**INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SHEET 1**

**STORIES ON SCREEN**

The act of telling a story, or creating a ‘narrative’, is hugely valuable within a wide range of cultures and societies. Storytelling used to be one way of making long winter nights pass more easily; over time, it has also functioned as a means of explaining mysteries, answering questions, remembering a shared history, and demonstrating intellectual and creative skill.

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. So what is a story: what elements is it made up of?
2. How is it told, by whom and to whom?
3. What response are we expected to have to a film's story?
4. What meaning or moral might a film have?
5. Or, is film intended purely for entertainment?

Both fiction books and feature films are concerned with telling stories. The method used by films and books is different, but in the examples included in this sequence of activities, the storytelling is the important thing.

**WHAT IS A TEXT?**

A text is something that communicates meaning using symbols that a reader recognises.

* A printed book is one kind of text
* A graphic novel, where images and words convey meaning, is another kind of text
* A website, an email or a text message are other examples
* A TV show or an advert is also a kind of text

When we read books and printed texts, we generally experience the story through a single mode: writing. Because films are made up of all of these separate elements, the way that we 'read' their stories is different in a number of ways to the experience of reading a printed text.

Film is a kind of moving image text. It has a number of different ways of conveying meaning: the dialogue that actors speak; their actions; the costumes that they wear; the props they use; the location and setting.

As well as this, the way the film is shot (that is, the way the camera is positioned and moves), the way a scene is lit, the editing and the sound will all be carefully considered and put together to have a particular effect on an audience.