Brøderbund
Software for Education

VCR Companion™

Teacher's Guide

Brøderbund®

VCR COMPANION™

Teacher's Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to VCR Companion

VCR Companion is a powerful multimedia tool for expanding the skills of students at all grade and ability levels. The activities in the *VCR Companion* Teacher's Guide were reviewed by a committee of teachers. Activities were randomly selected and field tested by students. As a result, we feel that these activities based on *VCR Companion* will help students to improve problem solving, sequencing and communication skills, as well as promote visualization skills, and inspire creative expression. You can use this tool in a variety of subject areas to interest, stimulate, and motivate your students.

VCR Companion opens the door to a new world of presentation possibilities in the educational environment. With *VCR Companion* students will be immediately successful at producing professional film sequences to enhance their oral and written communication skills.

VCR Companion requires no programming background or film making experience. Over 120 ready-made pictures, icons, borders, backgrounds, special effects, transitions, and fonts are included with the program. In addition, *VCR Companion Film Library*, sold separately, offers a more extensive collection of professionally designed artwork, fonts, patterns, special effects, and transitions.

Using this Guide

The purpose of the *VCR Companion* Teacher's Guide is to help teachers integrate the program into the curriculum to create various multimedia presentations.

Teachers should use this guide in conjunction with the *VCR Companion* User's Guide, which explains the program's operation in detail and is referenced throughout this document. **Before doing a VCR Companion project or activity with your students, you should become familiar with the VCR Companion program.** The Tutorial in the User's Guide Quick Start section provides a good introduction to the program. Although you can make a professional looking production using *VCR Companion* alone, use of other programs, such as *Animate, Dazzle Draw*, and *Fantavision*, will add another dimension to the creative uses of this program, as images created in any of these programs can be imported into your *VCR Companion* sequences. This guide will highlight many of the capabilities and features of *VCR Companion* and provide some sample activities to help you develop your skills.

The Teacher's Guide is designed to be used as a supplement to regular lesson plans. It is a tool to further enhance the curriculum in all subject areas. We have refrained from including time restraints as that will depend on many factors – such as class organization, grade level, class size, and equipment available.

The remaining sections in this guide provide an overview of the basic techniques, tips for improving presentations, and some specific activities and examples to help get you started.

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MAKING THE MOST
OF VCR COMPANION

Techniques

VCR Companion video scripts can be put together in a variety of ways for presentations, using any of these basic techniques.

SLIDE SHOW

A prepared *VCR Companion* video script can be run as a slide show of full screen graphics. A leader or title screen introduction made in *VCR Companion* could be followed by student artwork created in *Animate, Dazzle Draw,* or *Fantavision.* A control that waits for a keypress between the artwork would help enhance the slide show effect. You could use *VCR Companion* to make a closing screen to complete the slide show sequence.

FILM OR MOVIE

A *VCR Companion* script can be recorded on videotape and played back as a movie.

TITLES/CREDITS

Title screens or leaders are easy to create in *VCR Companion.* After selecting Make a Video from the Main Menu, you can add a background, a border, text, and an animation to your title screen. Using credit screens that acknowledge all the contributors adds a finishing touch to your videotape production.

STORYBOARDS

Storyboards provide students with an off-line activity that gives them a chance to plan and layout their *VCR Companion* video scripts before getting on the computer. Duplicate the Storyboard Blackline Master on the next page. Use the boxes for simple line drawings that represent the graphic screens. Use the lines below the boxes to record the sequence of your video script.

VIDEO SCRIPT STORYBOARDS

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Use the boxes for simple line drawings to represent the graphics screens. Use the lines below the boxes to record the sequence of your video script.

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Tips for Improving Presentations

TRANSITION

Choose a transition that enhances your script, one that provides a smooth change between screens or scenes. *VCR Companion* has 12 transitions to choose from: Checkers, Combine, Fade-In, Fizzle, Iris In, Iris Out, Mask, Random, Spiral, Venetian Blind, Wipe Right, and Wipe Down. In addition, you can create your own transitions with the *VCR Companion* Transition Editor. Save them to another disk and then retrieve them for use in your video script using the From Other Disk feature. (See Utilities section in User's Guide.)

