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Film Literacy Activities

Introduction



Watching a film is a fun family activity – but why not try to keep the fun going after the film has ended? Once you've finished watching, have a go at some of the film literacy activities in this slideshow to see how you can all get even more out of the film.

This resource was designed by Screen Scotland's Film Education team, and supported by Education Scotland, to help parents and their children to develop skills in film literacy, which supports reading, writing, listening and talking skills.

Activity Sections



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Writing

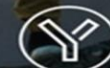
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Credits

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IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO
CHOOSE A TASK THAT IS
SLIGHTLY ABOVE YOU,
ONE THAT MIGHT BE
CONSIDERED AMBITIOUS
ON YOUR PART.

Robert Greene



YOU ARE YOUR REALITY

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Drawing and Making

Box Set



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Choose any film character.

Think about important parts of their personality and background that an audience would need to learn.

Design a model bedroom set for them that shows this.

Think about: furniture, props, colours, even the music they like or books they might read!



Character Profile



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Choose a character from any film.

Create a character profile full of details that reveal something about them.

Look for: clothing, hair, make-up, tattoos, scars, accessories, props, colour, settings, actions, dialogue, relationships...

CHARACTER PROFILE

WHAT DOES YOUR
CHARACTER DO TO SHOW
HIS PERSONALITY?

WHAT DOES YOUR
CHARACTER LOOK LIKE
ON THE OUTSIDE?

NAME

CHARACTER
TRAITS

WHAT DOES YOUR
CHARACTER SAY TO
SHOW HIS PERSONALITY?

HOW DOES YOUR
CHARACTER CHANGE, OR
WHAT LESSON DOES YOUR
CHARACTER LEARN?

Coming Attractions



Find a film poster and glue it to a larger piece of paper.

Label it with examples of how the poster convinces people to watch the film.

Look at pictures, words, layout, colours...



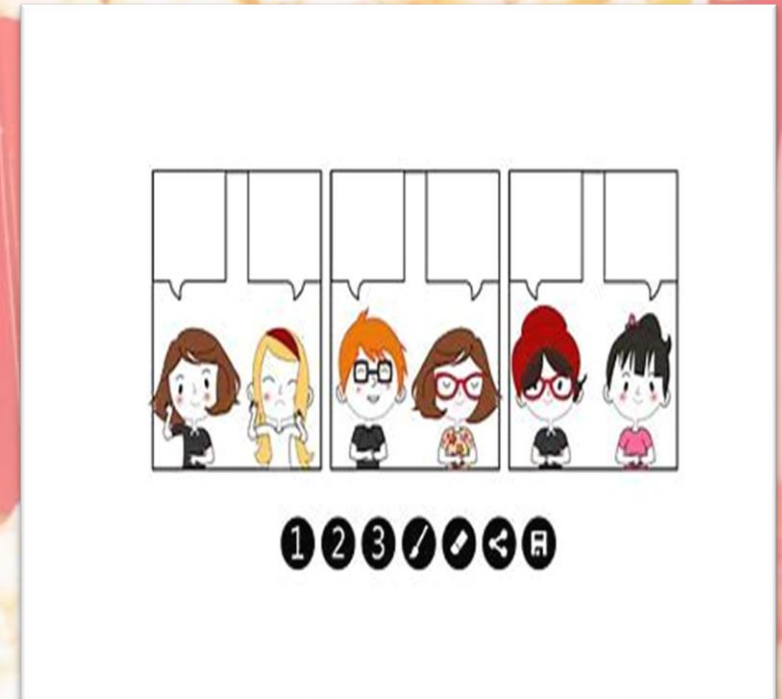
Comic Strip



Write a sequel to the film, or the continued adventures of your favourite character, as a comic strip.

You could draw this by hand, use some photographs or try a free software package:

[5 Best Free Comic Strip Creator Software For Windows](#)



Dressing Up



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Dress up like characters from the film and recreate a scene or create a new scene for the film.

You could perform it as a play, or film it.



In and Out



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Draw or print out a picture of an interesting character.

On the **outside** of the picture, write things other people might say about that character.
On the **inside**, write down how they might be feeling or what they might really be thinking.

It's interesting to do this for a **bad guy**!



Mood Board



Create a mood board of pictures/colours/words that represent the film you've watched in some way.

