MASTERPIECE™

FILM IN THE CLASSROOM

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

REVISED EDITION
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FOREWORD

The history of film is inexorably tied to the history of technology. There is a legendary, possibly apocryphal, story that an 1896 screening of one of the earliest films, *The Arrival of the Train*, caused a panic when the audience, unfamiliar with the concept of moving images, thought the train was going to crash into them. Developments in technology continued to affect audiences with the creation of synchronized sound in the 1920s, the widespread use of Technicolor™ in the 1930s and 1940s, the popularization of the 3D films of the 1950s, and the reliance on computer graphics, green-screen technology, and the newest 3D capabilities of today’s films.

But maybe even more important than the developments in how films are made are the changing ways in which they are viewed. From the five-cent nickelodeons running a continuous reel of short films at the beginning of the 20th century to the $10 matinee, Dolby® Surround sound, and stadium theaters of the 21st century, movie theaters have been fighting a losing battle to other places where audiences can watch movies. The advent of VHS and DVR players with high-definition televisions and digital broadcasting allows us to recreate—or even replace—much of the theater experience at home. Yet because these developments in living-room-theater technology have taken place over a span of more than 50 years, nothing could have prepared us for the lightning-quick changes in how we view film that have been caused by the digital revolution of just the past 10 years.

Consider the following list of technological developments, now ubiquitous, that did not exist in 2004, the year this guide, *Film in the Classroom*, was first published: YouTube, Facebook, Netflix, Hulu, Twitter, the iPod and iPad, and cell phones with built-in cameras and online video streaming. Suddenly, we have gone from experiencing film mostly in theaters and our living rooms to viewing videos on the bus, at our desks, and in line at the bank. Kids born in the last decade also have no concept of not being able to see what you want when you want it, as often as you want it. And now, we have the unprecedented ability, through social networking sites and increased bandwidth, to share and comment on what we’re watching with others, regardless of the geographical, social, gender, and age distances between us.
Not only has technology changed how and where we view film, but it has also changed who gets to make films. With a cell phone and the most basic video-editing software, anyone can be a filmmaker. Video sharing sites give us immediate access to an audience, mostly bypassing the traditional gatekeepers of film production and distribution. Spend a few minutes on YouTube and you’ll see that the great majority of the material is user-generated, noncommercial product, often made in response to others’ work, and in many cases annotating existing work with textual and visual comments and links to outside sources.

So what is the result? By not incorporating the realities of our students’ digital experiences into our curriculum, we have largely abandoned our students to a cyberworld that is for the most part unmonitored and where the rules of conduct are often unclear, and we cannot provide them the skills that they really need to be successful and literate global citizens. The National Council of Teachers of English has identified these “21st Century Literacies”:

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology;
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally;
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts;
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

Any teacher reading this now will probably say, “Great. I’ll just go ahead and balance these with my state standards, school expectations, oh, and with my state text and the Common Core Standards, too, right?” Luckily, these are not standards or assessments or brand-new technology skills for teachers to learn, but are only descriptors of the expectations students should have for the kind of work they are asked to do in school.

And for me, that brings us back to film. When teachers are using film actively in the classroom, they are touching on many of the skills identified above. As you will see throughout this wonderfully practical and insightful teacher’s guide, students are asked to critically analyze the “multiple streams of simultaneous information” as well as to “create . . . multimedia texts” such as screenplays and storyboards for their own film projects by developing “proficiency with the tools of technology.”
In no way does this guide promote extended “movie days,” with long class periods dedicated to passive viewing of a film. Active film engagement means taking full advantage of the pause and rewind buttons on a DVD player to allow time for critical comment and discussion. Using the treasure trove of MASTERPIECE films as its basis, and with numerous opportunities to expand to other films, this guide makes a connection between the film and print mediums by giving students the language to talk about, understand, and create film in sophisticated and revealing ways. As Carol Jackson Cashion points out in her recent article for the English Journal, “MASTERPIECE at 40: A Celebration,” the MASTERPIECE films have long been a staple in our classrooms, not just because teachers and students are eager to discover how filmmakers imagine the works of great literature are transformed to film, but also because they open up “dialogue between the printed page and the screen” and they ask students to become “active interpreters and critics.”

To those who might suggest that schools should not capitulate to the vagaries of society’s “infatuation” with technology, but instead focus on the lasting contributions of print literature, this guide provides a perfect marriage between the two: classic film and print texts that are explored through the new literacies. While it’s impossible to say what changes technology will bring next—my personal prediction of on-demand video streaming under closed eyelids still seems a little way off—it is essential that our classrooms continue to be responsive to the real-life needs of our students in the 21st century. And film, by connecting students’ in- and out-of-school literacies, seems like an ideal place to start.

John Golden

INTRODUCTION

About This Guide

Since 1971, with the debut of The First Churchills, introduced by Alistair Cooke, Masterpiece has been captivating audiences with works of the finest classic and contemporary writers. From the beginning, teachers have been enthusiastic viewers of—and an important audience for—Masterpiece, the longest-running, most-honored drama series on primetime television. In fact, you may already be using Masterpiece films in your classroom, to introduce students to literature or to enhance their understanding of what they are reading.

In 2011, with the wealth of new Masterpiece productions and the explosion of new technologies and literacies, it seemed the right time to update and revise the original Film in the Classroom: A Guide For Teachers, which was published in 2004. Using 25 outstanding Masterpiece films, all currently available on DVD, this revised guide offers fresh ideas and innovative activities for teaching film in today’s digital environment. Although film is no longer a new tool for teaching language arts, understanding how to use it effectively is now more important than ever. Because many of the questions and activities in this guide can be used across disciplines, they are ideal for team teaching with a history, music, or art teacher.

