

**Book title**

Pattern; Sentry

**Author**

Fredric Brown

**Bibliographic information**

Published by Arnoldo Mondadori in 2002; Einaudi Scuola, 2004

**Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)**

<http://www.coris.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/sentinella.pdf>

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fredric\\_Brown](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fredric_Brown)

**Theme**

Science fiction

**Short summary**

These two short stories complement each other: in *Pattern*, Miss Macy sprays insecticide in her garden, likewise the giant aliens spray a lethal substance on the earth. In *Sentry*, the main character, a sentry on a distant planet kills an alien, a repulsive two-eyed and two-legged creature, that is a human being.

**Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?**

The two science fiction stories make young readers reflect upon somewhat arrogant attitudes that often characterize those people who feel superior to others; they may also wonder about different perspectives on humans and on aliens .



### **What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?**

In each story, the narrator employs an unexpected point of view, thus driving young readers to consider the consequences of superficial behaviours, which are often the outcome of prejudices.

### **Why is this story motivational for the pupils?**

The unexpected end and the narrative technique of estranging effect are extremely appealing to young readers, who are eager to read other similar texts.

### **Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?**

No, there isn't.

### **Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promotes understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?**

The theme of diversity is dealt with at a science fiction level: aliens and humans.

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## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Title of Activity no. 1**

Role play: impossible interviews

### **Description of educational activity**

**Duration:** 3 hours

**Pupils' age:** 14-16

**Organization of the class of pupils:** group work

**Pupils' tasks:** Students read the two short stories by F. Brown. They form two groups, each one working separately on one short story. Inside each group, two sub-groups of 4/5 students single out information to use for the interviews (questions and answers). Finally, the two groups share their work and write down the two interviews. The presentation of the product will take place through role play: one student will interpret himself, while another one plays the character. The rest of the class pay attention and jot down what each group refers in order to comment and make observation afterwards.

### **Support materials:**

- "Pattern" and "Sentry" by Fredric Brown
- Biography of the author
- The science fiction genre

**Evaluation and assessment method:** The imitation game is another strategy suggested for effective learning. It is based on cooperative learning. The teacher defines exact rules, behaviours, tasks and timing.



1. Setting the group
2. Assigning roles and choosing a leader
3. Characteristics of the assigned tasks
4. Definition of setting for the activity and working materials
5. Meta-reflection on the process

Digital technologies and their supports are used: videos, films, ebooks and so on. The role play simulates a real situation, therefore students are guided in an analytical reading of the text which highlights message and also context.

### **Connection to curriculum**

**Grade:** 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

#### **Knowledge:**

- Definition of fantasy/science fiction short story
- Main elements of the fantasy/science fiction short story
- Origin of the fantasy/science fiction short story
- Some important authors of these genres and their texts.

#### **Skills:**

- Understanding the story
- Identifying the structure of a fantasy/science fiction short story
- Distinguishing real and fantastic elements
- Detecting in the texts elements which relate nature to science and technology;
- Recognizing the characters' roles and the elements of the setting in a fantasy/science fiction short story;
- Recognizing the suspense technique;
- Detecting and identifying the narrator;
- Establishing the rhythm of narration;
- Identifying space and time elements,
- Enriching vocabulary.

#### **Competences:**

- Reading
- Understanding and interpreting written texts of various kinds, and in details, using the narrating instruments to produce other texts using creative writing.

### **Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity**

#### **Italian version**

La sentinella e altri racconti di Fredric Brown  
Arnoldo Mondadori  
194 pagine  
Editore: Einaudi Scuola (5 febbraio 2004)  
Collana: Nuove letture



Lingua: Italiano - ISBN-10: 8828607440

ISBN-13: 978-8828607441



### Digital sources

There are many different sites on the Internet which illustrate the pattern of the “impossible interview”. Also the pdf version of the short stories are useful.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN8T99KYFKk>
- <http://www.teche.rai.it/programmi/le-interviste-impossibili/>
- [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le\\_interviste\\_impossibili](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_interviste_impossibili)
- <http://www.media.rai.it/articoli/le-interviste-impossibili-ovvero-quando-italo-calvino-parlava-con-montezuma-che-era-carmelo-bene/30671/default.aspx>
- <http://www.coris.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/sentinella.pdf>
- <http://www.fantascienza.com>

### Results

The science fiction genre is highly appreciated by young people who know it also thanks to the cinema. The literary text differs from the film as it does not involve the use of special effects, therefore it offers the opportunity for a deeper reflection on the themes and the possibility to analyse the characters accurately especially if we want to introduce creative writing.

