

**THE ACTORS** who play superheroes in films are just ordinary humans. Somehow film makers have to make them fly, appear or disappear and escape from all forms of danger in order to make their characters seem superhuman. A large team of technicians helps the director and camera crew in creating the various special effects used to give the impression that something extraordinary is taking place on screen. Flying, for example, is something we often see superheroes do and there are lots of ways to create the illusion that someone is flying. It can be done by simply suspending an actor from wires in front of a moving background; or it can be done by computer, which can be complicated and take much longer.

Reporter, **Jo Novak**, asked three technicians about the part they play in creating special effects. These are their answers to her questions.

**Q      How do actors survive the fires, explosions and other dangerous accidents in films?**

**A**

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| They don’t! Only a stunt double like me can do that. Films would be very boring without the exciting scenes stunt doubles perform. The way it works is that I get made up and dressed to look like the main star. I do all the dangerous, exciting bits instead of the actor. You can’t tell it’s me because all my shots are filmed from a distance so that you never get a clear view of my face.  | I’m trained to make sure that my life is never put at any risk, though. If I have to fall from an upstairs window, I wear padded body armour under my costume and land on soft crash mats to cushion my fall. Close-ups of the star are added later, so the audience think she was the only one ever involved in the action. That’s how actors are made to seem braver than they really are! | **Molly Lernerstunt double** |

**Q      How do actors change from ordinary humans into superheroes, monsters or even aliens?**

**A**

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| That’s what we call morphing – transforming one image into another. Before computers, this was a lengthy process that involved gradually altering an actor’s make-up and filming each new look after each make-up change. My most complex project required 15 applications of make-up. Now, a hi-tech computer | needs only two ‘still’ images – the actor before and after the change. These two photographs are all that is needed by the computer program to generate all the stages in between, blending them so smoothly that you believe the transformation is happening before your very eyes. | **Hema Aslammake-up artist** |

**Q      How do you make the bangs, crashes and other sound effects?**

**A**

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| My job, as part of the sound crew, starts when the filming is finished. We work on the actors’ dialogue, the music and all the splats, bangs and crashes you get in action films. We create most sounds artificially, record them and add them at this late stage. A lot of our work is still done without computers. You’d never guess, but the scrunching sound of footsteps in snow | is made by squeezing custard powder inside a rubber glove; the sound of crackling fire is made by rustling paper. On the other hand, we produce roars, explosions and the thud … thud … thud of a heartbeat electronically, using a synthesizer. This sound is stored on a computer and called up when needed to fit the film. | **Darren Hughes,sound technician** |

1.      The special effects you have read about were described by three technicians.

         Here are some effects.

         Draw lines to match each one to the technician who could tell you about it.



1 mark

2.      Why does Darren Hughes not need to be present during filming?

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1 mark

3.      Look at what Molly Lerner has said.

         Why are close-ups of the main actor added into the shots of Molly’s stunts?

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1 mark

4.      What is Molly’s attitude towards the main actors?

         Explain fully, using the text to help you.



3 marks

5.      How helpful are computers in creating special effects?

         Use the information to explain your answer.

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2 marks

6.      *My most* ***complex*** *project required 15 applications of make-up.*

Which word most closely matches the meaning of the word *complex*?

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| --- | --- |
|   | Tick **one**. |
| complicated |  |
| troublesome |  |
| simple |  |
| fun |  |

1 mark

**Length after length**

This is an extract from a novel about a teenage girl called Jess.
The story begins when Jess is at her local swimming pool.

Half-past nine in the morning and the pool was crowded already. That was
the down-side to summer holidays, especially hot ones like this, but she knew
she shouldn’t grumble: she’d been here since six thirty, together with the usual
hard-core of serious swimmers, and she’d managed a leisurely four miles
without interruption.

But she did grumble; the mere sight of all these people flopping in like
lemmings made her want to shout with frustration. She wasn’t ready to stop
yet, not by a long way. She had energy left and she wanted to use it.

She stuck to her lane, doggedly ploughing length after length, trying to ignore
the splash of other swimmers. Sometimes she’d found that if she just forced
herself to keep swimming up and down her lane without stopping or swerving,
the other users of the pool seemed by some collective telepathy to accept the
space as hers, and leave it to her. But that wouldn’t work today: they seemed
to be jumping in by the score. Another quarter of an hour and it would be
unbearable.

She locked into her stroke and drove herself on, her breath beating its
practised rhythm in time with the strokes, as even as the chime of a clock. In
for a gulp of oxygen, her mouth twisted upwards to snap its life from the air,
then face down again and the long exhalation to a slow, steady count, bubbles
teasing her lips like tiny fish.

She loved this rhythm; she needed it. It kept her thoughts on track when
they started to wander. Sometimes, when things were going well and she
was feeling secure in herself and had something pleasant to think about, she
was happy to let them wander; but if she was tiring or feeling vulnerable or
worrying, she focused on that rhythm and it settled her, sometimes even when
she wasn’t swimming.

But she was always swimming. She needed to swim. To be deprived of
swimming would be like a perverse kind of drowning. She loved the sensation
of power and speed, the feeling of glistening in a bed of foam, even the strange
isolation of mind in this watery cocoon. Distance swimming was as much
about will as about technique; and she knew she was strong in both. All she
needed now, to set that will alight, was a big swimming challenge; something
to test herself against. Something she could one day be proud of.