Here are some tips: [How to make a moodboard.](#)

And if you're not confident in your artistic skills, here's a link to a [Free Online Mood Board Maker.](#)

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Multiple Choice



Make a multiple choice quiz for friends about a film.

Host a quiz on Zoom after they've all had a chance to watch it.

Take turns and make it a weekly event!



Poster Child



Can you design a better poster for a film you love – or a film you've made?!

Remember to think about; colours; fonts;
pictures; whose names you'll include...

Don't forget a dramatic tagline (e.g. "In space, no one can hear you scream.")



Warm and Cold



Think about warm and cold colours.

Draw or make a costume or set design for a film.

Aim to make the character/atmosphere seem warm or cold.



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Filmmaking

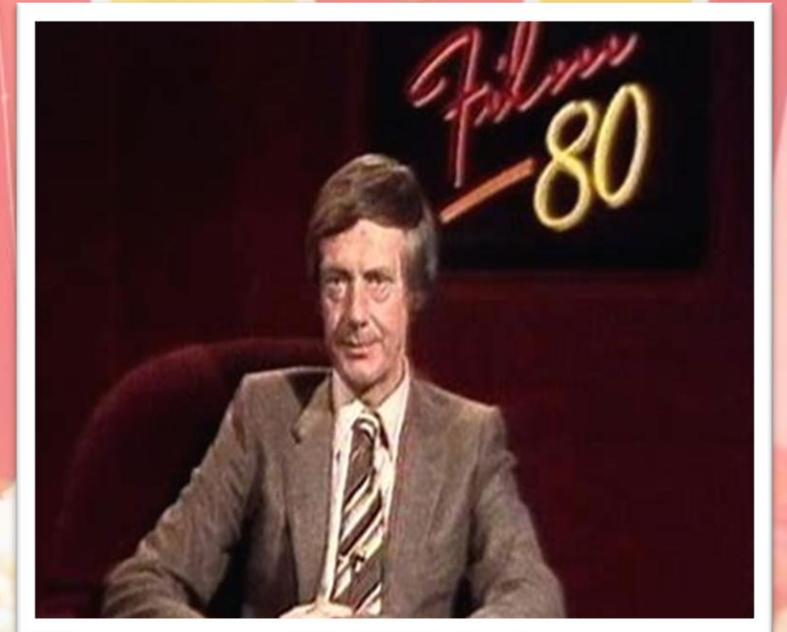
Film Critic



Film a series of reviews for different films:
[Writing About Film \(screeningshorts.org.uk\)](http://screeningshorts.org.uk).
Edit them together to make a whole show.

If you're feeling ambitious, add music, effects,
clips from the films reviewed...

Can you think of a way for your show to stand
out?



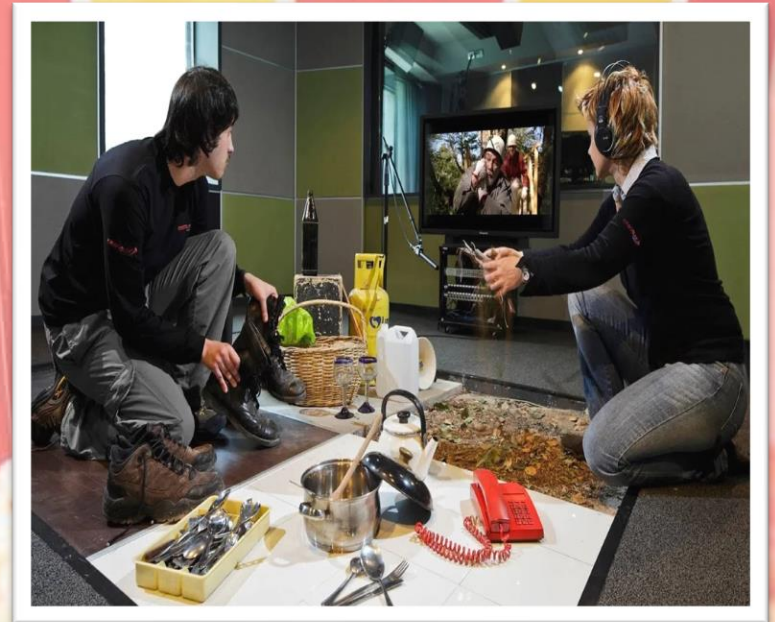
Foley-ing Around



A foley artist is in charge of adding sound effects to a film.

