



THINKING FILM
thinking MFL
TEACHERS' NOTES

General Approach

All of the film extracts and resources on this CD have been chosen, developed and trialled over a three-year period by our partnership schools in London, Cumbria, Lancashire and Kent.

Together we have pulled together clips and activities that we feel can be used at both KS3 and 4, based loosely around common examination topic areas that form core elements of the various exam board GCSE requirements.

These topic areas obviously change depending on the Board and the year, so we have tried to pull together fairly 'generic' areas that are easily adaptable and adoptable.

We also deliberately left the resources open so that you can change them around depending on your class, their context, the key stage or the level of challenge required.

All extracts can be shown with subtitles on or off and the activities can be translated into French, given scaffolding as needed and angled in whichever way you feel might be suitable for your classes.

The resources are discussion points in the first instance, open and diverse in approach, and are simply there to serve as a guide as to what can and has been done in schools.

All the extracts and resources can be adapted for use in the four skills of Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing and none of them require you to have seen the whole film.

Possibly the most important aspect of this resource is that it helps to build a better cultural understanding of France through immersion into French cinema, which will also hopefully spark your learners interest in seeing some of these films in full.

We have included an exemplar A level French resource that we have developed with all of the activities linked to the DVD extracts to give an indication of the 15 or so follow up resources we have.

We are also looking to release similar DVDs in both German and Spanish at GCSE and put the A level resources and training on our websites that can be accessed through www.londongt.org and www.ruralgandt.org.uk.



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Using this DVD

- Use the extracts that most clearly illustrate a key issue for your students – be critical in your selection – what scene and why is it useful
- Bear in mind the level of difficulty of the film but also think about its versatility – you can tackle smaller chunks of the film that allow more detailed focus
- Think about examining more authentic language than previously covered/prescribed
- Thinking about challenging the students' analytical and evaluative skills
- Talk about yourself in relation to the film – what did it mean to you?
- Encourage students to research and to give their own personal reaction
- Think about what themes the film fits into – future plans/family and friends/self and identity/school life/social issues – to make the study topic based
- Try not to think of it as a film, but as a text to explore and study
- You do not need to limit yourself to one film – it is not tremendously risky to study a film for three weeks, therefore doing one a term with more able students
- Use a mixture of authentic material to back up the syllabus but also allow yourself 'off-piste' activities
- It is possible to watch the film then complete activities, or do the clip-based activities and then watch the film from an enriched position
- Always keep evaluation in mind – question how, if and why something is effective.



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Approaches to using film

Classroom learning is often at its best when engaging with challenging issues and contexts, which make learners question, interrogate and extend their view of the world. Conflicts and dilemmas played out in many films provide not only the context for learners to immerse themselves in the issues, but also to mediate these.

Moving away from the textbook and the approaches that they routinely use – and looking instead at relevant and more interesting contexts can be liberating. Remember that almost any context is valid for developing language. When applied to the meaningful content that film provides and injected with the interactivity that technology offers, these have become powerful learning materials.

When you are looking to utilise a film in MFL, what are the best approaches?

- Identifying certain scenes/sequences within a film, and using these clips to understand how narrative markers work and predicting what happens
- Using oral activities to form questions to discover what the scene is; students describe the scene; students contextualise the scene
- Exploiting tasks developed following a viewing to contribute to oral and written assessments
- Using trailers to discuss film content and skills in summarising the narrative and storyboarding
- Separating sound and image with learner-generated dialogue or sub-titles
- Using a sequence to consider character profiles, to express points of view, to narrate events and to produce descriptions or other creative writing tasks that might arise
- Watching a sequence without the sound, focusing on the visual (or vice versa) to concentrate students' attention on a particular element within a scene
- Exploring how the text directs the audience to respond, either at a particular moment or throughout often produces detailed and thoughtful analysis



