**TEACHERS' NOTES**

**ABOUT THE RESOURCE**

This flexible teaching tool, designed for use in English with students aged 11-14, comprises a DVD of fifteen carefully selected extracts from ten feature films accompanied by a disc of curriculum-focused learning resources. These materials offer purposeful and relevant activities for improving students’ engagement and attainment in reading and writing in a range of contexts, exercising skills of descriptive, evaluative, persuasive, analytical and imaginative response. This resource also offers a clear and accessible introduction to work on moving image in English. Film Education offers this educational resource to schools and colleges free of charge.

This resource is supported by a website, [www.filmeducation.org/thinkingfilm](http://www.filmeducation.org/thinkingfilm) where you will be able to find further information and updates.

**USING THINKING FILM**

The materials can be approached in a linear fashion as a complete unit of work, or used to focus on particular areas of interest at different points in the term. The introductory activities and supplementary resources offer a general grounding in moving image work that is relevant to all students at ages 11-14, and for work towards GCSE and equivalent in English, Media and Film Studies.

Starting with a conceptual exploration of storytelling and texts, the resource is divided into sections on **Setting and atmosphere**, **Character**, **Plot**, **Viewpoint** and **Genre**. The grouping of tasks here is conceptual and fluid: teachers may wish to dip in and out of activities or focus on a particular area of the resource where, for example, individual clips could be used to supplement more detailed study of a particular text or theme.

Each clip is referenced at least once in the activities and some are used in more than one section, where they are explored with a different focus each time. The wide range of activities in this pack encourages students to read the moving image closely, developing an understanding of film language within short sequences and across extracts. Students will look at how film sequences are structured, thinking carefully about conventions and audience expectations. Through close watching and repeat-viewing a range of detail can be uncovered and interpreted: an exploration of individual components and their effects in film, as with a written text, allows for analysis of the filmmaker's intentions and the degree of success with which these are achieved. Creative responses are suggested throughout; these make good extended writing or planning activities; they may also be set as homework, extension or group learning tasks.

**USING FILM IN ENGLISH**

Whilst film often finds a place in the 'media and non-fiction' section of the syllabus, this can be an awkward fit for a medium that is capable of a huge range of expression. If we consider film to be a storytelling medium, in principle, then any feature film can be explored in terms of story and genre. The clips in this resource are taken from films that are, in many cases, based on adaptations from written works (from a literary 'classic' such as *Great Expectations* to a graphic novel such as *Thor*). This deliberate choice is intended to reflect the primary focus within English on the written text and to provide a bridging tool between study of printed texts and an exploration of film texts in the English classroom.

Despite its debt to other forms and especially the novel, film tells its story with its own grammar, its own syntax. Camera movement, camera position, framing, lighting, sound, and editing are some of the main vocabulary by which a director or screenwriter may express a narrative. A film of a novel is far from being a mechanical copy of the source - it represents a shift from one set of conventions for representing the world to another. Why this should be so, what is the nature of this shift and for whom is it done, what is 'gained' and what 'lost' - these are some of the questions necessarily addressed when the 'film of the book' is introduced to a class.

**Film language**

Just as we teach children skills for close reading of and engagement with written texts, so we should also equip them with the tools required to make sense of film texts. Without being off-putting or overly complex, the Thinking Film approach is to offer students precise vocabulary for expression and conceptual understanding of elements in the construction of film and the ways in which the viewer may be encouraged to respond to individual elements.

Basic vocabulary about shot types and camera angles not only enables students to express their ideas clearly, it also helps them to read the moving image more closely. Within the **Supplementary resources** section on this disc you will find a basic **Shot types** worksheet and a **Film Language glossary**. We would recommend that each student be given a copy of these for his/her folder or exercise book as it makes a helpful and versatile reference.

**TAKING IT FURTHER**

* Film Education offers additional resources for a number of the films on this disc. The index of film titles in these Teachers’ Notes shows where these can be found online; all are accessible free of charge.
* For further information on the films themselves, there is a wealth of online sources: for example, sites such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) supply a wide range of detail on almost any feature film.
* Teachers may wish to use this resource to ground further study of the moving image; for example, when working towards an examination or coursework style piece, or as preparation for entry into a film or media qualification post-14.
* General questions for approaching any film sequence are given in the appendix at the end of this document. These offer a useful framework for close study of moving image extracts and could be used in a variety of contexts.