They often have to be very creative (e.g. using cellophane to create crackling fire effects, or cracking walnuts for bones breaking!)

Make a short silent film. Record - or perform live - sound effects to go along with it.



Found Footage



Found footage is existing film footage.
Use found footage to create a new film about
an issue explored in a film you've watched, or
an issue you think is important.

You can find archive found footage in:

[Scotland on Screen](#)

[BFI National Archive](#)

[BBC Archive](#)

[British Pathé](#)



Lumière Minutes



This is a one-minute long film. Choose the location and subject of your shot, and exactly the right moment to start recording from one position (without panning). 60 seconds later stop the shot.

You're looking for beauty or interest in the everyday and "mundane".

You'll find more help here: [Lumière Minutes \(cinematheque.fr\)](http://Lumière Minutes (cinematheque.fr))



Mother Tongue!



Make a film in a language other than standard English – French, Arabic, Polish, Spanish, Mandarin – even Scots!

Can you add subtitles to it?

If you can't think of your own film idea, recreate a scene from an existing film. (Imagine the Scots version of 'Star Wars'!)



Playlist Predictions



What songs do you think a film character might have on their Spotify playlist?
Or what songs might they be listening to at certain times in the film?

Make a poster/list/film with your choices and give your reasons for choosing them.



Produce a Podcast



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Produce a podcast discussing the film or issues explored in the film. You could even interview characters or experts!

If the film plot fits, how about a true crime podcast?



Puppet Show

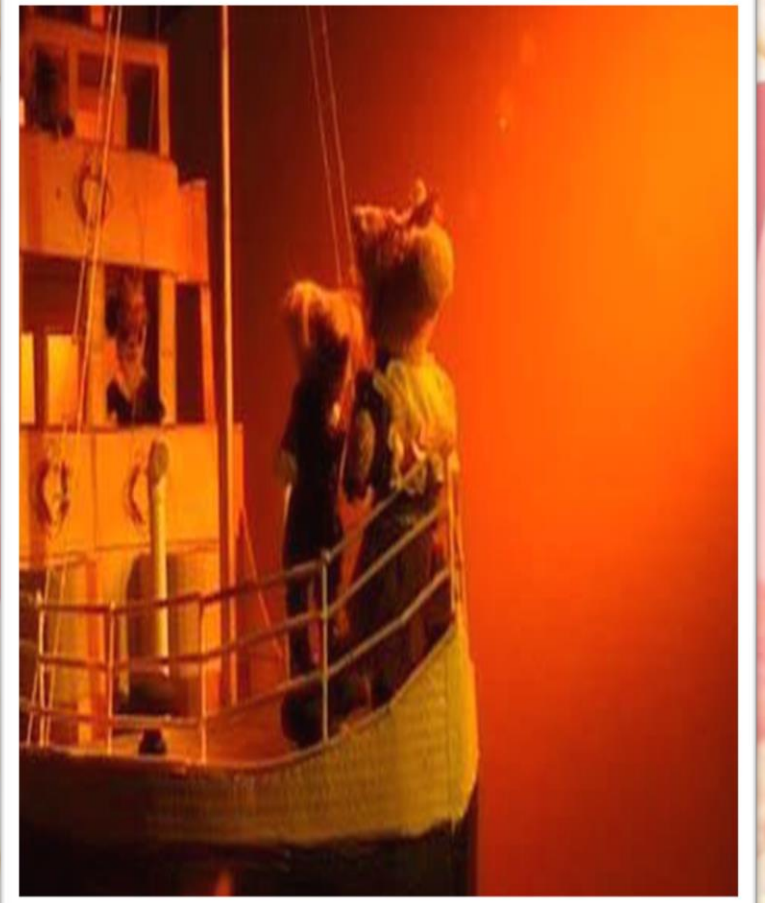


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Make puppets and film a puppet show related to a film you've watched.

It could be a sequel, new adventures of a character, or the remake of a scene (if it's a dramatic scene this is very funny with puppets!)



Remake It!



Choose a sequence from a film that you thought was really interesting. Watch it carefully and look for different camera shots that are used in the scene.

Gather some volunteers, props and costumes and try to shoot the scene exactly as it appears in the film.



Respect the Rules!



Choose a sport you love.

Write down everything you know about the rules and research the parts you're not sure of.

Film a beginner's guide to the sport with everything they'd need to know.



Running Commentary



Film a section of a sports event. You could film a sport someone in your family enjoys, or perhaps a kickabout at the park!

