

The Truman Show

(USA 1998)

Genre: Comedy / Drama /
Fantasy

He's the star of the show - but he doesn't know.

Jim Carrey wowed critics and audiences alike as unwitting Truman Burbank in this marvel of a movie from director Peter Weir (*Witness*, *Dead Poets Society*) about a man whose life is a nonstop TV show.

Truman doesn't realize that his quaint hometown is a giant studio set run by a visionary producer/ director/creator, that folks living and working there are Hollywood actors, that even his incessantly bubbly wife is a contract player. Gradually, Truman gets wise. And what he does about his discovery will have you laughing, crying and cheering like few film stories ever have.

(more) www.us.imdb.com

Characters

Action

appearance

body language

use of language /
communication



Narrative techniques

setting

plot

suspense

*Main function
of the scene:*

*Special camera
operations*

*Film music/sound
effects*

Cinematic devices



Visual symbols

Other effects

Characters in the film

Name	What we learn about them

The Truman Show

*Truman Burbank is the star of a popular TV show—he just doesn't know it. Filmed with over 5,000 cameras on the world's largest studio lot and broadcast 24 hours a day around the world, **The Truman Show** demonstrates how everything in the media is created, how the media can create reality, and how audiences can be influenced by the media.*


While-watching activities

1. The movie begins with interview clips of Christof, the creator and director of **The Truman Show**, along with the actors who play Truman's wife and his best friend. What do they say about the TV series?

Christof says	Truman's wife says	Marlon says

2. How is Truman introduced? What impression do you get of him?

3. Try to locate the different camera positions. Where are all the cameras hidden?

camera 1	hidden behind the mirror  Truman looks straight into it
camera 2	
camera 3	
camera 4	
camera 5	
camera 6	
camera 7	
camera 8	
camera 9	
camera 10	

4. When and where do you realize that the whole scene is not real, but a big TV studio? Find some examples.

5. Find examples for advertising and product placement in the first scenes of the film.

name of product	how it is placed	typical features of an advert

6. Sum up the events in the flashback in your own words.

7. What adjectives would you use to describe Seahaven in the establishing shot?

8. What is being done to prevent Truman from leaving his hometown?

9. Imagine the tramp was not hustled away. How might the scene have continued?
Act out the dialogue in pairs.

Truman: "

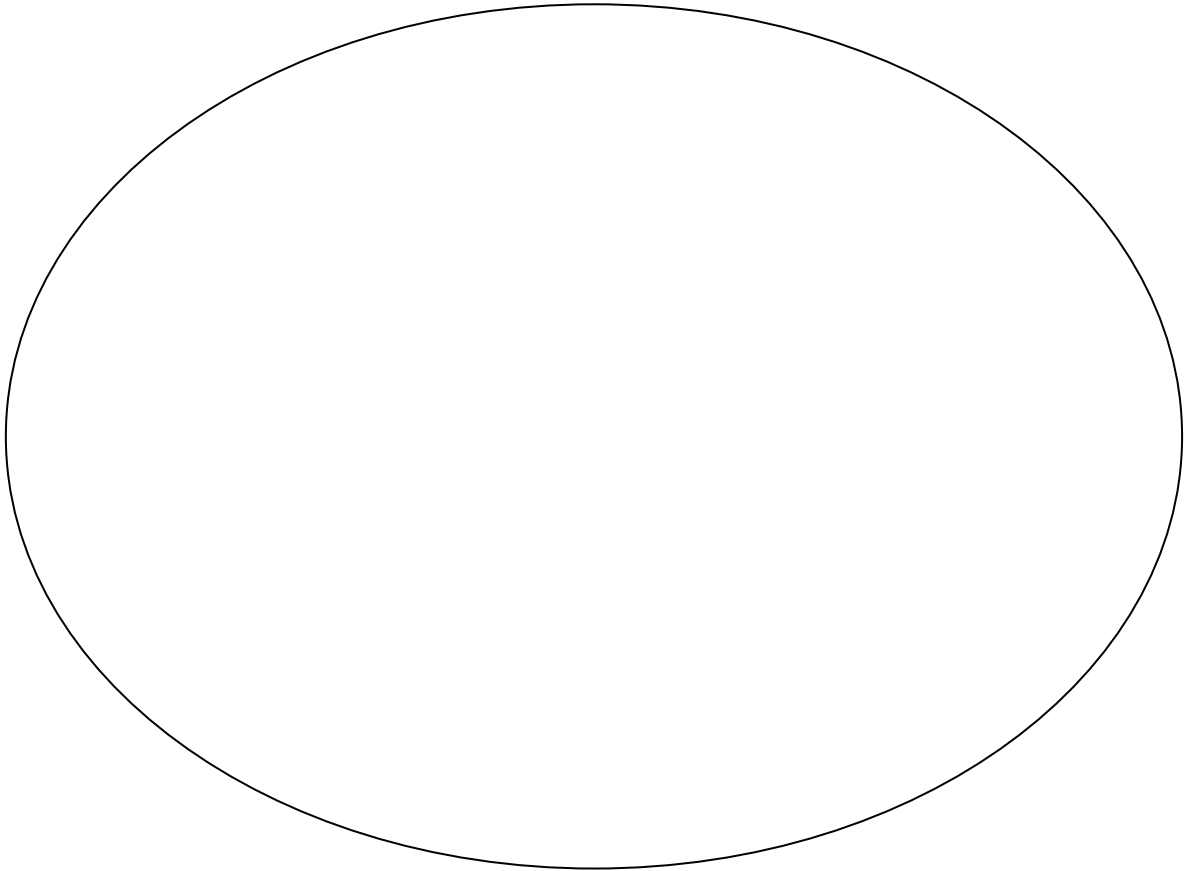
tramp: "

