

# JUST ADD POPCORN

Three movies that might awaken your students to the importance of politics...

In the last election only 44% of 18 to 24-year-olds voted. While in some countries people would give their lives to participate in the political process, in the UK many young people are disengaged with it – partly because they don't understand the system. Teaching them about politics and government from an early age – and how these institutions affect people here and overseas – will help tomorrow's adults to realise they do have a voice and, it is to be hoped, encourage more of them to use their vote.

Watching and discussing a film in which politics is a central theme is an accessible way to introduce the subject and spark interest in students who haven't previously considered it, as well as to reinforce the curriculum for pupils taking politics or history. It may even inspire someone to study the subject in greater depth. "One girl was so affected by a documentary we watched about America's military conflicts that it kick-started an awareness of politics which has led her to read it at university," says John-Paul, who runs the film club at a South London school.

From classics such as 'Duck Soup' and 'Mr Smith Goes to Washington' to German drama 'The Lives of Others', and satirical dark comedies 'In The Loop' and 'Election', the education charity FILMCLUB has a wide range of movies relating to the topic of politics. All films can be ordered for FREE via the website by members, with delivery direct to the school. "I feel it dealt with the controversial issue of the Soviet East of Germany during the era of the war rather well. It made me want to research this topic more deeply," wrote a 14-year-old member after watching The Lives of Others, whilst a 17-year-old reviewing Mr Smith Goes to Washington commented, "The film really spoke to me about the importance of standing up for what you believe in."

## FILMCLUB Recommends...



### THE LIVES OF OTHERS (2006, 15)

Highly-acclaimed Oscar-winning drama about corruption and surveillance in Communist East Germany

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. What is surveillance? How does this monitoring impact the lives of the citizens in the film?
2. Consider these quotes from the film: 'they decide what we play, who is to act, what we write'; 'nothing to write about, nothing to rebel against'. What do you think the film says about the relationship between art and politics?
3. Why do you think Georg wants to publish his article even at such great risk? What role does a free press play in politics?

**REVIEW STARTER**

This subtle and moving drama sheds light on a troubling era in European politics...



### ELECTION (1999, 15)

Reese Witherspoon made her name in this razor-sharp satire that uses a school election to send up both moral and political corruption

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. What motivates people to enter politics? Does anyone in the film enter the election with good intentions?
2. Who or what do you think the film is satirising?
3. What is corruption? Who in the film would you describe as corrupt; do their actions reflect those of politicians today?

**REVIEW STARTER**

Sharp wit and hilarious performances bring political satire to life in this biting comedy...



### MR SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON, (1939, U)

Thought-provoking film about an idealistic scout leader made a US senator and faced with the reality of widespread political corruption and cynicism

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. Do you think the message of the film is still relevant to a modern audience? What has changed?
2. The film suggests one person with strong principles like Mr Smith can make a huge difference. Do you agree?
3. The censors were uneasy about the film's critical view of government. Should films ever be banned?

**REVIEW STARTER**

It was made back in the '30s, but the message in Mr Smith Goes To Washington has never been more important than now...



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