1.      Look at the paragraph beginning: *She stuck to her lane*...

**Find** and **copy two** words that suggest everyone understood that the space belonged to Jess.

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1 mark

2.      *To be deprived of swimming would be like a perverse kind of drowning*.

What does this show about Jess’ feelings towards swimming?

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1 mark

3.      Describe the character of Jess based on what you have read.

Explain your answer, using evidence from the whole text.

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3 marks

Mark schemes

1.       Award **1 mark** for all three pairs correctly matched.



**1 mark**

2.       Award **1 mark** for answers referring to the fact that Darren is responsible for sound or that sound is added afterwards, eg:

*•        the sounds are all stored in a computer;*

*•        he does all the sound effects / he only does the sound;*

*•        he’s in the sound crew.*

**1 mark**

3.       Award **1 mark** for reference to the fact that Molly is not meant to be seen / recognised or that there is some deception involved, eg:

*•        the audience is supposed to think that it was the proper actor all along;*

*•        we are not meant to know that it was someone else doing the stunts;*

*•        because the audience would notice that it’s not all for real;*

*•        because she looks different from the real actor.*

**1 mark**

4.       Award **3 marks** for fully developed responses which include explicit statement of Molly’s negative opinion of the actors, with more than one textual reference to support answer, eg:

*•        she doesn’t seem to like them because she says that the actors are made to seem braver than they really are because she’s the really brave one and she has to have lots of special skills and training that they don’t have;*

*•        I think Molly doesn’t really like the main actors for she says things like “that’s how actors are made to seem braver than they really are.” She is being very biased towards stunt doubles “only a stunt double like me can do that.”*

Award **2 marks** for identifying Molly’s negative opinion (may be implicit) and providing one piece of support / textual evidence, eg:

*•        she says she does all the dangerous, exciting stunts instead of the actors.*

          Award **1 mark** for identifying Molly’s negative opinion, eg:

*•        looks down on them / resents them;*

*•        they are not as brave as people think;*

*•        they have a boring job to do.*

**up to 3 marks**

5.       Award **2 marks** for recognition of the fact that computers are helpful in some aspects of film-making **and** unhelpful in others, eg:

*•        not helpful for ‘flying’ because it’s quicker and easier to dangle an actor on ropes than to make him look as if he’s flying on a computer but helpful for morphing;*

*•        quite helpful but they can still do some effects better without computers;*

*•        used for some sound effects likes the thuds but other methods are used for snow and fire.*

Award **1 mark** for reference to the fact that they are **or** are not helpful in some aspect(s) of film production, eg:

*•        they are used for flying and sound effects;*

*•        helpful in morphing / make-up;*

*•        not all that helpful for ‘flying’.*

**Do not accept** *very helpful* without explanation.

**up to 2 marks**

6.       Complicated

**1 mark**

1.       Award **1 mark** for:

•        collective telepathy

**1 mark**

2.       Award **1 mark** for answers that recognise that Jess needs to swim / cannot survive without it, eg:

*•        she loves it so much that she would rather die than go without swimming*

*•        this shows that Jess loves swimming and she is saying she couldn’t live without it*

*•        she needed it*

*•        she couldn’t do without it.*

**1 mark**

3.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Acceptable point** | **Likely evidence / quotation linked to text** |
| 1.  hard-working / motivated / dedicated | there at 6.30 / stays a long time / swims a long way |
| 2.  persistent / determined / stubborn  | locked into her stroke / doggedly ploughing / forced herself to keep swimming |
| 3.  impatient of others / selfish / frustrated / irritable | says it is becoming unbearable / tries to ignore them / grumbles / made her want to shout with frustration / calls them lemmings / says they are ‘flopping’ |
| 4.  passionate  | needed to swim |
| 5.  likes / needs a challenge / optimistic about success | big swimming challenge / something to test herself against |
| 6.  insecure  | vulnerable / worrying |
| 7.  confident / optimistic.  | loves the isolation of long distance swimming / knows she is strong in will and technique. |

Award **3 marks** for reference to at least three of the acceptable points, with evidence from the text for each, eg:

•        *she is dedicated, ‘she stuck to her lane’ shows she will carry on and on. She is quite irritable, ‘the mere sight of the lemmings flopping made her want to shout’ shows she is also a passionate person as ‘she needed swimming’, her love for swimming was immense. [B1+ evidence, B2 + evidence, B4 + evidence]*

Award **2 marks** for reference to two of the acceptable points, with evidence from the text for both, eg:

•        *she feels really annoyed and frustrated at the other swimmers because she complains ‘that they flop in like lemmings’. Jess is very determined and she hopes that one day, she’d enter a competition and do something she’d be proud of* [B3 + evidence, B2 + evidence]

•        *I think she is determined – ‘drove herself’. I think she’s ambitious – ‘something she could one day be proud of’.* [B2 + evidence, B4 + evidence]

Award **1 mark** for reference to one of the acceptable points with evidence from the text, or two or more acceptable points without evidence from the text eg:

•        *she is determined as it says that ‘she drove herself on’* [B2 + evidence]

•        *I think she might be a bit short tempered because when people get in her way she gets quite annoyed. I think she might be quite determined because she wants to swim longer and she won’t give up.* [B3 + B2]

**Accept** the same evidence for more than one acceptable point, if appropriate.

**Up to 3 marks**