Add a commentary that shows your knowledge of the sport.

Or film and add the commentary to an alternative “sport” – like your dog chasing its ball!



Scary Mary!



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Use footage from a film to make a new a trailer.

Try to make the new version very different – like this horror version of ‘Mary Poppins’:

[Scary 'Mary Poppins' Recut Trailer](#)

You can find downloadable short films on [Screening Shorts](#).



Six Shooter



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Make a six-shot film inspired by one of the following titles:

The Discovery

The Animal

The Rebel

The Box

Use at least three interesting camera shots.
Click [here](#) to find out more about camera shots.

TIP: for ease, you could just pause the video between shots, rather than have to edit footage as well.



Stop Right Now!

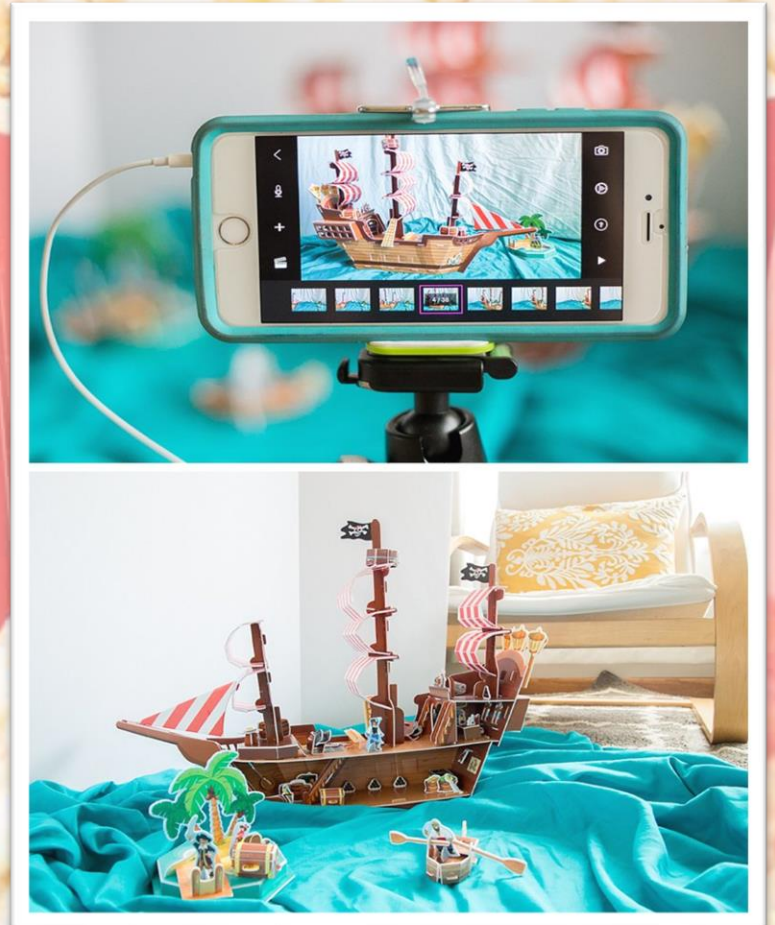


Stop-motion is when objects (e.g. puppets, models) are photographed in a position then moved a tiny bit for the next photograph. When the photos are played together it seems as if the objects are moving.

Try making a stop-motion film.

Use your own artwork, or toys, puppets, household objects...or all of the above!

This is a brilliant app: [Stop Motion Studio](#)



Them-Tube



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Imagine that a character from the film has a YouTube channel: what might they talk about?

Film their vlog.

TIP: A supporting character can be particularly useful in getting a different perspective on the film's events.



Visual Textbook



Some of us learn much more easily watching and listening to something than reading it in a book.

Make a film explaining a complicated concept from Science, Maths, Geography...