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- Using an excerpt as a stimulus for descriptive writing, providing learners with an audio-visual reference point for writing about characters, periods and places beyond the remit of their own experience
- Developing précis skills using sequences from a film, whilst storyboarding in turn can provide an active approach to engage more reluctant writers
- Re-sequencing to offer the chance to manipulate the narrative and to begin to reach an understanding of how and why the director makes the choices they make
- Using trailers as a form of condensed storytelling. Film trailers are intended to get audiences excited about seeing a film at the cinema. In a few minutes an extract can establish genre and mood, introduce character and setting and establish plot and key themes

These film-based resources have been developed to refute the assumption that students cannot think unless they have the target language. Experience has shown that the use of film encourages an intensity of interest and engagement which encourages long-term interest, motivation and ambition for learning to develop.

How film supports outstanding MFL teaching and learning

A broader perspective

Our London G&T/Rural Network partnerships of schools across the country have over the last few years recognised that using film for the basis of a writing and/or oral assessment task helps to make good MFL students really stand out. It also helps with transition issues to the sixth form through using year 11 to strengthen target language skills.

Initially there was a concern amongst some of the linguists about using film being seen to become contaminated by “off-syllabus” fears, yet it has become abundantly clear that MFL is a subject that lends itself very well to extension beyond the syllabus. In addition to using film to teach more traditional language skills, flexibility within the curriculum at Key Stages 4 and 5 now provides the opportunity to make far greater use of film as a key resource for learning than has previously been practical.



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The experience of film goes far beyond the cinema as it can play a significant role in students' social and cultural immersion. There is no doubt that film helps pupils to appreciate the cultural conventions in other countries through direct visualising and through different audience expectations. It provides a far more realistic backdrop than textbooks can and informs learners about contemporary events in the country of their target language, whilst giving a great opportunity for personal engagement and discussion. It takes away the boundaries of textbooks, and builds on pupils' skills and gives them access to colloquial language and cultural perspectives.

The new MFL curriculum has been used to look beyond the immediately transactional and functional uses of language that are presented in directly 'relevant' situations, and time has been given to reconsider the notion that foreign language learning is a cultural pursuit. Learners have found it interesting to study the difference between British and European cultures through the medium of film but specifically for developing listening skills and hearing authentic language rather than reading prescribed vocabulary lists.

Many of the MFL learners in our partnerships have expressed that they would like to have opportunities to explore the target language culture and to place the language in context and to have contact with authentic native speakers. Watching a film in the target language and then discussing it in the target language is a really powerful way of developing *all* of a student's language skills.

Their teachers also wanted to encourage them to go beyond the curriculum and to have other sources suitable for independent language work. Film offered all of these opportunities.

Considering examples of films represented on this DVD that are appropriate to GCSE French. Responding to and exploring challenging issues seen through films, such as cultural identity, intolerance and racism (*Entre Les Murs*); surrealism, solitude, parental relationships and nostalgia (*Amelie*), war, religion and anti-Semitism (*Au Revoir les Enfants*) has been found to provide an often much-needed injection of realism into learning in languages.

Specific skills

Our partnership identified the following skills and behaviours as significant for students to develop for the highest achievement in MFL. Students should;

- Show an intense interest in the cultural features of the language being studied



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- Think quickly and be able to recognise familiar language in an unfamiliar context
- Have the ability to use verbal and non-verbal clues in order to understand challenging material
- Use independent study skills to investigate areas of linguistic and cultural interest
- Be curious about how language works and show an interest in form for its own sake.

We have found that each of these skills has been enhanced by the study of film. An adaptation of a literary text can be used to explore complex concepts, such as viewpoint and narrative device. Similarly, a carefully chosen film extract can be used to explore how atmosphere or mood is created, with students then creating their own written, spoken or performance pieces to reflect this understanding.

An exploration of individual components and their effects, in a film, as with a written text, allows for analysis of the filmmakers intentions and the degree of success with which these are achieved.