In addition to the wide range of activities in each section, two graphic organizers (Storyboard and Viewing Log), as well as general After-Viewing Questions and a Film Scavenger Hunt help you further integrate the use of any film in the classroom. If you are teaching a particular title, the About the Films section provides production information and links to additional resources on the Masterpiece site.

Please Note: Some Masterpiece films contain mature themes, images, and language. Be sure to preview any film before showing it in your classroom.

Although film is no longer a new tool for teaching language arts, understanding how to use it effectively is now more important than ever.
The MASTERPIECE Website

Although Film in the Classroom is a general guide that can be used no matter what film or text you are teaching, the MASTERPIECE website contains a rich collection of teacher’s guides and other educational materials. The Learn section of the site offers 30 in-depth guides to classics such as The Hound of the Baskervilles, Our Town, and Henry V, as well as comprehensive author guides such as The Complete Guide to Teaching Jane Austen and Teaching Dickens. In addition, there are over 25 Book & Film Club guides. Aimed at libraries, but easily adaptable for the classroom or afterschool book groups, the Book & Film Club materials offer brief background information, thought-provoking discussion questions, and, in some cases, games, activities, and recipes.

In addition to educator resources in the Learn section, each film that airs on MASTERPIECE is streamed on the site following the broadcast. Background information, interactive features, interviews, and behind-the-scenes peeks are just some of the other multimedia resources you may find useful.

Why Study Film in the Classroom?

Anyone who has ever watched a movie with a classroom full of middle- and high-school students knows that young people are comfortable with film and understand its power. By high school, students have watched thousands of movies, television shows, and videos, and they unconsciously understand the basic tools and conventions of the medium. Most have even tried their hand at being filmmakers themselves, whether formally through a class assignment or informally by taking videos of their friends and families and posting them to social media sites.

Although they may still treat it chiefly as passive entertainment, students can be sophisticated interpreters of the interplay of sound and image. They know—often without knowing they know—that a close-up of an actor’s face signifies something different emotionally from a long shot of an actor across a distance, or that certain kinds of music indicate that a dramatic event is about to happen. In fact, students may know how to interpret film better than they know how to interpret literature, especially the classics. Some teachers feel this is the very reason not to use film in the classroom. Isn’t showing movies a waste of time when students have such a reading deficit already? Yes—but only if students watch film passively.

Film is not a guilty pleasure or the “reward” at the end of reading a book, but a legitimate means to enhance literacy. Contemporary thinkers on media literacy (see Resources) have argued that the same habits that a good reader brings to a written text are those that a critical viewer brings to a visual text: enhancing one effortlessly enhances the other. In both, a critical thinker predicts, makes connections, infers, asks questions, and interprets. In both, meaning is made through the details of character, theme, plot, mood, and symbolism. For both, we must guide students to be active interpreters.
Using Film to Interpret Literature

As written texts, the classics are often inaccessible to students. For many, the settings and historical contexts are foreign to them, the complex language hinders fluent reading, and the epic scale of some of the books can seem intimidating. While they will likely feel a sense of foreboding when they view the filmed shot of the stilled mill in George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*, they might miss the same foreshadowing when they read the novel. Where the camerawork might make the romantic interest between a man and woman in a film version of a Jane Austen novel clear, students might miss their flirtation as encoded in Regency-era dialogue in the text. Even more contemporary texts, such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, can prove challenging, particularly for reluctant readers. And yet, we want them to understand these works because they have something important and enduring to say. Using film is a way to help them do this, whether with the filmed version of the same story, in whole or in part, or as a companion text that complements the themes, characters, setting, or conflicts of that story. (For more about companion texts, see Theme/Plot Elements.)

**ACTIVITY**

Film teacher John Golden, who wrote the Foreword to this guide, suggests beginning to think critically about film by starting with a personal film inventory of one’s own viewing history. First, have students make a list of 10 films they have loved. (You might want to make a master list of all the “best picks” when the class has finished.) Then have students choose a partner and take turns talking about one film, telling each other a little about the characters, plots, settings, points of view, themes, and moods that made these films so effective. Compare and contrast the selections students made. What are the most memorable scenes from their films? Why?

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TEACHER TIPS

Consider these ideas, suggested by teachers, for new and different ways to use film. See also Wrap Up for concluding activities.

1. Consider showing the film version of a literary work first, rather than last, or begin your reading with short scenes from the film version. Because students are so visually oriented already, having them first analyze character, look for themes, make predictions, and make observations about the film can help them see these elements more easily when they turn to the literature.

2. Use film as a mini-lesson to highlight a skill or literary element you want your students to practice. For example, let them make predictions from the opening scenes of a film, then ask them to practice predicting while reading.

3. Don’t feel you have to show an entire movie; clips of key scenes can be enough. Be sure to prepare well in advance when showing clips. You may want to show just one (from two to ten minutes long) or make a compilation of clips that show a range of film techniques or plot and character development.

4. Instead of showing the film version of a work of literature you are reading, consider choosing a companion film. This can be a work with similar themes, protagonists, characters, or settings; a film of the same genre; or a film version of another work by the same author. See Theme/Plot Elements for more ideas.

5. Begin class the day after viewing a film by having students write about or discuss which images, scenes, or lines of dialogue stayed with them most strongly. Help students to continually ask themselves: “How did I feel during that scene, and how did the filmmaker make me feel that way?”

6. If you are showing an entire film, use pre-reading strategies beforehand. Having students do a simple K/W/L exercise works as well with film as it does with literature for “activating schema,” or prior knowledge, and for setting expectations.