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Special Effects can be effectively used anywhere throughout the script. *VCR Companion* has 12 special effects to choose from: Flash, Glitter, Highlight Right, Highlight Up, Melt Down, Rain, Random Flashes, Silhouette, Squash, Stars, Upside Down, and Warp. You can also use Special Effects from the *VCR Companion Film Library*.

CONTROLS

There are 3 control features that can be added to a *VCR Companion* script: Pause (with a slow, medium or long option), Repeat Items, and Wait for Keypress (with or without a screen prompt message.) The Pause and Wait for Keypress controls are excellent features to use between scenes, allowing the user to view at his/her own pace.

TEXT AND FONTS

VCR Companion has 3 text presentation options: Static (text remains stationary), Vertical Scrolling (text scrolls from bottom to top), and Horizontal Scrolling (text scrolls right to left.) Text can also be centered or positioned to the left or right. Additionally, there are 12 fonts to choose from, plus the option of From Other Disk. There are 16 color choices for both your text and background.

ANIMATIONS

VCR Companion comes with 12 animations: Boy, Cops, Crawl, Eyes, Fireworks, Flag, Flame, Girl, Plane, Roadtrip, Robot, and Sneakers. Animations can be run at fast, medium, or slow speed and from right to left, left to right, or stationary. There are 12 Bonus Animations on the back of Side 4: Baby, Ball, Coming Soon, Countdown, Lion, Puppy, Special, Sun, Supergal, Superguy, Train, and Wedding. You can also use animations created in *Animate* by using the From Other Disk feature.

BORDERS

VCR Companion comes with 12 borders: Columns, Deco, Film, Hearts, Lace, Photo, Pinfeed, Pipe, Rainbow, Red Tones, Roses, and Stars & Stripes. You can also use borders from other Film Library disks.

Use the
VCR Companion:

WITH *DAZZLE DRAW*

Dazzle Draw is a double hi-resolution computer graphics program which provides students with a variety of drawing tools and 16 colors. Students can use *Dazzle Draw* to copy or create images that illustrate ideas. These images can then be converted for use in a *VCR Companion* sequence by choosing Convert Graphics under the *VCR Companion* Utilities menu.

WITH *ANIMATE*

Animate is an incredibly flexible tool for the development of computer graphics animation. Animated characters can be converted for use with *VCR Companion* by using the Animate Character option under the *VCR Companion* Utilities menu.

WITH *FANTAVISION*

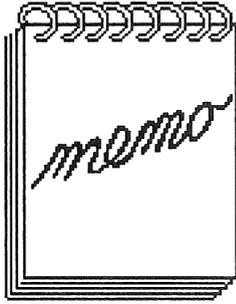With *Fantavision*, students can produce original animated sequences from scratch, edit demonstration sequences, create background scenes, or produce self-running movies. A *Fantavision* movie can be imported into a *VCR Companion* video script.

WITH A VCR

Connect the computer to the VCR and record *VCR Companion* sequences onto videotape. See "Connecting Your VCR" in the *VCR Companion* User's Guide for more information.

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ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES

These activities are adaptable to a wide variety of classroom environments and are designed to be used across many grade levels.

ACTIVITY ONE: Create a student or class anthology

ACTIVITY TWO: Design book reports for class presentations

ACTIVITY THREE: Film student productions

ACTIVITY FOUR: Create a cartoon or animated sequence

ACTIVITY FIVE: Make a computer generated mural or collage

ACTIVITY SIX: Illustrate concepts in Science

ACTIVITY SEVEN: Sequence a video script

ACTIVITY EIGHT: Create a video letter

ACTIVITY ONE: Anthology

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USE *VCR COMPANION* AND *DAZZLE DRAW* TO CREATE AN ANTHOLOGY OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENT OR CLASS WRITING

WRITE A STORY.

Students can write the story or poem themselves, dictate it to the teacher, or tape their story on a cassette recorder. (If your video camera has sound/audio capabilities, you can videotape the student reading his/her story.)