Finally, the study of foreign films fits well into Ofsted criteria foci for improvement, specifically;

- Developing listening and speaking skills in realistic situations to improve spontaneity
- Building intercultural understanding in language teaching
- Increasing the use of authentic language resources
- Preparing learners for advanced level learning
- Creating a varied and interesting curriculum

It also fits well into the new Ofsted subject specific (February 2012) guidance and also the 'Report on Modern Languages Achievement and Challenge 2007-10, published in January 2011 as well as the previous report from 2004-7. For significantly more detail on this, please see the two pdfs on 'Outstanding' guidance in this downloadable section of this DVD.



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Outstanding Teaching & Learning and Achievement in MFL

Outstanding learning involves giving the students the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do. Engaging with film as part of their learning provides many opportunities but the use of this DVD is likely to result in students being able to demonstrate and develop their ability to:

- perceive patterns quickly and demonstrate assimilation of new grammatical structures.
- recognise familiar language in an unfamiliar context.
- transfer skills when adapting language to new situations.
- cross-reference and transfer language and skills.
- use verbal and non-verbal clues to understand challenging reading and listening material.
- ask questions about exceptions to the rule or more complex grammatical queries which have may not been addressed in class.
- use study a range of skills to investigate areas of linguistic and cultural interest.
- notice new features and structures and to develop constructions on their own.
- grasp the gist of spoken language without having to know every word.
- pick up accents quickly recognising differences and inquiring about differences (e.g. regional dialects).
- use appropriate language in different contexts and make wider links.
- be accurate and precise in their use of language and to enjoy the new expressive possibilities that different language provides.

What is noticeable about this list is the opportunity that film presents for students to acquire language for themselves, **to develop a passion and curiosity for the study of languages and culture**. This cannot simply be given to them, but has to be experienced as part of the routine of classroom learning. Using film can play a key role in changing the dynamics of learning.

Achievement

The outstanding grade descriptor in the new Ofsted subject specific guidance regarding judgements on the achievement of pupils in Modern Languages during their classroom visits looks like this:



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*As appropriate to their stage of development, all groups of learners are **confident speakers with good intonation and pronunciation**. They develop a sense of passion and commitment to the subject and can **use language creatively and spontaneously** to express what they want to say, including when talking to each other informally and writing imaginatively. The four skills are developing equally well and pupils use them creatively to **increase their knowledge and understanding and to deal with the unexpected**. Pupils have a **strong awareness of the culture of the countries where the language is spoken**. Pupils show exceptional independence in their studies and can **use a range of resources including ICT to develop their language skills** and investigate aspects that interest them. The majority work hard, **develop resilience and understand that language learning is often challenging, purposeful and collaborative**. An above average proportion continues to study languages in the next stage of their education.*

Achievement on a classroom level means giving students the chance to show what they are capable of. The words highlighted in bold are those which have been readily observed in lessons where film has been used. When read with the previous list it is abundantly clear that **the use of film can transform the way in which students engage with the learning of languages**. Even for those at a relatively early stage in their learning of a language it can be intellectually challenging and rewarding. And for those with more developed skills it can represent the value of languages as a discipline for further study.

Quality of Teaching

In terms of their judgements on the quality of teaching, the new guidance has this to say about outstanding:

*Teachers communicate **high expectations, enthusiasm and passion** about their subject to pupils. They have a **high level of confidence and expertise both in terms of their specialist language knowledge and their understanding of effective language learning**. Carefully planned **imaginative activities** guide and support pupils to **communicate enthusiastically both orally and in writing in the target language** and secure outstanding progress. **Pupils use the language with little prompting** for routine classroom communication as well as for specific purposes. **Resources, including new technology, are used imaginatively to develop pupils' cultural awareness and their ability in all the four skills**. The precisely targeted support provided by other adults encourages all pupils to develop independence and a desire to use the target language for real communication. Assessment and marking are carried out in all four skills and conducted as far as possible in the target language.*



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This statement presents a clear vision of what teaching should look like and in particular it presents *Outstanding* as coming from what might be described as a 'different direction' to *Good*. Film presents the opportunity for authentic learning of the language and in a way that might sharply differ from more traditional book-based approaches. But it can be introduced in a way which supplements more routine approaches, enabling the teacher to experiment with new practice and to explore new ways of learning with their students. The resources on this DVD have been carefully crafted to support this approach.