7. Try assigning small groups or individuals in the class just one cinematic or literary technique to track as they watch a film. For instance, one group might observe a particular actor, another might watch for camera angles or lighting, and a third might track the editing of a scene.

8. Have students write before, during, and after viewing a long film. They can do this with a Viewing Log by using sentence starters such as, “I wondered.../felt.../thought...,” or by writing to a prompt specific to that film.
Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* begins with a description of the complexities of an inheritance. The opening paragraphs are key to understanding the characters’ roles in the novel, but they’re also likely to mystify (and turn away) contemporary readers.

...By a former marriage, Mr. Henry Dashwood had one son: by his present lady three daughters. The son, a steady respectable young man, was amply provided for by the fortune of his mother, which had been large, and half of which devolved on him on his coming of age. By his own marriage, likewise, which happened soon afterwards, he added to his wealth. To him, therefore, the succession to the Norland estate was not so really important as to his sisters....

Screenwriter Andrew Davies has addressed this problem in two ways for his 2009 film adaptation. First, he has written an opening love scene that brings forward a dark subplot that is only alluded to in the novel. Shot in extreme close-up, in a flickering light so that we cannot clearly identify the characters, the new scene both informs the rest of the film thematically and adds an element of mystery to it since viewers won’t know who the two lovers are until nearly the end.

Davies then follows this by compacting the inheritance plotline into just a few short, stylish scenes that explain the intricacies of Regency-era inheritance law—and show vividly how they affect the characters in the novel—in a way that contemporary viewers will understand:

The camera briefly shows a horse-drawn carriage racing somewhere and following this, a bird’s-eye view of footmen walking through the grand interior of an estate. We hear a voice-over that says, “You should prepare yourselves,” and one that answers, “I have done all I can.”

A close-up shot of the worried face of a middle-aged woman then moves to the face of an old man in bed. The camera pans over the three girls who are with the woman at the old man’s bedside. Over a close-up of the woman, we hear footsteps. Then, her voice: “John. I’m so glad you’ve come.”

“Is it John?” asks the old man.

“Here I am, Father,” he answers.
As the camera moves between close-ups of the dying man and close-ups of John’s face (these shot with a wavering, hand-held camera as if from the point of view of the dying old man), the father struggles to gasp out his words: “The law prevents me from dividing up my estate. You are to have everything. Without your help, your stepmother and the girls will have almost nothing. You must do something. You must give me your solemn promise.”

“Yes, of course I promise,” John says, as a close-up shows his face.

We cut to a high angle shot of the somber, gray exterior of the house as the camera tilts down to a horse-drawn hearse, then to the women and girls we saw at the bedside, now in black and crying. The camera follows them as they walk down the grand staircase and ready themselves to follow the hearse.

As the camera pulls away for an extreme long shot of the vast estate, we hear a self-satisfied female voice saying with delight, “Norland Park. Ours at last.”

Students may settle in for one kind of film based on the fire-lit sensuality of the opening love scene, but in the next scene viewers are quickly in familiar Austen territory: grand houses, footmen, an old man’s dying instructions about his will. Yet the crisp editing choices move us, in just four minutes and fifteen seconds, from a love scene to a death scene to the startling, comic moment when the somber shot of a funeral hearse on the vast estate is juxtaposed with the voice-over (“Norland Park. Ours at last.”) that makes it clear that this grand property has just passed into someone else’s hands. The combination will give students a great deal of information about the themes, characters, and plot of the book, even if they don’t initially realize it. This is a perfect spot to stop and have students make predictions about what they expect the rest of the film to be about and why.

**Film Basics**

_How do I feel during a certain sequence, and how does the filmmaker make me feel, react, or think that way?_ This is the essential question for students to ask themselves as they view a film. Like the words of a novel, everything we see and hear on screen is put there intentionally, and everything contributes to the overall meaning. If students only talk about the story in a film, they miss the opportunity to analyze and interpret the film and the filmmaker’s craft.

In film, story elements (plot, dialogue, character, theme, etc.) plus production elements (camera angles, lighting, costumes, acting, etc.) make the narrative. How does lighting set a mood? How does a director create a sense of intimacy in a scene? How is a character’s loneliness emphasized visually? How is a character—even a villain—made understandable or sympathetic? How can the camera replace dialogue? How is point of view manipulated? How can sound intensify emotion or heighten suspense? Like looking closely at the writer’s craft to see how he or she “showed” rather than merely “told,” looking at film with a little knowledge of visual composition, camera movement, editing, and sound can make students active rather than passive viewers.

**How do I feel during a certain sequence, and how does the filmmaker make me feel, react, or think that way?**
The basic unit of meaning in written texts is the word. The basic unit of meaning in film is the shot (the frames produced by one continuous take of the camera, without cuts). Editing—how the shots are organized into a sequence—is what tells the story. The order in which shots follow each other is as important as the shots themselves. For example, imagine a sequence that begins with a shot of a woman and a man embracing. We understand from seeing this that the two people are attracted to each other, maybe even in love. But if this shot then cuts to a shot of someone secretly watching, and if that person is the woman’s husband, we have a whole new layer of information. If the camera then cuts to a close-up of his face and he is smiling rather than looking upset, the film goes in yet another direction.

As an example, we can look at the series of crosscuts that director Philippe Monnier uses in the 1989 adaptation of Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* to contrast the world of the gentle heroine, Lucie Manette, in London, with the violent world of her revolutionary opposite, Madame Defarge, in the streets of Paris. As the tension rises to the storming of the Bastille, the filmmaker cuts between quiet scenes in London drawing rooms and chaotic street scenes in Paris, where hungry mobs fight for a sip of wine spilled on the ground and children are trampled by horses. The scenes with Lucie Manette—whom Dickens called the “golden thread” of the novel—are brightly lit to reflect her role in the novel, while those with Madame Defarge are dark, a visual contrast that uses the language of film to translate the “shadow” images Dickens used repeatedly to describe her in the novel.

