

34. This is your life

Use the *Introduction* and *Activity 1* and possibly one or more of the *Variations* as appropriate, followed by *Drawing things together*. Please read them all before making your choice. Activities marked with * are particularly suitable for younger pupils.

Teacher's notes

- *This is your life* was a TV programme screened between 1955 and 2003 in which a celebrity was surprised by the host, originally Eamonn Andrews but later Michael Aspel, who then gave an account of the celebrity's life with specially invited guests from his or her past.
- Clips from the programme can be found by using your preferred internet search engine.
- The technique is particularly suitable as a summative task when learning has been based on the life of a specific person.
- The teacher may take on the role of the compere for continuity purposes or the role of the celebrity.

Introduction

Show pupils a short extract from an edition of *This is your life*. Note the key features of the format:

- The compere with the red book
- The surprise of the celebrity
- The introduction of family and friends by the use of 'voices off'
- The brief interviews with family and friends to illustrate events in the celebrity's life
- The embarrassment of the celebrity
- The presentation of the red book at the end of the show

* Activity 1: This is your life

Give the class the identity of the person from recent learning whose life they are going to portray. Agree on five family members or friends that could be included as surprise guests, each one representing a key event in the person's life. In groups of four or five pupils, prepare short

scripts for each of these, including a 'voices off' introduction, allocating roles as necessary.

Variations

1. It is possible to include a range of additional material within the show:
 - Recorded interviews with guests 'who are unable to be with us'
 - Re-enactments of key incidents in the person's life
 - The presentation of mementoes and awards to mark the person's achievements
 - Embarrassing revelations
 - Musical interludes
2. Pupils may wish to end the show by introducing God, who gives an overall evaluation of the person's life and makes the decision about whether or not to allow him or her into heaven. Pupils may wish to discuss the criteria on which God bases the decision.
3. An imaginative option would be to involve a member of staff who has had no involvement in the preparation, and to treat them as if they are the celebrity (e.g., Nelson Mandela, St Patrick, Abraham) in question. The staff member would be expected to improvise reactions and responses as they become aware of the character they represent. Pupils are likely to respond imaginatively to the secrecy and surprise of this situation.

Drawing things together

Perform the show in front of an invited audience.