is your chance to create. Your mission is to design a concept for a new, 60-second *Blue Planet* segment. You don't have to film it, just plan it!

Your Plan Must Include:

1. **Choose Your Star:** Pick a real marine animal. It could be one you just saw, or another favorite like an octopus, anglerfish, or sea turtle.
2. **Identify the "Story":** What is your animal doing? Is it a hunt? A journey? Hiding from a predator? Caring for its young? What is the one key adaptation you want to highlight?

3. **Plan Your Shots:** Describe at least three shots you would use. (e.g., "I'll start with a WIDE SHOT of the dark seabed to show how alone the anglerfish is...")
4. **Set the Mood with Music:** Describe the music. (e.g., "The music will be slow and mysterious as it waits for prey.")
5. **Write the Script:** Write a short (2-3 sentence) narration script in the style of David Attenborough.

Success Criteria (How you'll know you did a great job):

- ✓ You have chosen an animal and a clear story/action.
- ✓ Your plan includes at least three specific camera shot ideas.
- ✓ You have described the music and its effect on the audience.
- ✓ You have written a short narration that fits the *Blue Planet* style.

Part 3: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Showtime & Recap

Present your director's plan! Share your animal, the story, and the filmmaking choices you made to bring it to life.

After you share, let's recap what we learned:

- **What are the three main tools a filmmaker uses to create emotion and tell a story about wildlife?** (Answer: Camera, Music/Sound, Narration).
- **What was the most surprising or cool animal adaptation we saw or talked about today?**

Connecting to the Real World

Next time you watch any movie or documentary, pay attention to these techniques. Nothing you see or hear is an accident. The creators are always trying to make you feel a certain way. Now, you know how they do it!

Differentiation Options

- **Scaffolding Support:** If you're feeling stuck, use a provided storyboard template with pre-drawn squares for your shots, or choose from a list of 5 fascinating sea creatures with their key adaptation already described.
- **Extension Challenge:** Take your director's plan to the next level. Research a more obscure deep-sea creature and ensure your narration includes 2-3 fascinating, verified facts. Or, use a free video editor to create a 30-second "trailer" for your segment using royalty-free ocean clips and music.