Curriculum

The outstanding grade descriptor in the subject specific guidance on the curriculum looks like this:

*The imaginative and stimulating subject curriculum is skilfully designed to match the **full range of pupils' needs** and to ensure highly effective continuity and progression in their learning. In addition, **innovative approaches to curriculum design** ensure the needs of individuals and groups, such as those who already have competence in a language or would benefit from learning more than one language are exceptionally well met. There is an excellent balance between structured opportunities for learners to develop subject skills, knowledge and understanding and **opportunities to engage in exciting real-life situations**. A wide range of imaginative extra-curricular and enrichment provision ensures pupils have **an extensive knowledge of the culture of the countries** where the target language is spoken.*

What becomes very clear from this is that in an outstanding curriculum students must have opportunities for both high challenge and 'real life' (i.e. non-textbook) engagements with the culture of the countries they are whose language they are studying. Film also provides the opportunity to engage issues which help challenge and extend their view of the world. The clips on this DVD present contexts such as France under the Occupation, racism, bullying, social and cultural stereotypes which can be 'squeezed' for learning about big ideas and key debates in both historical and modern day France. Film is very much a lens which can be used to explore how France sees itself and how a director's intentions or viewpoint interact with what the students know themselves. In short, presenting and exploring the morale purpose for the study of languages. And critically this can be achieved through the use of a short clip, bringing a context, often reserved for extra-curricular enrichment or 'special' lessons, into what becomes a far less ordinary routine.



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Leadership and Management

The statement for outstanding quality of leadership and management of MFL are as follows:

*Leadership at all levels is informed by a **high level of understanding about language learning**. At subject leadership level there is **strong subject expertise and vision** that underpins the entire workings of the department. There is a **proven track record of innovation**. Subject reviews, self-evaluation and improvement planning are **well-informed by current best practice and research** in languages and in education generally. Subject leadership inspires confidence and whole-hearted commitment from pupils and colleagues, including recognising and encouraging the positive contribution that **other stakeholders can make by sharing their expertise**. There are effective strategies to delegate responsibilities where appropriate and to share good practice and **secure high quality professional development**. Language learning has **a very high profile in the life of the school and contributes strongly to the ethos**. Highly productive links exist with parents, external agencies and the countries where the languages being taught are spoken.*

The use of film provides a wonderful context for deepening professional knowledge. It almost goes without saying that colleagues would wish to use film in their teaching but for a variety of reasons this huge resource remains sadly under-used. Having the clips, suggested activities and a context for their use will provide a valuable stimulus for collaboration between colleagues who can be confident that the ideas have been tested in use. **Film can provide an ideal access route to the development of intercultural understanding, providing students with the means to access the lives of children in other cultures and to access authentic voices to enhance their own.**

Links with other subjects can be anchored to a concrete context, where the benefits for linguists are as clear as they may be for other subjects. The films chosen for this DVD have been selected because they present opportunities for students to use the skills of other subjects to augment and stimulate their learning in languages. Using clips from across the topics/contexts for GCSE will provide students with opportunities to explore how the learning of language will, in turn, augment in these skills.



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*Modern languages, Achievement and challenge 2007–2010 (January 2011) 100042
Ofsted Subject Specific guidance section 5 evaluation schedule 'Generic grade descriptors and supplementary subject-specific guidance for inspectors on making judgements during visits to schools.' (February 2012)*

Subject Specific guidance following 2012 Ofsted changes to the section 5 evaluation schedule 'Generic grade descriptors and supplementary subject-specific guidance for inspectors on making judgements during visits to schools,' provides a useful starting point for looking at what constitutes Outstanding practice in Modern Languages. (February 2012)

'Report on Modern Languages Achievement and Challenge 2007-2010, published in January 2011 Reference no: 100042' as this highlights some key areas that MFL teachers have been encouraged to focus on by Ofsted