For a more in-depth discussion of the concept of mise en scène, a term which refers to everything that is seen on screen, you may want to read Warren Buckland’s *Teach Yourself Film Studies*. See Resources. For more about the film adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities*, see *A Tale of Two Cities: A Masterpiece Teacher’s Guide*.
Learning the Language

Use the Glossary below to help familiarize students with the language of film. The related activities will enable students to practice learning this language and help them understand that a film is not just a story with pictures, but a different medium with its own language. You may want to use several clips or a clip reel to illustrate camera angles, types of shots, etc. If you spend a day or so early on learning the terms and their meanings, the subsequent classroom discussion will be deeper and more insightful.

GLOSSARY

Types of Shots

Long shot
A shot taken from a sufficient distance to show a landscape, a building, or a large crowd.

Medium shot
A shot between a long shot and a close-up that might show two people in full figure or several people from the waist up.

Close-up
A shot of one face or object that fills the screen completely.

Extreme close-up
A shot of a small object or part of a face that fills the screen.

Camera Angles

High angle
The camera looks down at what is being photographed.

Eye level
A shot that approximates human vision; a camera presents an object so that the line between camera and object is parallel to the ground.

Low angle
The camera looks up at what is being photographed.

Camera Movement

Pan
The camera moves horizontally on a fixed base.

Tilt
The camera points up or down from a fixed base.

Boom
The camera moves up or down through space.

Tracking (dolly shot)
The camera moves through space on a wheeled truck (or dolly), but stays on the same plane.

Zoom
Not a camera movement, but a shift in the focal length of the camera lens to give the impression that the camera is getting closer to or farther from an object.

Hand-held
A shot taken with a hand-held camera or deliberately made to appear unstable, shaky or wobbly; often used to suggest either documentary footage, realism, news reporting, or amateur cinematography.

Editing

Cut
The most common type of transition, in which one scene ends and a new one immediately begins.

Fade-out / Fade-in
One scene gradually goes dark and the new one gradually emerges from the darkness.

Dissolve
A gradual transition, in which the end of one scene is superimposed over the beginning of a new one.

Wipe
An optical effect in which one shot appears to “wipe” the preceding one from the screen.

Adaptation from Reel Conversations: Reading Films with Young Adults by Alan B. Teasley and Ann Wilder. Copyright ©1997 by Alan B. Teasley and Ann Wilder. Published by Boynton Cook, Portsmouth, NH. Used by permission of the publishers.
ACTIVITIES

These activities will help students understand the language of film.

Images

1. Practice becoming more aware of images by doing an “image skimming” exercise. Watch a short segment of a film, TV show, or commercial and concentrate on each frame. Then turn it off and list as many specific images as you can remember. Practice describing the shots, building up from two or three until you can get several in a row. You might even have a contest with your classmates to see who can list the most.

2. Cut compelling pictures from magazines, then explain what techniques give them that quality. See if you can find examples that illustrate each kind of camera shot listed in the Glossary. Then take still shots yourself that illustrate each, and upload them to a photo-sharing site or to a class blog, wiki, or website in order to compare them. For example, how might long, medium, close-up, and extreme close-up shots of a school athletic event contrast? What information does each give? What emotions does each evoke?

3. In Reading in the Dark (see Resources), John Golden suggests rolling up a piece of paper into a tube and using it to visualize various shots and camera angles. As you look through the rolled-up paper, you are a director looking through the lens of a camera. For instance, look at someone across the room, framed so that you can see their entire body in a long shot. Then roll up your “camera” more tightly so that you can see only their face in a close-up. You can look at someone from a low angle, with that person standing on a chair and you looking up; a high angle could be demonstrated by standing on a chair and looking down at someone below. You can also use your paper “camera” to pan across the classroom or to tilt from a high to a low angle. After practicing this the “low-tech” way, try doing the same exercise with a video camera or cell phones and posting the results online to create a “video glossary” of the film terms found here.

4. Try the filmmaker’s exercise of sequencing, or storyboarding, ten shots to show a simple activity or event. (See Storyboard.) Your ten shots can illustrate something simple and everyday (for example, someone making dinner or leaving in the morning to go to school), or they can illustrate a more complicated event, such as an interaction between two people. Next, try filming the sequence and see if viewers can break down the scene into the same storybooked shots you originally planned.

Sound

1. Listen to a section of film without viewing the images. As you listen, draw a line graph tracking the intensity of the music, dialogue, and sound effects. Look at your graph. Can you guess what was on the screen? Now turn off the sound and view only the images in this same sequence of film. Make another line graph, this time showing the intensity of the action based on visual cues (what you see on the screen). Compare your two graphs. How similar are they? Finally, watch the sequence with the sound on. How well do the images and the sound work together? What happens when sound is missing? What effects can a filmmaker create by using sound and music?

2. In Seeing and Believing (see Resources), Ellen Krueger and Mary Christel recommend learning to appreciate the role of sound in film by creating a “soundscape.” To do this, they suggest making a one-minute audiotape that tells a story through music, sound effects, background sound, and the use of only five words (the words are optional). You might do this in groups, either using a scene from literature or writing an original short paragraph that describes the actions and mood you want to create. To collect the sounds, you might go around your house, school, or community, or borrow them from sound effects recordings. Let your classmates listen to the audiotape. What images do they bring to mind? Write a story to accompany the sounds.
All Together Now

1. Nothing in a film sequence or in the text of a novel is accidental, but there is much that might escape your notice the first time you view a film or read a story. Build up your observation skills by watching the same segment of a film—perhaps the opening—several times. Make a list of the new things you notice with each viewing. If you are reading the literary version of the same story, try making this same list as you reread the scene several times.