10. After the scene on the beach. Truman writes down his thoughts and feelings into his diary. Write down this entry.

Truman Burbank's Diary

Today something strange happened on the beach.

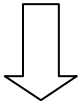
11. Having heard the voices on his car radio and before entering the building Truman walks around totally confused. What does he think at that moment?



12. Retell the scene in the travel agency. Use reported speech. Start like this: *The travel agent came in and said that she was sorry. Truman replied it was okay.*

13. Truman makes four different attempts to leave the town, by plane, by coach, by car and on foot. Make a grid and compare these. Show how he is prevented from being successful.

by plane	by coach	by car	on foot



14. How would you describe Truman's and Marlon's relationship in this scene?

15. Write and act out the dialogue between Truman and his father in pairs.

16. Imagine you had the chance to interview Christof. What would you ask him?

you: " ...

Christof:" ...

17. Sum up in your own words how Truman tricks Christof and is able to escape.

18. Christof says: "That's our hero shot." What do you think? Is Truman a hero or a prisoner?

19. Discuss Christof's decision to risk Truman's life by creating a storm to stop him. In how far is Christof in a God-like position?

After-watching activities

Sum up the plot of the film in one catchy phrase like "On the air. Unaware."

Write an entry for the Guinness Book of Records about the Truman Show.

Two days after the end of the show the final edition of the **Truman Magazine** appears. Devise one page for the magazine. It can be an editorial, an interview, a human interest story, a factual report, etc.

Do you think that the broadcasting of people's private lives on TV or the Internet (Jennycam) is a positive development?

Write a film review of the Truman Show. Stick to the rules you already know.

How might the story go on? Write a possible ending. What will happen to Truman? How will he manage in real life? What will Christof do?

the **TRUMAN** show

(Worksheet: Interior Monologue)

Sylvia's story



Sylvia is in her room, watching the Truman Show. She is pondering on her unsuccessful attempt to tell Truman the truth.

Complete the sentences below. You may add more sentences/ideas if you like.

When I first met Truman I hoped

I wish I could have made him

But the producers

I could have cried when

When I now see him on the show I can hardly bear

If only I could

But I'm sure one day he

...

the **TRUMAN** show

Quotes

Christof: We accept the reality of the world with which we are presented

Truman: This is us...and all the way around here... Fiji. You can't get any further away before you start coming back.

Christof: Cue the sun!

Truman: Good morning! And in case I don't see you: good afternoon, good evening and good night!

Christof: I have given Truman the chance to lead a normal life. The world, the place you live in, is the sick place.

Truman: It was Dad. I swear! Dressed like a homeless man.