DESIGN A TITLE SCREEN USING *VCR COMPANION*.

Add a background, border, and font appropriate to the subject of the story.

ILLUSTRATE STORIES.

Use the graphics that come with *VCR Companion* or *VCR Companion Film Library* to illustrate the stories. You can also illustrate your stories using *Dazzle Draw* and then convert them for use in a *VCR Companion* video script.

DESIGN A CLOSING SCREEN.

Add a closing screen crediting the student authors.

PUT THE SEQUENCE TOGETHER IN ONE OF THREE WAYS:

1.   FilmDisk (see User's Guide)
The leader, graphics, and closing screen can be made into a FilmDisk. Insert a control that waits for a keypress between the artwork for each story. Students can orally present their stories while their graphics are being displayed on the screen or they can write the story or poems in *VCR Companion* as separate text screens. At the end of each presentation, pressing any key will bring up the next student's video script.

2.   VCR with Audio Dubbing
If you have a VCR with audio dubbing capabilities, the entire sequence can be saved to videotape. The taped stories can be added to the audio track of the videotape (see User's Guide.
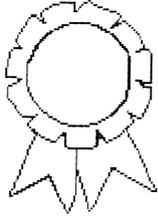
3.   VCR & Video Camera
Hook the VCR to the computer and record the title screen made with *VCR Companion*. Use the same videotape to film the student orally presenting his/her story. Return the tape to the VCR and record the closing screen made with *VCR Companion*.

Each student could make his/her own anthology written throughout the year or the class could make a collection of writings on a specific topic.

ACTIVITY TWO: Book Report Slide Show

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Oral Book Report Presentation

USE *VCR COMPANION* AND *DAZZLE DRAW* TO MAKE A BOOK REPORT FOR CLASS PRESENTATION.

TITLE SCREEN

Design a title screen using *VCR Companion*. The student might want to refer to the book jacket as he designs the leader.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Students can use graphics from *VCR Companion, VCR Companion Film Library,* or artwork made in *Dazzle Draw, Animate,* or *Fantavision* to illustrate the book.

CLOSING SCREEN

Design a closing screen using *VCR Companion*. A Bonus Icon like "Ribbon", "PG", or "Trophy" added to the credit screen offers a finishing touch to the presentation.
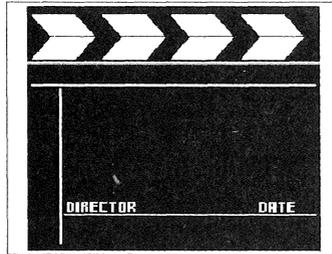
An oral presentation of the book report could accompany the video presentation.

In addition to book report presentations, *VCR Companion* can be used to illustrate a critique of a movie, play, documentary, or an article.

These presentations can be saved and used as a "how to" model for next year's class.

ACTIVITY THREE:
Films–Videotaped or Computer Generated

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USE *VCR COMPANION* WITH *ANIMATE, DAZZLE DRAW,* AND *FANTAVISION* TO ENHANCE PRODUCTION OF CLASS PROGRAMS.

DEBATES
Have students debate issues such as defense spending, national health care, or funding for social programs like Unemployment, Welfare, and Social Security. Videotape the debates. Use *VCR Companion* to make the title screen. The credit screen should acknowledge the debaters.

DOCUMENTARIES
Choose an upcoming or ongoing class, school, or community event that is worthy of documentary coverage. Set up a schedule for shooting the event. Make a leader and credit screen using *VCR Companion*. The "Coming Soon" Bonus Animation would enhance any sequence on future events.

EVENTS
Events such as Founder's Day, Grandparents' Day, openings of school musicals or plays, guest speakers, etc., make wonderful topics for news or documentary coverage.

FILM FESTIVALS
As an end of the year activity, invite parents and friends to visit the classroom and view previously-taped activities ... newscasts, documentaries, debates, interviews, etc.