Watch the Science Guy to see how he does it:
[Bill Nye Explains Climate Change](#)



Warm and Cold



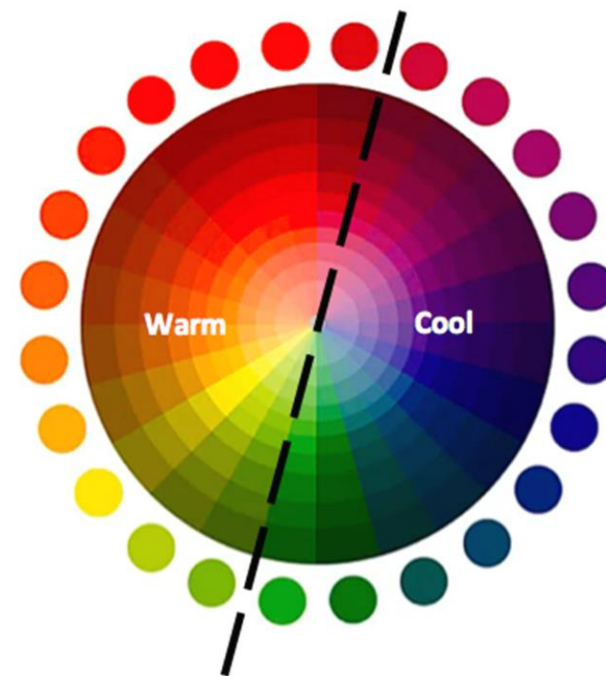
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Think about warm and cold colours.

Make a film. Edit the colour filters to make the images warmer or colder.

How does it change the mood of the film?



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Investigating

Copyright



Research copyright laws. (This will get you started: [What the law says - The Copyright Hub](#))

What copyright laws do filmmakers have to follow?

Make a poster of **five** clear and simple rules that explain what a filmmaker would have to do if they wanted to use copyrighted material in their work.



Genre Conventions



Choose a film genre. What **conventions** does that genre have? (Conventions: *similar types of character, characteristics, plot situations, settings, colours, fonts, actors, directors, etc. found in a genre.*)

Find three film posters from that genre. Label each poster with the genre conventions found in each poster. Do any of them do something different for that genre?



action



adventure



comedy



crime/gangster



drama



epic/historical



horror



musical/dance



science fiction



war



western



Grid of genre icons

Film genres

Film Fact File



Make a 10-15 page booklet filled with research and facts about a film you love.

You could include sections on: plot, actors, the director, special effects, costumes, settings, music, themes, trivia, favourite quotes, controversies about the film...

This is a good place to start: [IMDb](#) | [The Internet Movie Database](#)



Job Search



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Take the [BAFTA Guru Career Quiz](#).

Do some research into whichever job you end up with.

Find five key skills or tasks that the job needs.
What skills do you already have that connect to the job?

Present your findings as a PowerPoint, poster or pamphlet.

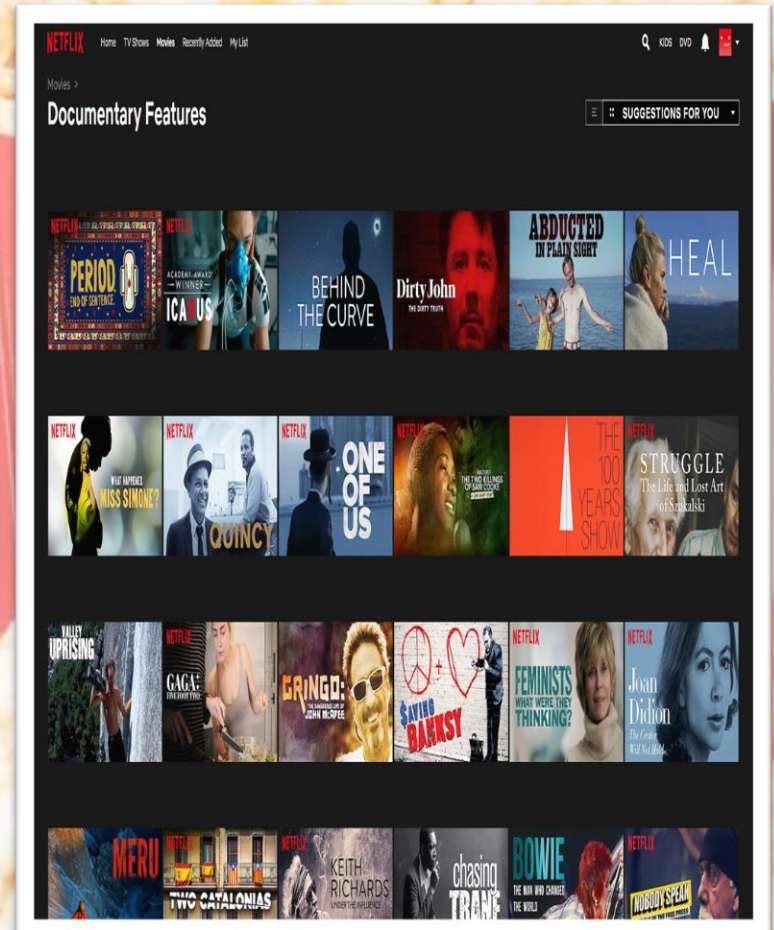


Real Life

Research an issue or real-life event explored in a film you've watched.