Network Executive: For God's sake, Chris! The whole world is watching. We can't let him die in front of a live audience!

Christof: Listen to me, Truman. You can leave if you want, I won't try to stop you. But you won't survive out there. You don't know what to do, where to go.

Christof: Truman, I've watched you your whole life, I saw you taking your first step, your first word, your first kiss. I know you better than you know yourself. You are not going to walk out that door.

Truman: You never had a camera inside my head.

Truman: Well, I'm Truman.

Lauren: Yeah. I know. Look, Truman, I'm not allowed to talk to you. You know.





Truman: Yeah, well, I can understand, I'm a pretty dangerous character.

Truman: Look, Meryl! Same road, no cars. It's magic!









Truman: I want to be an explorer.

Teacher: You're too late! There's nothing left to explore!

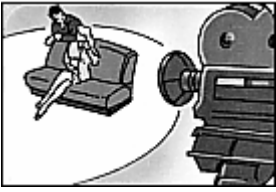

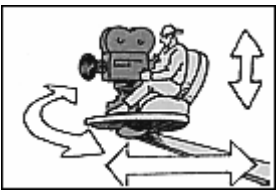

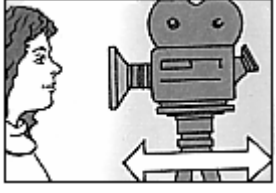
Camera Angles

<p>Eye-level shot / Straight-on angle</p>	<p>Normalsicht</p>	<p>Viewing objects from about 1.70 m, underlining the normal perspective.</p>	
<p>High shot / High-angle shot (from above)</p>	<p>Aufsicht / Vogelperspektive</p>	<p>Viewing objects from (far) above eye-level, making them appear smaller or inferior (oppressed, diminished)</p>	
<p>Low shot / Low-angle shot (from below)</p>	<p>Untersicht / Froschperspektive</p>	<p>Viewing objects from (far) below eye level, making them appear bigger, more important powerful, domineering etc.</p>	
<p>Overhead shot Aerial shot</p>	<p>Obersicht Luftbildaufnahme</p>	<p>In a high-angle shot, the camera is placed above the scene of action; in an extreme form, it becomes a bird's eye view</p>	




Camera Ranges

Extreme long shot (XLS)	Weitaufnahme / Supertotale	Scene filmed from a considerable distance, usually wide angle; e.g. people in a wider context or a view of scenery as far as the horizon	
Long shot (LS)	Totale	Shot showing people in their environment; e.g. a street scene or people in a larger room	
Medium long shot (MLS)	Halbtotale	Shot showing individuals in a group, some from head to toe, engaged in interaction with each other; e.g. a fight scene, with part of their surroundings in the picture	
Full shot (FS)	Halbnahaufnahme / HalbnahEinstellung	Shot including the entire figure and part of the surroundings, emphasizing action and/or the constellation of characters.	
Medium close shot (MCS) / Medium shot (MS)	Amerikanische Einstellung / Naheinstellung	Shot showing a subject from head to chest or waist; e.g. a Western hero with his gun on his hips	
Close shot (CS)	Nahaufnahme	Shot showing a person's face, shoulders and part of his/her arm, without emphasizing particular facial expressions; e.g. a heated discussion or serious conversation	
Close-up (CU)	Großaufnahme	Full screen shot of a subject emphasizing facial expressions; e.g. a person's head	
Extreme close-up (XCU) / Detail shot	Detailaufnahme	Close-up showing only subject's face or part of face; e.g. a person's mouth or eyes; any important object of the scenery	

Camera Movements

<p>Stationary camera/ static shot</p>	<p>Statische Kamera</p>	<p>Not moving the camera nor changing the focal length</p>	
<p>Pan/panning shot (to pan left /right) (to tilt up / down)</p>	<p>Schwenk horizontal schwenken; vertikal schwenken</p>	<p>Moving the camera to the right or left, up or down, so as to follow a moving object or to show a wide or panoramic view; the camera itself is stationary</p>	
<p>Crane shot</p>	<p>Kranfahrt</p>	<p>Camera moves flexibly in all directions on a crane</p>	
<p>Tracking / travelling shot</p>	<p>Kamerafahrt</p>	<p>Camera is on a vehicle moving on the ground; movement of the camera eye across a wide area as the camera moves horizontally; e.g. a car chase in an action movie</p>	
<p>Zoom (to zoom in on / out of s.th.; e.g. a face)</p>	<p>Zoom</p>	<p>Moving the camera gradually closer or further away from a subject so that it seems to be closer or more distant</p>	