2. How do people’s perceptions and opinions of films vary based on their age, race, gender, and other circumstances? Choose a recent film about which there has been some controversy, and ask as many people as you can about their opinions of the film. (Be sure you reach a diverse group.) What conclusions can you draw? Can you imagine some circumstances in which you might change your own opinion of this film? Describe them.

3. Watch the trailer for a film, keeping detailed notes about what information it gives, what questions it raises, and how it attempts to convince viewers to see the entire film. At the Masterpiece site you can watch trailers for some of the films used in this guide. After watching several, try to script or film a trailer for the film version of a book you’re reading.

4. What are your favorite YouTube videos? Why? Analyzing them might seem silly—especially if they involve pets on skateboards—compared to analyzing films of classics, but thinking critically about media is a skill to practice no matter what you’re watching. Get in the habit of asking yourself “How do I feel watching this, and how did the filmmaker make me feel that way?”—whether you’re applying the question to a television commercial or to Wuthering Heights.

5. Explore the differences between a film review, such as you might read in a newspaper or on a website, and a film analysis. What are the different purposes of each? In an analysis, the central question is, as noted above, How do I feel watching this, and how did the filmmaker make me feel that way? Read some classic examples of film analysis alongside an original review of a film you’re familiar with so you can find the differences, in preparation for writing your own review and/or analysis. (See Resources)

6. A dramatic example of the power of film that students might analyze even if they haven’t read the accompanying text is the final scene in the 2010 film adaptation of The Diary of Anne Frank.

Because the story is familiar to most students, they may need only a bit of background before they view the scene, which imagines the events of August 4, 1944, when the German SS and the Dutch security police find the secret annex and arrest Anne and the others. (Anne’s diary ends on August 1, 1944, so we don’t get to read the scene via her diary.) In the film, it’s an ordinary day in the attic. As the camera picks out each inhabitant, Anne is writing in her diary, and we hear a voice-over of what she’s writing. Suddenly there is a sound from downstairs, and we see first one character look up in alarm and then, in turn, the camera shows all the other characters as they begin to realize that this is the moment they have feared for over two years. So absorbed is she in her writing, Anne realizes the danger last, and the camera plays over her diary as we hear a voice-over deliver her famous line: “In spite of everything, I still believe people are good at heart.” The music begins to pound as Miep Gies bursts in with the police and says, “I couldn’t warn you, Mr. Frank. I’m so sorry.”
ADAPTATION: FROM NOVEL TO FILM

I used to teach Jane Austen, and in a way doing what I do now is a bit like doing those lectures in which I say “This is the way I see it. Don’t you see it like this?” [Now, as a filmmaker] I have got millions of dollars worth of visual aids and actors to prove my point.

—ANDREW DAVIES, SCREENWRITER FOR FOUR MASTERPIECE JANE AUSTEN FILMS*

John Harrington, in his book Film And/Is Art, estimated that a third of all films ever made have been adapted from novels, and, if you included other literary forms, such as drama or short stories, that estimate might well be 65 percent or more. Nearly all of the works of classic literature students study in high school have been adapted for film—some many times and in multiple languages, settings, or formats. For example, there are over 200 film versions of Sherlock Holmes, from a silent film made in 1916 by William Gillette to the reimagined 2010 MASTERPIECE version starring Benedict Cumberbatch. There are nearly 50 film versions of Romeo and Juliet, from a 1900 French version called Roméo et Juliette to the 2011 animated American film Gnomeo and Juliet. But turning a novel into a screenplay is not just a matter of pulling dialogue from the pages of a book.

In novels, we often come to know characters best not through what they say, but through what they are thinking or what is said about them in the narration. A narrator mediates the meaning of what we read through his or her point of view: a coming-of-age story reads much differently if we hear about what happens from the point of view of the person growing up than if we learn about it from that person’s mother, sister, or teacher. But in film, the narrator largely disappears. Sometimes a narrator’s perspective is kept through the use of a voice-over, but generally the director, cast, and crew must rely on the other tools of film to reproduce what was felt, thought, and described on the page.

For example, consider the famous scene from the 1998 film adaptation of Rebecca, where the narrator, a young, naïve girl who has just become the second wife of the wealthy Maxim de Winter, first meets Mrs. Danvers, the forbidding housekeeper of his estate, Manderley. Rebecca's terror and awkwardness, revealed in two pages of first-person narration in the book, are made clear to the viewer in the film simply by the way Mrs. Danvers first emerges from the shadows with just her severe face lit and the way the camera lingers there uncomfortably, making the viewer cringe with the same fear that the new Mrs. de Winter feels.

The major difference between film and books is that visual images stimulate our perceptions directly, while written words can do this indirectly. Reading the word chair requires a kind of mental “translation” that viewing a picture of a chair does not. Film is a more direct sensory experience than reading—besides verbal language, there is also color, movement, and sound.

* See the full interview with Andrew Davies at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/austen/davies.html.
Yet film is also limited: for one thing, there are no time constraints on a novel, while a film usually must compress events into two hours or so. (The 2002 adaptation of *David Copperfield*, for example, compresses a novel that runs to 800 pages into just 180 minutes.) For another, the meaning of a novel is controlled by only one person, the author, while the meaning we get from a film is the result of a collaborative effort by many people. Film also does not allow us the same freedom a novel does—to interact with the plot or characters by imagining them in our minds. For some viewers, this is often the most frustrating aspect of turning a novel into a film.