**THE DVD**

The film clips in this resource have been carefully selected from feature films of a range of genres, from a variety of time periods and production contexts. The clips are taken from ten different films, released between 1946 and 2011: there are fifteen clips in total. The intention is to enable the teacher to use the clips in the most suitable way for their classes. Film titles are listed alphabetically on the disc for ease of use.

**A note on classification**

The BBFC classification for each film is listed here for your reference. Please be aware that this rating is for the film as a whole, rather than for the individual clip. Information on classification, and more detailed information on the classification decisions made for more recent films, is available through the BBFC website: **http://www.bbfc.co.uk/**

We recommend teachers view individual clips carefully before using them with their students to ensure that they are familiar with the content and are happy with the suitability of the material for their classes. These clips have been chosen with care and sensitivity and although the use of film in a schools context is exempt from certification requirements, it is important that teachers work with department heads and their school leadership team and school governors to ensure that the learning intentions are well understood. It is important, particularly where the certificate of a film is above the age of a student, that parents are aware of the films their children will be exploring and the learning context within which this activity will take place.

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| **Title** | **Year** | **Classification** | **Film Education resource** |
| *Beowulf:*- Arrival by sea- Beowulf and Hrothgar | 2007 | 12 | Website:**www.filmeducation.org/beowulf/** |
| *Great Expectations* | 1946 | PG | - |
| *Jane Eyre* | 2011 | PG | - |
| *Jurassic Park* | 1993 | PG | PDF: **www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/JurassicP.pdf** |
| *Oliver Twist:*- Opening sequence- Oliver sets out | 2005 | PG | Website: **www.filmeducation.org/olivertwist/** |
| *Rabbit-Proof Fence* | 2002 | PG | - |
| *Sherlock Holmes:*- Introducing Lord Blackwood- Blackwood and Holmes | 2009 | 12 | Website:**www.filmeducation.org/sherlockholmes/** |
| *Thor:*- Opening sequence- Coronation ceremony | 2011 | 12 | Website: [**www.filmeducation.org/thor/**](http://www.filmeducation.org/thor/)NB: this site features a range of interactivity, including creative ‘make your own trailer’ task |
| *To Kill A Mockingbird* | 1962 | 12 | - |
| *Whale Rider:*- Paikea and Koro- Paikea jumps in | 2002 | PG | PDF:**www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/WhaleRider.pdf** |

**APPENDIX 1: CD-ROM contents**

Materials on the CD-ROM may be networked within the school or college. Materials on the disc are ordered as follows:

* **Teachers’ Notes**
* **Introductory activities:**
* INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SHEET 1
* INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SHEET 2
* **Setting and atmosphere:**
* SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 1: Establishing the setting
* SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *Great Expectations -* sound
* SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 3: *Great Expectations –* viewing activities
* SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 4: *Sherlock Holmes*: Introducing Lord Blackwood
* **Character:**
* CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 1: Who’s who?
* CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 2: Creating a hero – *Beowulf*
* CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 3: Character and representation - *Whale Rider*
* CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 4: *Whale Rider* - Paikea jumps in
* CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 5: What makes a ‘hero’?
* CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 6: Heroes and villains - *Sherlock Holmes*
* **Plot:**
* PLOT ACTIVITY SHEET 1: The film’s ‘story’ – *Thor*
* PLOT ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *Thor* - plot, time and place
* PLOT ACTIVITY SHEET 3: Setting up the story: Beowulf and Hrothgar
* **Viewpoint:**
* VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 1: point of view in stories and film - *Oliver Twist*
* VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *Oliver Twist* in still, and moving, image
* VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 3: *Jane Eyre*
* VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 4: *Rabbit-Proof Fence*
* **Genre:**
* GENRE ACTIVITY SHEET 1: What do we mean by genre?
* GENRE ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *To Kill A Mockingbird*
* GENRE ACTIVITY SHEET 3: *Jurassic Park*
* **Supplementary resources:**
* Storyboard sheet
* Film language glossary
* Shot types sheet

**APPENDIX 2: General questions for approaching a film sequence**

**Production context**

Using the film’s official website as your starting point, see what details you can find about this film online.

1. When was the film made?
2. Do you recognise any 'names' in the credits for directing, writing, producing or acting?
3. What information is available on the official site, and why do you think this has been selected for this site?
4. What does the marketing for the film indicate about the film’s genre and target audience? If you can find them, refer to the film’s trailer, poster, official synopsis and details from the official film website in your answer.