Points of View

Establishing shot	(Übersichtseinstellung)	Often at the beginning of a film and/or a sequence; a shot which sets the time and place of the action or setting (usually a long shot that lets the viewer get a feel for the location and the number of people in it before the camera goes in closer to cover the action)	
Over-the-shoulder shot		The partner in a dialogue is seen from the perspective of a person standing just behind and a little to one side of the other partner so that parts of both are in the frame	
Reverse-angle shot		A shot from the opposite side, usually showing a dialogue partner	
Point-of-view shot (POV)	Subjektive Einstellung	Showing the scene through a character's eyes; important for motivation and controlling aspects of the audience's identification with the characters	An extreme example in Hitchcock's <i>Spellbound</i> : the camera adopts the point of view of a character who is about to shoot himself; when the gun fires, the screen goes black.
Reaction shot	Gegenschuss	Short shot of a character's response to an action	cf. Hitchcock's <i>Psycho</i> . We see the knife descending again and again and we see the <i>reaction shots</i> of Janet Leigh, but we never see the stabbing take place.

Editing

Flashback	Rückblende	Flashbacks are used to integrate the past into the present action	There are many flashbacks in <i>The Truman Show</i>
Flash-forward	Vorausschau	Shot or sequence anticipating a future development	A good example of the use of flashbacks and flash-forwards is Zemeckis' <i>Back to the future II</i> (1989)
Parallel action/ Cross-cutting	Parallelhandlung/ Querschnitt	Mixing shots of different scenes to express parallelism or contrast	
Match-cut	zusammenfügender Schnitt; Symbolschnitt	Connecting two scenes in the spectator's mind by visual, aural or metaphorical parallelism	One door closing and then another one opening
Flash cuts	Kurze Rückblenden	Short machine-gun bursts of images sandwiched together (e.g. for time compression)	
Split screen	Bildteilung	Division of the screen to show two or more pictures at the same time	e.g. two people on the phone can be seen at the same time
Freeze frame	Standbild / eingefrorenes Bild	The picture stops moving, becoming a still photograph	cf. the ending of <i>The Full Monty</i> (1998)
Cut Cut to... / from.../ back to...	(harter) Schnitt Schnitt auf.../ von.../ zurück auf	Switch from one picture to the other without obvious connection	
Fade-in / fade-out	Auf- / Abblende	Gradual appearance or disappearance of a picture	
Dissolve / Cross-fade	Überblende	Simultaneous appearance of one and disappearance of another image	

Television

Useful words

anchor/anchorman/anchorwoman/	broadcaster on television who appears on a news broadcast to connect one part of the broadcast with the next
co-anchor	one of two or three anchorpersons
commercial	an advertisement on television or radio
daytime soap	soap opera broadcast during the day
episode	part of a serial broadcast at one time
footage	(only sing) sequences of filmed material
live [laiv] (adj)	broadcast while actually happening, not recorded or edited
news agency/ wire service	an agency supplying news, etc, to newspapers, radio and television stations
newscast (<i>news + broadcast</i>)	a radio or television broadcast news report
newscaster (AE) /newsreader (BE)	person who reads the news on TV or radio
news item /item of news	single piece of news
newsreel	short film with a commentary presenting current events
newsreel piece	short film presenting only one event
news show	news programme
on-air (adj., attrib.)	radio broadcast while actually happening
on-location/on-the-scene	TV broadcast at the place while actually happening
prime-time	the time when most people are watching TV
ratings	the statistics published each week which show how popular each television programme is
serial (BE) /series (sg/pl)	a continued story broadcast in many episodes
soap opera /soap	popular (often sentimental or trivial) television drama serial about the daily lives and troubles of a group of people
televisable	fit for being broadcast by TV
viewer	someone who watches television
voice-over	voice of a person commenting a film without appearing on the screen