GAME SHOWS
After completing a unit of study in History, Geography, Social Studies or Science, have one group of students prepare a list of questions covering the information recently studied. Have these game show "hosts" design an opening screen using *VCR Companion*. Videotape the "show." Let the "contestants" make the closing credit screen.

INTERVIEWS
Students could research the life of a historical figure and then be "interviewed" on a student-directed "talk show." Use *VCR Companion* to design an introductory frame in which the "host" and his "guest" are identified. Videotape the interview, perhaps including questions from the "audience." Then make a final credit screen acknowledging the "director," "producers," etc.

CAREER DAYS
Students invite their parents to speak to the class about their careers. Before parents arrive, have the children design an opening screen using graphics from *VCR Companion, VCR Companion Film Library* and artwork made with *Animate, Dazzle Draw,* and *Fantavision.* Videotape the parents' presentations. Then ask the students to make a closing credit screen.

ACTIVITY THREE:
Films–Videotaped or Computer Generated
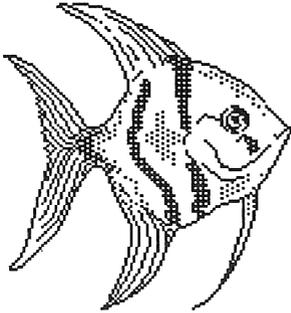
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NEWS

This activity could use class, school or local news. Connect the computer to the VCR. (See "Connecting Your VCR" in the *VCR Companion* User's Guide.) Use *VCR Companion* to make a leader for the news broadcast. The "News" Background Picture would be an appropriate addition to the leader. Use a video camera. The students can film news events around the school, in the classroom, or around town. Include a weather report. The "Sun" Bonus Animation or "Weather" Icon could be used. The students could also use "Stars," "Rain," and "Flash" Special Effects. Then use *VCR Companion* to make a credit screen. Rotate groups to be in charge of the news for the week or the month.

TRAVEL LOG

Students could set up a travel agency and run a *VCR Companion* video presentation that shows what the climate is like in popular vacation spots. The "Tourist" Bonus Icon could be incorporated into this sequence.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Cartoons and Animation

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USE *VCR COMPANION, ANIMATE, DAZZLE DRAW,* OR
FANTAVISION TO MAKE A CARTOON OR AN ANIMATED
SEQUENCE.

CARTOON

Use *VCR Companion,* and *Dazzle Draw* to make a cartoon. Each
screen can be a frame in the cartoon strip. Cartoons can be
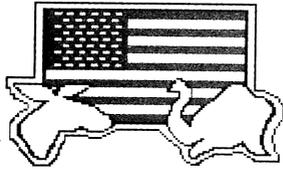fictional, topical, or historical.

ANIMATION WITH DAZZLE DRAW

Using *Dazzle Draw* draw a scene that lends itself to animation, like an
ocean scene with a fish in the far left of the screen. Save this picture as
"fish1." Move "fish1" a little to the right, save this new picture as "fish2."
Continue moving the fish and saving the scenes in this way until the fish is
all the way across the screen. Import the *Dazzle Draw* files into *VCR
Companion* using the Convert Utility. Then put a short Pause between
each scene. Preview your completed sequence. It should look like a fish
swimming in the ocean.

WITH ANIMATE OR FANTAVISION

You can produce the same sequence using *Animate* or *Fantavision.* Each
scene would show the fish in a different spot in the ocean. Background
landmarks like coral, shells, etc. will help create the animation. Show the
fish's fin at different angles in some of the scenes. Use *VCR Companion*
to make the leader and credit screens for this animation sequence.

ACTIVITY FIVE: Murals and Collages

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USE *VCR COMPANION* AND *DAZZLE DRAW* TO CREATE A TOPICAL MURAL OR COLLAGE.