A documentary would be a really good choice. Netflix has some great ones!

Make a PowerPoint presentation or film and teach your family or friends about the issue.



What are your influences?



Watch a film closely.

Could it be intentionally or unintentionally influencing the public to think or act in a certain way?

It could be positive or negative (e.g. promoting sexism/racism or encouraging people to take action, etc.)

Present your findings as a PowerPoint, poster or pamphlet.



The Year That Was



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Choose any decade from the 1920s onwards.

Research what the big issues in society were at that time (e.g. the Great Depression, World War II, apartheid, the civil rights movement, 9/11, #metoo...)

Look for films from that time period that reflect these societal issues.

Explain what the issue was and how the film reflected this.



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Talking

Moral Dilemma

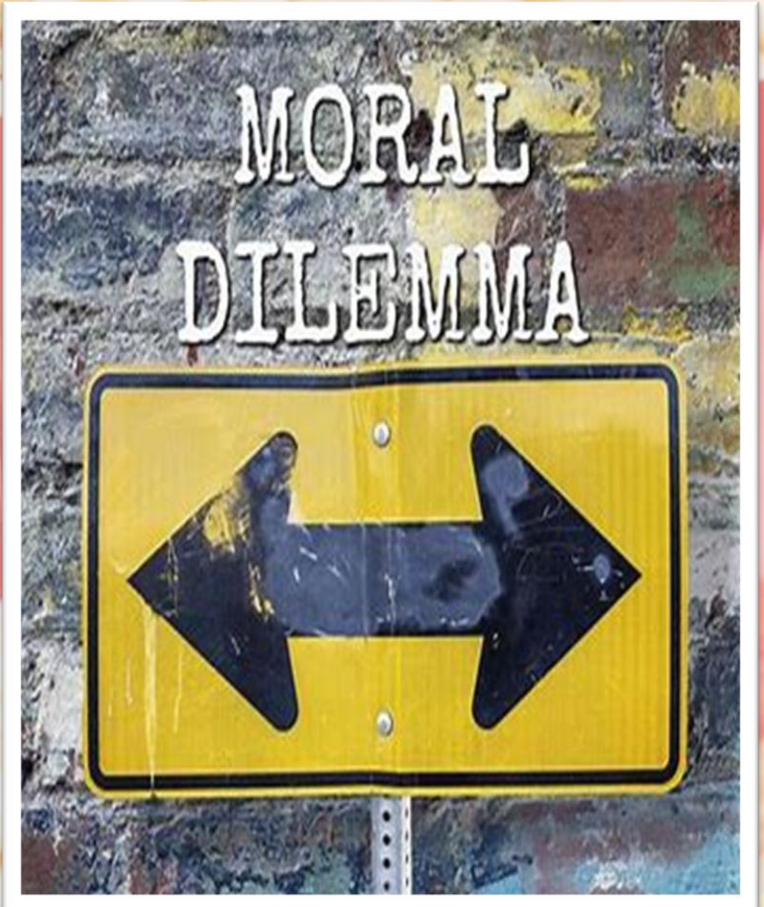


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With a group of friends or family, watch a film with a moral dilemma.

Assign sides to people and have a debate about the dilemma, using evidence from the film.



Speech! Speech!



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Is there a character in the film you've watched that you think could have something interesting to say?

Write a speech for that character.

Perform it for an audience. Remember to build yourself a podium!



You, the Jury



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Choose a film based around a trial.

Watch carefully and take notes of evidence,
like a jury member would have to.

**Before the verdict is given in the film, stop
watching!**

Deliberate the evidence and decide if the
characters are guilty or not guilty.



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Thinking

Me as the Audience



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Examining your opinions on films can teach you a lot about yourself.

What are your favourite films/film genres? Can you pinpoint what you like about them?

Can you think of a film you hated? Why do you think you felt this way? What do you find off-putting in films?

How do you expect men/women to behave in films? Why do you think that is?

