

JUST ADD POPCORN

Three movies about movies – celebrating the first National Youth Film Festival

The universal appeal of film makes it a powerful tool to engage pupils of all abilities in a broad range of topics, stimulate their imaginations and improve their critical skills. From now on teachers across the UK will have new opportunities to educate their students through and about movies as part of a new unified programme of film education in which the British Film Institute is investing £26 million of lottery funds over four years – the largest investment in film education ever seen in the UK. This starts with the first National Youth Film Festival (October 21-November 8); a three-week programme of free screenings, workshops, Q&A sessions, resources, and other activities including an information pack to help you run your own, one-day in-school festival.

Why not celebrate these exciting developments and help your students become better informed about film-making and the movie industry by encouraging them to watch, discuss and review one of the many great films on the subject featured on the FILMCLUB website and available free to members?

From satires about Hollywood past and present like *Sunset Boulevard* and *The Player*, to Mark Cousins' moving documentary *The First Movie*, Oscar-winning homage to the silent era *The Artist*, gothic inspired drama *Gods and Monsters*, comedies about film-making such as *Bowfinger* or *Be Kind Rewind*, and films about our relationship with cinema like *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, there are many to choose from. Access to films like these, which they may not normally see, can broaden young people's understanding of film and enrich their cultural experiences; as one teacher and club leader observes, "it's media education by osmosis!"

FILMCLUB Recommends...



THE FIRST MOVIE (11+)

This poetic Iraqi-set documentary sees filmmaker Mark Cousins travelling to Kurdish village Goptapa, where he projects the first films the children have ever seen. After joyfully observing the likes of *E.T.* and *The Red Balloon*, they are encouraged to take a camera and escape from their challenging lives into a world of fantasy – with thoughtful and moving results.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Why is it important to record interviews with ordinary Iraqis from a tiny village, which we would never see on the news?
2. Did anything about the images of Iraq shown in the film surprise you?
3. If you could make a film, what would it be about?

REVIEW STARTER

This is a film about how cinema can act as a window onto another world...



THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO (11+)

Cecilia, an unhappily married, unemployed woman in New Jersey in the 1930s, goes to the cinema and watches the same movie over and over again, until one of the film's characters begins to talk to her directly...

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. How do you think visiting the cinema has changed since the Depression? How is it the same? Do you think the cinemas themselves have changed?
2. If you could walk into the set of any movie, what would it be and why?
3. Who in your opinion is the person most responsible for creating a character – the actor, the writer, the director or the audience?

REVIEW STARTER

All those people who wish that real life were more like the movies should watch this film...



GODS AND MONSTERS (14+)

This is a tender and melancholic account of the last days of *Frankenstein* director James Whale. A gardener, Clay, comes to work for him, and Whale, who is gay, is attracted to the young man. The heterosexual Clay is at first wary of the older man, but soon a close friendship blossoms between them.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. In the film, people are quite dismissive of Whale's films. Why do you think this is? Do you think this is still the case today?
2. What links does the film suggest between parts of Whale's life and his films?
3. Do you think it is still difficult to be openly gay in the world of the film industry?

REVIEW STARTER

This poignant drama uses flashbacks, fabrication and films themselves to examine the final days of a legendary director...



TAKE IT FURTHER

To start a film club now visit filmclub.org, email schools@filmclub.org or call 0207 288 4520

For further information about the First National Youth Film Festival and to register visit nationalyouthfilmfestival.org