WITH DAZZLE DRAW

Choose a topic related to the curriculum or one of interest to the students. Have each student import a picture drawn in *Dazzle Draw* that illustrates one aspect of the theme or topic.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL COLLAGE

Students could use *VCR Companion* to make an autobiographical collage. The leader or title screen could include some biographical data, like name, birthday, age, sex, etc. Each screen would focus on a specific theme. On the first screen, the student could use *Dazzle Draw* to make his/her personal logo. The second screen could be a family tree drawn in *Dazzle Draw*. Other screens designed in a similar manner could focus on likes or dislikes, favorite subjects, favorite things to do, pets, hobbies, etc. A credit screen acknowledging parents or other special people would add the final touch to the collage. The "Supergal" or "Superguy" Bonus Animations would add to the artwork in this sequence. This graphics sequence would make a nice visual accompaniment to an oral presentation of an autobiography.
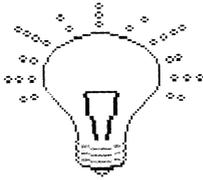
ANIMAL HABITATS

Students could use *VCR Companion* and *Dazzle Draw* to create an animal habitat. The title screen could announce the type of habitat to be depicted - e.g. desert, marshland, forest, etc. On the following screens the students could use *Dazzle Draw* to create the animals and their habitats. The closing credit screen, using *VCR Companion*, should acknowledge the students who participated in the project.

TIME LINES

After completing a Social Studies or History unit, have the students make a time line for that time period. Use *VCR Companion* to create the title screen. *Dazzle Draw* would be used to illustrate important events within this time frame. Use *VCR Companion* to design a final credit screen.

ACTIVITY SIX: Science Applications

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USE *VCR COMPANION* TO ENHANCE THE SCIENCE CURRICULUM.

EXPERIMENTS

Use *VCR Companion* to design screens showing the sequential procedure for doing an experiment. This activity would lend itself to a Biology class where students are asked to dissect a frog. Make a leader or, title screen with *VCR Companion.* Use *Dazzle Draw* to generate a graphics screen showing materials needed. Subsequent steps demonstrating the procedures could be videotaped. If you have audio dubbing capability you can dub in the students' explanation of the procedure. A credit screen made in *VCR Companion* acknowledging the teacher and the student scientists could end this sequence.

DIAGRAMS

VCR Companion can be used to make video diagrams. For example, flowers have four basic parts: sepals, petals, stamens, and pistils. Have the students do research which will show that the shape, number, and color of these parts differs from one kind of flower to another. Using *VCR Companion* make a title screen for the sequence on flowers. Use *Dazzle Draw* to draw different kinds of flowers, labeling the basic parts of each flower. The *Dazzle Draw* Teacher's Guide has an activity on drawing a flower. Make a closing screen. Students could give an oral presentation that explains each part of the flower. This sequence could be enhanced by some actual videotape of real flowers and their parts.

OBSERVATIONS

VCR Companion can be used to develop observation skills. In this activity students will learn that raisins come from grapes. You will need *VCR Companion*, a video recorder and a bunch of grapes. Using *VCR Companion*, make a title screen, for example, "Grapes to Raisins." Videotape the students as you lead a class discussion on how the grapes look, taste, smell, and feel. Ask them what they think would happen if the grapes were left out in the sun for a few weeks. Record their responses. On subsequent days, until the grapes have turned into raisins, have the students use *Dazzle Draw* to show how the grapes look. (You might want to videotape them as they describe the changes taking place.) Use *VCR Companion* to make a closing credit screen.

ACTIVITY SIX: Science Applications
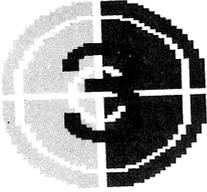
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SCIENCE AND GEOMETRY

Geometric shapes are found everywhere in nature; redwood trees have the basic shape of a triangle and stalactites and stalagmites are shaped like cones. Have the students draw geometric shapes; squares, rectangles, triangles, spheres, cones, etc. using *Dazzle Draw.* Follow each geometric shape with a *Dazzle Draw* drawing of something in nature that has the same shape. A variation would be to take the students on a field trip and film things in nature that have the various geometric shapes being studied. Use *VCR Companion* to make the leader and closing screen for this sequence on science and geometry.

SCIENCE FAIRS

Have each student prepare a *VCR Companion* script that describes his/her booth or project in the science fair.