What settings do you find most interesting/appealing? Why?

Do you have certain expectations of a film? What are they and why do you expect these things?



Representations



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Filmmakers make decisions about how they will create characters that represent a whole group (e.g. showing women as strong, or elderly people as full of life, or teachers as mean).

Choose a character that you think represents a group in society and ask yourself:

Who is being represented? What in their costume, actions, speech, etc. creates the representation?

Is it a positive or negative representation of that group?
What judgements do we make because of the representation?

How does this representation change our views?



Rolling the Dice



There are six main elements that make a film work and can be used to explore it in detail - the 3Cs and 3Ss:

Character Colour Camera Story Setting
Sound

Get a pair of dice.

Each of the 3Cs and 3Ss has a number. Roll one die to find out which C or S you'll be working on. Roll the other die to find out which task number(s) to complete on the next three slides.



1: Character

1. Pause the film when a character first appears. What do you expect them to be like? Watch the rest of the film: Do they change, and in what ways? Does your opinion of them change? Why?
2. What do the main characters look like? What do they wear? What about their hair, make-up, accessories, scars, tattoos...? What do these things reveal about the character?
3. Choose a character you find interesting. How do they speak and what do they say? How do they behave? How do they behave towards other characters? What does this teach you about them?
4. Who would you say is the main character? Why? Is the story really about this character or about someone else?
5. How would the story be different with another character added or a character taken away?
6. Which character do you find most interesting/relatable/sympathetic/(un)believable? Give reasons.

2: Colour

1. Pause the film for a particular scene. What colours do you see? When do the colours change and why?
2. What are the main colours used in the film? Are some more important than others? Why do you think certain colours are used?
3. Look at a character, and their costume/setting. Are there any colours associated with particular characters? Why have those been chosen?
4. How important do you think the colours are in the film? What would the film have been like in black and white, or in just one colour? What would change if you changed the colours of a moment or character?
5. Are unusual colours are used in the film? Why? Does it add to the atmosphere or make a certain element stand out?
6. Look up colour psychology. Can any of the suggestions there be applied to any parts of the film?

3: Camera

1. Choose a particular scene. What camera shots can you identify? What are the different shots used for?
2. Pick a moment and draw a storyboard of six shots from the film. Say what we learn from each shot.
3. Choose an interesting scene. When does the camera move and when does it stay still? When does it get close and when does it stay far away?
4. Watch the first couple of minutes of a film. What do the first few shots tell us about the story, the setting, the characters, etc?
5. Choose your favourite camera shot in the film. What do you like about it?
6. Find a short sequence from the film and imagine the effect of changing certain uses of camera framing, movement and angles.

4: Story

1. What happens in the story at the beginning, middle and end?
2. What are the most important things that happen (events) in the story?
3. How would the story change if events happened in a different order? Why would that be better/worse?
4. What do you think happened before the story began?
5. What might happen next, after the end of the story? How would you like the story to end or continue?
6. Does this story remind you of other stories? In what ways?

5: Setting

1. Where does the action take place? Why is the story set in this particular place?
2. When and how does the setting change? How does the setting affect the characters and the way they might behave?
3. When the story began, where did you think we were? How could you tell where the story was taking place?
4. Could the same story have happened in a different place? How do you think the story would have changed if it happened in a different place or setting?
5. Is there a particularly interesting setting? What is so interesting about it?
6. What impression do you get of a city/country from the film? Is it positive or negative – would you want to go there? Why (not)?

6: Sound

1. What type of film do you expect from the music and opening titles?
2. Choose two minutes of the film. How many different sounds do you hear? What are they?
3. What music is in the scene/film? When? How does the music make you feel? What atmosphere/mood does it create?
4. Are there any moments of silence in the film? When do they happen? Why do you think they've been silent there?
5. What music would you add to the film? Where and why?
6. Could you add your own voiceover to the film? Who would speak? What would they say?

Same But Different



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When we watch a film and expose ourselves to other cultures (gender, age, family, education, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, political/religious beliefs...) we can examine our shared and different experiences - and find what we have in common!

What did you see in the film that is similar and/or different to your life in some way?

Can you find any similarities with something in the film that seems very different to your life/experiences?

Is there a character/setting/event in the film that you can really relate to? Why?

Did anything in the film change your opinion on a previously-held belief?



Same but different

Song Scene



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Choose any song.

Listen to the music carefully and study the lyrics.