### Recommendations

The role play of the “impossible interview” arouses students’ interest and encourages accurate and intensive reading. It enriches vocabulary and fosters oral and written linguistic skills.

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### Title of Activity no. 2

The science fiction genre: literature and cinema

### Description of educational activity

**Duration:** 5 hours



**Pupils' age:** 14-16

**Organization of the class of pupils:** group work

**Pupils' tasks:** Pre-requisite for the students is having read some science fiction short stories. Students are asked to read aloud in turns, then a debate is started on characteristics and trends of the science fiction genre. Students are invited to collect data on filmography, from "Le voyage dans la lune" by G. Mèliès (1902) to the latest films. Each student's task is to trace the original poster of the film on the Internet and download it on a memory stick. All posters files with a brief presentation of the film will make up a chronological route of the genre for a power point presentation.

**Support materials:** The teacher proposes again F. Brown's short stories "Pattern" and "Sentry", plus new stories, such as "The Pedestrian" by Ray Bradbury from "le meraviglie del possibile"; "Key Word" and the stories from "I Robot" by I. Asimov.

**Evaluation and assessment method:** The evaluation method is based on the observation of the cooperative behaviour of students who work together on a project, each of them giving their contribution. Each student will feel personally involved in the learning process, as he will be the one to choose the film and write its presentation.

### **Connection to curriculum**

**Grade:** 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

#### **Knowledge:**

- The science fiction genre and narrative structures and techniques of the genre
- Authors and stories of the science fiction genre: I. Asimov, F. Brown, R. Bradbury
- Science fiction cinema.

#### **Skills:**

- Grasping the specific traits of a literary text
- Mastering the linguistic structures in the texts
- Understanding the message inside
- Understanding and producing audio-visual products.

#### **Competences:**

- Reading, understanding and interpreting written texts of different kinds, and in particular, using the narrative instruments to interpret a film
- Making comparisons between literary texts and films

### **Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity**

The science fiction "Key Item" by I. Asimov can be found in the Italian anthologies of "Biennio", as for example in the text by Gabriella D'Anna, Milla ghedini, "Foglia dopo foglia" vol. A, La Scuola Editore (pag. 273-275)

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### **Digital sources**

There are many sites on the Internet dedicated to Asimov, science fiction and films of that genre. Here are those consulted and given to students:

- [http://www.laterza.it/indici/9788842112020\\_capitolo.pdf](http://www.laterza.it/indici/9788842112020_capitolo.pdf)
- <https://oggiscienza.it/2014/10/22/il-cinema-di-fantascienza/>
- <http://www.mymovies.it/film/fantascienza/>
- <http://www.film.it/film/generi/genere/film-fantascienza/>

### **Results**

Students have learned to appreciate the science fiction genre; they got so passionate about reading this genre that they are going to read the short stories collections of the three authors (Asimov, Bradbury, Brown). Students already knew the film genre, but thanks to the project, they have expanded their knowledge, sharpened their skills of analytical observation and made textual competences better in the comparison between the two languages: Cinema and Literature

### **Recommendations**

Motivating students means indulging their tastes and encouraging their personal choices; the science fiction genre is one of the favourite among the young generations of readers. On the other hand, the film language offers many different catchy stimuli especially thanks to the use of special effects in science fiction. Encouraging reading narrative texts through the relationship between cinema and literature has given tangible results: finding out that behind a film there is reference literature has triggered curiosity towards reading.