How faithful to the original written work should a film version strive to be? In *Reading the Movies*, William Costanzo quotes George Bluestone, one of the first critics to study film adaptations of literature. Bluestone believes the filmmaker is an independent artist, “not a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right.” Some agree with Bluestone that a literal translation of a book is often foolish—even, some have said, a “betrayal” of the original work. Instead, the filmmaker has to refashion the spirit of the story with his or her own vision and tools.

There are three main reasons a filmmaker or screenwriter might make major changes in adapting a literary work to film. One is simply the changes demanded by a new medium. Film and literature each have their own tools for manipulating narrative structure. In a novel, a new chapter might take us back to a different time and place in the narrative; in a film, we might go back to that same time and place through the use of a flashback, a crosscut, or a dissolve, such as the various techniques the filmmakers in *Wuthering Heights* employ to keep the complex narrative coherent. Or consider the flashback that begins the 2009 film adaptation of *Little Dorrit*, with the violent birth of Amy Dorrit in the Marshalsea debtors’ prison. In the novel, “little Dorrit” herself isn’t even introduced until some 70 pages in, but in the film version she is clearly the center of the story: the first sound we hear in the film is the sound of her cry as she is born, and in the next several scenes (in which she is a young girl) she is costumed in a robin’s-egg-blue cape, the only bright spot of color in an otherwise gray world.
For other works, the problems of adaptation might be even more difficult. Filmmakers working with *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a contemporary classic that is, after the Bible, one of the most read books in the world, realized they needed to tread lightly if they were to “update” a figure as beloved as Anne. Here is what screenwriter Deborah Moggach says about her decision to make Anne less “sancified” in the *Masterpiece* film version:

> Like many people, I read the diary when I was young. Now, on rereading it, I’m struck by how contemporary Anne is...obsessed with boys, with her looks...rebellious, highly critical of her mother. In other words, a thoroughly modern teenager. In past adaptations, she has been somewhat sanctified—a bit cheeky and talkative maybe, but also over-sweet. I want to be true to the real girl. Sure, she got on people’s nerves; but she was also full of life, her own sternest critic and, above all, she made people laugh."

Sometimes filmmakers make changes to highlight new themes, emphasize different traits in a character, or even try to solve problems they perceive in the original work. Allan Cubitt, who wrote the screenplay for the 2001 film *Anna Karenina*, says in an interview on the *Masterpiece* website that he always felt Vronsky’s suicide attempt was “undermotivated,” and therefore he tried to strengthen the character’s sense of rejection and humiliation in the film version. Similarly, Andrew Davies wanted to add a male perspective to Jane Austen, so he wrote in scenes “that Jane Austen somehow forgot to write.” He explains:

> Actually [Austen] didn’t forget to write them, but she made a rule for herself that she wouldn’t follow the men when the women weren’t there.... [as if] she said, “I’ve never been in a scene where two men had a conversation together without a woman present. I have no idea how they’d be. I’d never write a scene for one man on his own.” But I think that robs us of seeing the male characters as a whole so the scenes that I add are generally scenes for the men doing manly things—going hunting, going shooting, going swimming, riding their horses—so you get a sense that they have a life apart from when they are being polite to the women in the drawing rooms.

Andrew Davies understands all too well the third main reason for a filmmaker to make dramatic changes to an adaptation, and it is one that anyone who works on a *Masterpiece* classic is motivated by: how to make a classic story “new” for a contemporary audience.

For more about screenwriter Andrew Davies’s views on adapting four Jane Austen novels, see “Longing, Betrayal, and Redemption: An Interview with Andrew Davies.” For more about using Jane Austen in the classroom, check out *The Complete Guide to Teaching Jane Austen* and the *Jane Austen Book & Film Club.*

Sometimes this means subtle substitutions or additions of language or props that are more recognizable to a modern audience; at other times it means depicting events or characters in the novel in a way that better fits a modern sensibility.

One of the most striking examples of adaptation, is Steven Moffat’s and Mark Gatiss’s startling 2010 reinvention of Sherlock Holmes. In their series, *Sherlock*, Mr. Holmes is a private detective in today’s London. He has a smart phone and a website, and he enjoys baiting the police via text messages when they aren’t solving a case adroitly enough for his liking. As Mr. Moffat says, Conan Doyle’s stories “lend themselves incredibly well to a modern setting...[they] were never about frock coats and gas light; they’re

about brilliant detection, dreadful villains and blood-curdling crimes—and frankly, to hell with the crinoline. Other detectives have cases, Sherlock Holmes has adventures, and that’s what matters.”* Reimagined, however, the Holmes stories still retain the central idea that any technology—whether it be the early forensic science of the original stories or a Google search in this version—is merely another tool for a detective with a superior mind. (For more about the new Sherlock series, see the Sherlock Book & Film Club.)

To show students how cleverly a literary classic can be brought into the 21st century, you might invite them to read just the first chapter of A Study in Scarlet, the famous story in which Holmes and Watson first meet, and compare it to the parallel scene, about ten minutes into the film, called A Study in Pink. Note, in particular, the brilliant way in which the original famous first line to ex-soldier Watson (“You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive”) has been reworked for today.

ACTIVITIES
Students can use these activities to explore the process of adaptation and the issues surrounding it.

1. How are film and literature alike? How are they different? In a Venn diagram, list as many similarities and differences between these media as you can. Think about the tools each uses to tell a story and to draw in its audience. Consider how each handles aspects of storytelling such as point of view, narrative structure, and time frame. Consider also that a work of literature is created by just one person and a film is created by a team. What conclusions can you draw?