ACTIVITY SEVEN: Sequencing Scripts

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USE *VCR COMPANION* TO REINFORCE SEQUENCING SKILLS.

OFF-LINE

Use comic strips that have been cut apart. Have the students put the comic strips back together in the proper sequence.

ON-LINE

Prepare a three or four frame *VCR Companion* video script. Show it to the class. Discuss the order in which the pictures appear. Then mix the frames up (put them out of sequence using "Clone" and "Delete" editing features) and have the class restore them to their original order. Using different video scripts, this activity can be repeated several times. Later, have the students create their own scripts. Working with a partner, they could challenge their partner to restore their scripts.

ON-LINE

Prepare a *VCR Companion* video script which is purposely out of sequence but can be sequenced in a variety of ways. Have the students rearrange the sequence. Discuss the various possible sequences.

ACTIVITY EIGHT: Video Pals

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USE *VCR COMPANION* FOR A VIDEO PAL PROJECT.

You can use *VCR Companion*, a video camera, and a VCR for a variation on the traditional pen pal project.

Hook the VCR to the computer. Make a leader appropriate to the theme of pen pals or video pals. Videotape your students as they introduce themselves to their video pals. Design the closing screen using *VCR Companion.* You can have video pals within the school and also with students from other schools.
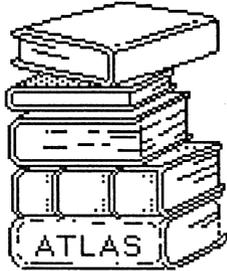
Have the children put together a videotaped sequence about themselves as a way of introducing themselves to next year's teacher. Make the leader and closing screen using *VCR Companion.*

Have your students put together a videotaped sequence that shows what happens in their classroom. This sequence could be given to the incoming class. Use *VCR Companion* to make the leader and closing screen.

TEACHER/SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

Library Presentations
of New Books

USE *VCR COMPANION* TO MAKE A PRESENTATION OF FEATURED BOOKS FOR THE WEEK OR MONTH, NEW BOOKS, OR BOOKS BEING SHOWN AT THE BOOK FAIR.

Use *VCR Companion* to design a title screen. Then illustrate the book using *VCR Companion, VCR Companion Film Library, Animate, Dazzle Draw*, or *Fantavision*. Design a closing screen.

This project can be done by the librarian or by students for the library. If computers are used in your library this sequence would be effectively presented on a FilmDisk (see "Making FilmDisks" in the *VCR Companion* User's Guide).

TEACHER/SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

AWARDS

You can use *VCR Companion, Dazzle Draw,* and *Animate* to make personalized awards that are displayed on a monitor.

Make a *VCR Companion* sequence to present "The Student of the Day" or Week. Design a video presentation of what the student did to merit the award. Have it on screen when the students arrive at school. Add a new screen for each student who earns the award.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

You can use *VCR Companion* to make an effective presentation of student work and activities. Videotape your students throughout the year. Have the students design the leader and the closing screen using *VCR Companion.*

CALENDAR

Use *VCR Companion* to produce a slide show that announces things to come throughout the year in the classroom. The "Coming Soon" Bonus Animation could be used in the leader for this sequence.

Use *VCR Companion* to prepare a calendar slide show of upcoming school events. Slide shows can be used to notify students and staff of plays, fairs, meetings, celebrations, etc.

AUDIO-VISUAL DEPARTMENT

Your school's Audio-Visual department could effectively use *VCR Companion* to make previews of all the footage it shoots. Make a leader that answers the five "W" questions: why it was filmed, what was filmed, when it was filmed, where it was filmed, and who filmed it. This eliminates the need to watch the entire tape.

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A FINAL WORD

THE END

As you can see, *VCR Companion* is a useful and versatile tool which can be easily integrated into all areas of the curriculum. The opportunity to enhance your teaching with multimedia presentations is unlimited.

Please feel free to write and share your questions, concerns and ideas. Any ideas or suggestions for future editions of *VCR Companion* Teacher's Guides are welcome. We are happy to trade any activity ideas we use in future editions of this guide for a school edition of your choice.