Explain in detail what would be a good film scene for that song (either an existing film scene or one you've made up).



Sound and Vision



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Choose a scene in a film that features a song as an important part.

Listen carefully to the music and lyrics.

Explain in detail why that particular song works for that particular moment in the film.



Themes



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What theme (message) do you think the filmmaker wanted the audience to take away from their film?

Try to identify the theme.

Give examples from the film of how the theme is shown.

Common Themes in Literature

acceptance	jealousy
anger	justice
being yourself	kindness
bravery	loneliness
bullying	love versus hate
compassion	loyalty
culture/tradition	money
death	overcoming challenges
dreams	past versus present
equality	peace
fairness	perseverance
family	pride
family struggles	regret
fate	reputation
fears	respect
forgiveness	responsibility
freedom	revenge
friendship	religion
good versus evil	sacrifice
gossip	sharing
gratefulness	sibling rivalry
greed	survival
growing up	teamwork
hard work	the American dream
honesty	time
hope	trying new things

5 Ws



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Build your understanding skills by finding answers to these questions on the film you've watched:

WHAT happens in the film? WHAT is the most important moment?

WHO is the main character? WHO appears in the film? WHO is the film about?

WHERE do the events in the film take place?

WHEN do the events in the film take place?

WHY does: this thing happen/this character do this thing/this thing happen in this place?



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Writing

Crossing Over



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Imagine the worlds from two different films collided: like if Moana met Lilo and Stitch, or the Avengers faced off with the Justice League.

Write a story or script about what might happen.



Dear Diary

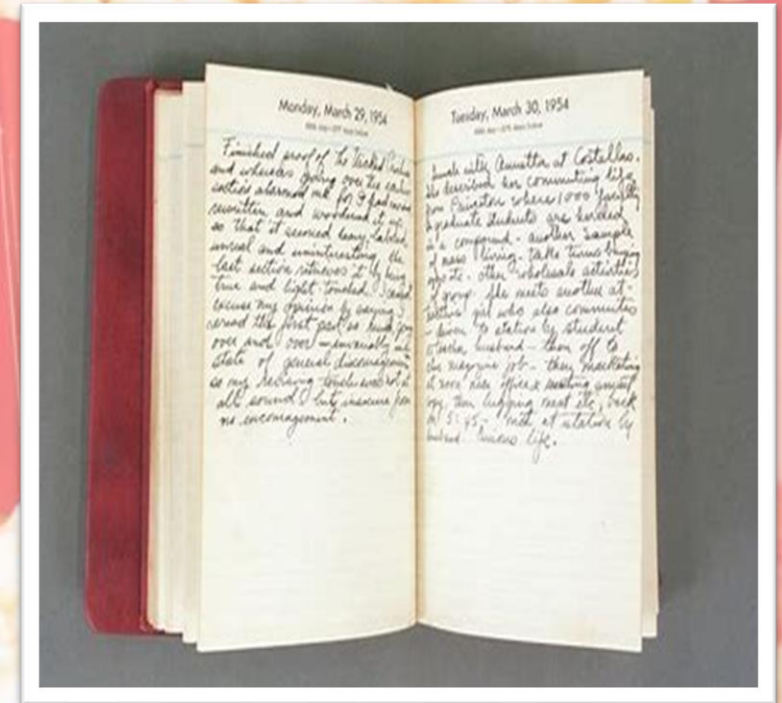


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Write a personal account of the events from a character's point of view in the first person.

You could write it like a diary entry. Aim to include lots of description, thoughts and feelings.



Devil's Advocate



A Devil's advocate is someone who argues against the popular opinion – like someone who defends the Devil!

Write or perform a speech defending the worst character in a film – like Scar from 'The Lion King' or the shark from 'Jaws'!



Hitting the Headlines



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Imagine that you are a reporter and need to write an article for a dramatic event in a film.

Create a whole front page for the event – or film a news report, with interviews if possible!



Silent Movie



Find a short film with no dialogue. You will find several on [Screening Shorts](#) and [Languages on Screen](#).

Write a script for a scene of the film – or the whole thing. What should characters be saying.

Try writing the dialogue in another language!



Credits

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Resource developed by Gail Robertson on behalf of Screen Scotland.

Some material adapted from Screening Shorts and Languages on Screen.

For more information on Film Education resources and opportunities, go to Home | Screen Scotland.