**What is the film about?**

1. Describe what you think is happening in the sequence. What do you think is significant about what you can see?
2. Describe any characters, their relationships and their actions in the sequence.
3. What kind of production does this seem to be (independent cinema? Hollywood blockbuster?), and what genre does this sequence seem to belong to? Explain your answer, describing any genre features you can identify in this extract.
4. What questions would you want to ask about the rest of the film? Based on what you have seen, what predictions might you make about narrative events that have already occurred and developments following this sequence?
5. Do you think the sequence highlights any particular issues?
6. From watching this sequence do you feel that the film has a 'message' for its audience – is it trying to put across particular ideas or viewpoints? Explain your answer.

**How is meaning created in this sequence?**

Refer to the key terms to guide you in answering these questions.

1. How do setting, location, props and costume choices contribute to your interpretation of the sequence? Consider what information these convey.
2. How does the sound shape your responses to the sequence? Comment on dialogue, tone, incidental sound and any music you notice, exploring their impact on your emotional response to the sequence.
3. How do lighting and colour affect tone and atmosphere? Explore lighting choices, including noticeable use of light and shadow, as well as considering choice of colour.
4. How does camera technique contribute to the creation of meaning in this sequence? Consider the effects of camera position and angle, choosing two example shots to describe in detail. What are we shown (and not shown) and what is the intended effect?
5. Consider the ways in which the editing affects our interpretation of what we see in this sequence. How important are pace and continuity in shaping your response to what you see?

**Why would you watch it?**

1. Does this sequence engage you, move you or connect with you in any way? Why?
2. Would you go and see this film? Why? What sort of audience do you think this film might have attracted at the cinema?
3. Whose point-of-view do we get in the sequence and why might this be important?
4. Why do you think the director chose to film the sequence in this way? How else could he have directed it?
5. Why do you think this sequence has been chosen for analysis of the different ways in which film can create meaning?

**INDEX OF ACTIVITY SHEETS**

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| **Worksheet** | **Activity focus/worksheet content** | **Name of clip****(where relevant)** |
| **INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES** | **NB:** teachers may wish to introduce the **Shot types** and **Film language glossary** sheets, in the **Supplementary resources** section of the disc, at the start of the unit of work. The **Shot types** sheet could, for example, be offered to groups with the shot names missing, as a matching activity; groups could be challenged to come up with tableaux or similar to describe key film language terms. |  |
| INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SHEET 1 | * Discuss what makes a story; discuss function of films
* Consider text types; film as a multimodal text
 | N/A |
| INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SHEET 2 | * Chart examples of story elements in film and written fiction
* Argue the case for ‘key’ story elements
 | N/A |

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| **Worksheet** | **Activity focus/worksheet content** | **Name of clip (where relevant)** |
| **SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE** | **NB:** You may wish to link work in this section to a novel or poem already studied, where appropriate |  |
| SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 1: Establishing the setting | * Introduction to setting in fiction
* Activity thinking about texts the class has already explored – how is setting created and described?
* Setting in film: how this is depicted, and the use of the long shot or establishing shot
* Still image task: students create descriptive writing based on long shots taken from three of the sequences in the pack
 | N/A |
| SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *Great Expectations* - sound | * *Great Expectations*: how sound functions in the clip. In the first task, students read the novel’s opening lines and consider what information is conveyed by the printed text, and how this may differ when interpreted in film.
* Then, the extract is played for students with the image turned off – sound only. Students record details of what they hear in the sequence.

**NB:** we would suggest you play the sound from the clip at least twice  | *Great Expectations*, sound only (turn off projector or screen) |
| SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 3: *Great Expectations* – viewing activities | * **Viewing activities**:

View *Great Expectations* clip in full- Close response: questions for discussion explore the effect, and effectiveness of the sequence- Second viewing tasks get students working in groups to count the number of shots and their duration, thinking about the pace of the sequence* **Creative response**:
* Students imagine they are transported back to the set to take David Lean’s place as director. They storyboard their version, choosing camera angles and movement, and cutting, to appeal to a modern audience. Storyboard sheet provided
* Students write the opening descriptive paragraphs for a new story, focusing on setting and atmosphere, using their notes on the clip as stimulus
 | *Great Expectations* – as above**NB:** Whilst these activities are based on the clip from *Great Expectations*, you could also explore the following clips using similar tasks and approaches to uncover the significance of setting and atmosphere:- *Oliver Twist* - opening sequence- *Jane Eyre* - *Beowulf* – Beowulf arrives- *Jurassic Park*  |
| SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITY SHEET 4: *Sherlock Holmes*: Introducing Lord Blackwood  | * Brief introduction to the sequence
* **Viewing activities**:

- students make notes on setting and location, thinking about details of period and place- second viewing: exploration of atmosphere throughout the sequence; evaluation of how set/lighting/colour contribute to atmosphere; looking at symbolism in the sequence* **Creative response**:

- turn the opening sequence into a piece of descriptive writing. Discuss with a partner the differences between creating atmosphere in words and creating atmosphere in sound and images. | *Sherlock Holmes*:**Introducing Lord Blackwood** |

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| **Worksheet** | **Activity focus/worksheet content** | **Name of clip (where relevant)** |
| **CHARACTER** |  |  |
| CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 1: Who’s who? | * Exploring character types in relation to film
 | N/A |
| CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 2: Creating a hero – *Beowulf* | * Introducing the film: synopsis of *Beowulf*
* **Close viewing activity**, exploring film language in the sequence
 | *Beowulf*:**Arrival by sea** |
| CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 3: Character and representation - *Whale Rider* | * Introducing the film *Whale Rider*
* **Viewing activities**: close exploration of the *Whale Rider* sequence **Paikea and Koro**, including:

- group viewing work on each character;- longer ‘writing to explain’ task based on notes from close viewing  | *Whale Rider:* **Paikea and Koro** |
| CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 4: *Whale Rider* - Paikea jumps in  | * Synopsis for *Whale Rider* contextualises second clip
* **Viewing activities** explore character reactions and atmosphere in the sequence
* **Creative writing tasks**:

- recreate the underwater sequence using descriptive writing to create atmosphere;- Writing in the ‘voice’ of the different characters in the sequence | *Whale Rider:* **Paikea jumps in** |

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| CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 5: What makes a ‘hero’? | * Background to the character of Paikea
* **Presentation task**: argue/persuade task in response to one of two statements about what it means to be a hero
 | N/A |
| CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 6: Heroes and villains - *Sherlock Holmes*  | * Thinking of examples of onscreen heroes and villains
* **Viewing activities**: exploration of the clip thinking about how Blackwood, the villain and Holmes, the hero are presented and contrasted in the sequence
* **Creative task**: think up a new idea for a modern-day hero/villain pairing and create a pitch for a film or TV company to ‘sell’ the idea
 | *Sherlock Holmes:* **Blackwood and Holmes** |

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| **Worksheet** | **Activity focus/worksheet content** | **Name of clip****(where relevant)** |
| **PLOT** | **NB:** We have deliberately used the term 'story' in the title of this resource. It is useful to think about the relationship between ‘story’ and ‘plot’ and there are a variety of literary and film theory approaches to this area. The second activity sheet in this section makes an initial consideration of this. You may also wish to look at the theories of Vladimir Propp and Tzvetan Todorov, which are frequently used in Media Studies teaching. |  |
| PLOT ACTIVITY SHEET 1: The film’s ‘story’ – *Thor* | * Discussion task thinking about sources of information for finding out a film’s story, and critical responses to it
* Introduction to *Thor* including official film synopsis with activities
* **Viewing activities**: *Thor*, Opening sequence: what information is conveyed in this clip, and it what ways does the clip compare to the film’s synopsis?
 | *Thor*:**Opening sequence** |
| PLOT ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *Thor* - plot, time and place | * **Close viewing** of the sequence from *Thor*, looking at how plot is conveyed and simultaneous action in different locations is presented
* Summary of the opening story, and comparison of story and plot: the order in which events are shown on screen is different from the chronological story order.
* **Creative response**: pairs come up with ideas for a short story that either conveys simultaneous action in different locations, or relates events ‘out of order’
 | *Thor*:**Coronation ceremony** |
| PLOT ACTIVITY SHEET 3: Setting up the story: Beowulf and Hrothgar  | * Brief introduction to the clip
* **Viewing activities** on Beowulf and Hrothgar explore how plot points are set up in the sequence, encouraging students to think about expectations for and possible complications in the plot.
* **Creative response**: students storyboard their own idea for a short scene in the film to take place before or after the clip they have just seen using the storyboard template provided.
 | *Beowulf*: **Beowulf and Hrothgar** |