2. What does it mean to be “faithful” to a work of literature—to capture it literally or to capture its spirit? Often in films, screenwriters adapt the plots, change the endings, or shift the emphasis of the literature from which they are working. What do you think about that? What are the rights of the original author? Are there limits to how much something can or should be changed? How might Thornton Wilder feel if the Stage Manager in Our Town were a woman, or if a hip-hop version of the play were created today? What would Jane Austen think of the invented scenes written for the film adaptation of several of her novels? For that matter, how might she feel if she were to read or watch one of the famous “mash-ups” people have recently created, such as Seth Grahame-Smith’s book Pride and Prejudice and Zombies, the YouTube hit “Jane Austen’s Fight Club,” or the 2004 Bollywood film Bride and Prejudice?

3. With a partner, try your own adaptation exercise. Have each of you write a paragraph or two that describes some event, action, or situation (an argument, a car trip, a first date, a fight, etc.). Then switch paragraphs with your partner, and try storyboarding each other’s description. (See Storyboard.) As you storyboard, you may take some liberties with the written paragraphs to make them more cinematic, but try to be true to the spirit of the original idea. Finally, collaborate to film them. For inspiration, you might try some of the plot ideas in Theme/Plot Elements, each inspired by one or more of the MASTERPIECE films in this guide.

4. Open to a random page from any classic novel. How much of the text is dialogue? How much is narration? If you were to cut the narration from the page, what would be lost? What does the narration show you about character, setting, and action that dialogue alone cannot? How would you replace it if you were filming this scene? (You can also reverse this process by taking a scene from a film and rewriting it as narrative description. What is lost? What is gained?) For example, if you are studying *Anna Karenina*, try transforming Levin’s argument with himself about marriage into sound and image for a movie audience. See how screenwriter Allan Cubitt did it in his “Novel to Film” feature on the *Masterpiece* website.

Note: In John Golden’s essay, “Literature into Film (and Back Again): Another Look at an Old Dog” (see Resources), he suggests having students use highlighters as they read a scene from a novel, and color code the portions that are “directly filmable” and those that are only “indirectly filmable.” They then practice “translating” the indirectly filmable to the screen via visualizations.

5. What wonderful adaptations of books do you know of? Which adaptations can you think of that are terrible? Choose an adaptation of a literary work that you believe was not successful, and write an essay in which you analyze why.

6. What written work would you love to adapt for the movies? It could be a children’s book, nonfiction book or essay, novel, short story, or play. Write the “pitch” that you’d deliver to the Hollywood executives who will decide whether or not to “green-light” your idea. Your pitch should be no longer than five minutes if you deliver it orally, or two written pages, and should provide as much detail as possible: Who will star in this film? How faithful will you be to the original text? Where will it be set? What will be some of the film’s highlights? What will the opening sequence be? What music might be used on the soundtrack? You might choose to do this in small groups. Another group can act as the Hollywood executives who will decide which team has the most viable idea.

7. As you read a work of literature that’s more than 50 years old, make a list of the problems a filmmaker might encounter in bringing it to life for a contemporary audience. How could he or she solve them? Then watch the film version and make notes on how the filmmaker addressed the issues you listed. How successful is the result? For example, is it possible to take George Eliot’s lengthy and complex *Middlemarch*, which describes life in a rural English town in the 1830s and touches on everything from political reform to religion to women’s rights to the changes threatened by new technology, and make it entertaining and accessible to an audience today? Make a list of how you might do this, then compare it with Andrew Davies’s 1994 film adaptation. (For more about using *Middlemarch* in the classroom, check out *Teaching Middlemarch*.)

8. In small groups, improvise a critical scene from a literary work you’re studying, then watch how the director chose to bring it to life. What choices do you think he or she made that either enhanced or detracted from the text? For instance, a pivotal scene in *Our Town* is the one in which Emily revisits an “ordinary day” from the grave. How would you stage, direct, or act this scene? How does the filmed version compare to yours? Which do you prefer?

9. Write, storyboard, act out, or film a “missing scene” from a written work or a film. This scene could be something that happens before, during, or after the action of the filmed or written story. It might flesh out a character you are curious about, a theme or
motif already present in the work, or an event alluded to but not depicted. It might also be a sequel or a prequel to the story. For instance, in *The Turn of the Screw*, what do you imagine that a scene involving Miss Jessel, the previous governess who literally haunts the story, might reveal about her time with the children, Miles and Flora? Or, try your hand at creating a missing scene that the *Masterpiece* screenwriters actually created, then compare your version with theirs. For instance, the film version of *Mansfield Park* imagines a conversation between Mary and Henry Crawford as they walk toward Mansfield Park for their first visit. What do you think these worldly and manipulative siblings might say to each other in their way to meeting the eligible sons and daughters of the Bertram family?

**11.** Create your own mash-ups as a homage to, or a parody of, two or more works you love. (You can find a list of examples at [http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/17/a-mash-up-culture-ten-to-watch/](http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/17/a-mash-up-culture-ten-to-watch/), or just search YouTube by putting in the names of authors and titles.) You might ask yourself if mash-ups are legitimate works of art in their own right, or plagiarism. How can you combine two things to make viewers see both in a new way? Why do you think mash-ups, whether of literature and film or of music, comic books, or any other art form, are currently so popular?

**Exploring Screenwriting**

What do screenwriters do when they adapt a literary work for the movies? To address this question with your students, first help them become familiar with the content and format of a screenplay by reading several excerpts. Note that the screenplay is not only dialogue, but also instructions for the actors, set and lighting descriptions, etc. (You can find excerpts from screenplays on the *Masterpiece* website, as well as at [www.simplyscripts.com](http://www.simplyscripts.com).)