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| **Worksheet** | **Activity focus/worksheet content** | **Name of clip****(where relevant)** |
| **VIEWPOINT** | **NB:** viewpoint is an interesting area of film theory and of literary theory. Work on, for example, unreliable narrators is very useful for helping students start thinking more carefully about the way stories are told, in writing and on screen. In the moving image, you could start by looking at point-of-view shots, and use of high/low angle to convey the perspective of particular characters.  |  |
| VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 1: point-of-view in stories and film - *Oliver Twist* | * Introduction to viewpoint: thinking about first and third person in written texts, and how this might relate to film.
* **Viewing activities**:
* based on the **Opening sequence**, students work in pairs to explore how we are encouraged to feel about Oliver in the sequence and how the filmmakers create these effects.
* On second viewing students count the number of shots in the sequence, looking at how many Oliver is in. This is intended to introduce further work on his viewpoint.
 | *Oliver twist*:**Opening sequence** |
| VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *Oliver Twist* in still, and moving, image | * Students look at stills taken from *Oliver Twist*: Opening sequence. Using text boxes next to the images they describe what they see in the shot and explain how the shot type and camera angle encourages the audience to react to the shot in a particular way
* **Viewing activity**: students then watch the sequence Oliver sets out, taken from slightly later on in the film, focusing on how camerawork and editing encourage the viewer to sympathise with Oliver and to share his viewpoint.

**NB:** thinking about how Oliver’s viewpoint is conveyed, you may want to look at the moment when Oliver sits down on the milestone. We can see what he’s sitting on before he does – at this point, we don’t really share his viewpoint but are ahead of him, and the timing is intended for comic effect. | *Oliver Twist*: **Oliver sets out** |
| VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 3: *Jane Eyre* | * Introduction to the sequence from the 2011 film version.
* **Viewing activity:** exploring how, although neither Helen nor Jane has any dialogue in this sequence, their view on the action is conveyed by the filmmaker
* **Creative response**:

- annotating a transcript of the scene with directions for the actors playing Jane and Helen.- groups rehearse and act out the scene as they interpret it.  | *Jane Eyre* |
| VIEWPOINT ACTIVITY SHEET 4: *Rabbit-Proof Fence* | * Brief overview of the film and introduction to the sequence
* **Viewing activities**:

- First viewing and initial responses;- Second viewing, counting the number of shots- Third viewing: working in groups to complete the table with close observations on the camera work and sound in the sequence, used as the basis for questions exploring viewpoint. * **Creative response**:
* storyboard an alternate version of the scene from the tracker’s point of view, rather than that of the three girls
* produce a short presentation explaining the decisions made and how these will influence audience sympathies
 | *Rabbit-Proof Fence* |

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| **Worksheet** | **Activity focus/worksheet content** | **Name of clip (where relevant)** |
| **GENRE** | **Genre: a type or kind** - *‘Genres are formal systems for transforming the world in which we actually live into self-contained and controllable structures of meaning...they shape reality, thus making it less random and disordered.’*Patrick Phillips: An Introduction to Film Studies (Ed. Jill Nelmes, Routledge 1996) |  |
| GENRE ACTIVITY SHEET 1: What do we mean by genre? | * Introduction to meaning of genre in terms of film education
* Table to exploring film genres and conventions
* Viewing activity: watch the two *Thor* clips: **Opening sequence** and **Coronation ceremony**, exploring the genre conventions presented

**NB**: at this stage, teachers may wish to select a variety of clips from the DVD and apply a similar approach. Some of the films are more difficult to categorise: e.g. what genre would students apply to *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, or *Whale Rider*? | *Thor*:**Opening sequence****Coronation ceremony** |
| GENRE ACTIVITY SHEET 2: *To Kill A Mockingbird*  | * **Viewing activity** on sequence from *To Kill A Mockingbird*, looking at genre conventions
* Exploring how the sequence sets up expectations for the film
* Thinking about this film as a ‘classic’: in what ways is it different from modern-day features
 | *To Kill A Mockingbird* |
| GENRE ACTIVITY SHEET 3: *Jurassic Park*  | * Introduction to the film’s main action
* **Close viewing activity** exploring how tension is built up in the clip
* **Creative response**: genre mash-up re-creating part of the script for the scene
 | *Jurassic Park* |