Choose a passage from a classic work of literature that has been made into a film. A particularly rich example can be found in a key scene from *Daniel Deronda*, when Daniel meets his mother for the first time and finally learns the truth about his identity. Students can read an excerpt from the book, compare it to the script, and then view the scene on the *Masterpiece* website.

The scene from *Oliver Twist* where Oliver asks for more food, is one of the most famous in all of English literature. As a class, read the original passage from the book (see page 21). Have students use the Storyboard to turn this into a scene of fewer than ten shots, paying particular attention to their choices for costumes, set, and lighting. Then have them compare their work with either the script or the actual scene in the 2002 *Masterpiece* version or the 2009 *Masterpiece* version.
The room in which the boys were fed was a large stone hall, with a copper at one end, out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at mealtimes. Of this festive composition each boy had one porringer, and no more—except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper, with such eager eyes, as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon.

Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months: at last they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn’t been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cookshop), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel per diem, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye; and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook’s uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered each other, and winked at Oliver, while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:

“Please, sir, I want some more.”

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

“What!” said the master at length, in a faint voice.

“Please, sir,” replied Oliver, “I want some more.”

The master aimed a blow at Oliver’s head with the ladle; pinioned him in his arms; and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

You might also choose to screen this *Oliver Twist* scene alongside the scene early in *Jane Eyre* where Jane first comes to the Lowood School. Students will find a vast number of similarities, from plot, character, and conflict parallels to the theatrical elements of costume, lighting, props, and the use of camera angles used to bring both famous literary scenes alive. For more in-depth activities and explorations of screenwriting, see the Resources.
LITERARY ELEMENTS

Characterization

...Modernizing and making [the story] fresh was really about thinking about the characters and why they did what they did, why they said what they said, why they loved who they loved, why they hated who they hated.

—SARAH PHELPS, WRITER FOR OLIVER TWIST

In a film, how do we get to know a character? We register who he or she is, often without even realizing it, by taking in close-ups of the actor’s face, his or her facial expressions, or the music playing in the background. Other elements, such as the character’s age, size, dress, speech, how he or she moves, etc., also influence our understanding. We may perceive on first viewing that a character is dangerous by the harsh or darkened lighting on the actor’s face, by the reaction shot that shows another character’s fear or uncertainty, and by the ominous sounds on the soundtrack.

Simple things like camera angles or movement can telegraph a great deal about a character’s feelings and personality. The first time young David is alone with his evil new stepfather in David Copperfield, the camera shoots Mr. Murdstone from a low angle so we see from David’s point of view what a huge, threatening presence he is. Similarly, when Jane Eyre first meets Mr. Brocklehurst, the clergyman who will take her to Lowood, he is shot from a low angle to emphasize his power over her. In Goodbye, Mr. Chips, the camerawork highlights Mr. Chips’s nervousness and insecurity as a new teacher by posing him against the grandeur of the buildings, spying on him through windows, and watching him from behind. In Bleak House, the inventive use of a perceptual distortion technique called a dolly zoom makes us feel what Esther Summerson feels as, from her point of view, we seem to “zoom” toward the terrible Miss Barbary, who seems to get larger as she berates the young girl.

Similarly, costume choices can give us far more information than we’re probably aware of. The bright green, inappropriately lavish hat the filmmakers give Mrs. Van Damn when she first comes to live in the tiny, dark attic in The Diary of Anne Frank signals the brash presence she’ll have in the film. In the 2009 film adaptation of Emma, the first words we hear in the opening voice-over are: “Emma Woodhouse was born with the sun shining”—a version of the famous original first line—and for the rest of the film Emma is nearly always seen in dresses of red, yellow, pink, and orange hues, costumes that make her ebullient, headstrong personality stand out even more.

* In “A New Twist on Oliver Twist” feature on the DVD.
ACTIVITIES

Use the activities below to understand how characters are portrayed on the page and in film.

1. Choose a major character in a film to analyze as you watch. Notice the things you would notice in a novel—this person’s behavior, actions, gestures, appearance, dialogue, and feelings, and how other characters react to him or her. But notice also what the language of film tells you about this person: How is he or she lit? What is the character wearing? How does the director physically situate this person in relation to other characters? Keep a chart in which you take notes on these aspects and any others that occur to you as you watch. For example, because we watch the main character in *David Copperfield* grow up over the course of the film, first Daniel Radcliffe and then Ciaran McMenamin must portray David at different ages. See if you can identify the many ways the director managed to keep a sense of continuity of character regardless of these changes. Or keep track of how contrasts in characters play off each other. In *Sense and Sensibility*, the filmmakers use all the tools at their disposal to contrast the sisters Elinor and Marianne, who represent, respectively, the “sense” and “sensibility” of the title.

2. What does the way a character is introduced for the first time in a film tell us about who that person is? Our first meeting with the 21st-century Sherlock Holmes in *Sherlock* starts with the sound of a zipper in darkness, so that when we first see him, we realize the camera is looking up at his avid face as if from inside a body bag in a morgue. The shot speaks volumes about a man so thrilled by “the science of deduction” that he exclaims, “Four serial suicides! Ah…it’s Christmas!”

3. Although filmed in a much more traditional style, the first several shots in *Silas Marner* give us a similar degree of information about the main character, played by Ben Kingsley. With long and unwavering close-ups on his face as he works and sings in church, the camera seems to scrutinize and judge him, preparing us for the key event that sets the stage for the rest of plot: Silas is accused, falsely, of theft and cast out of his Calvinist community. Similarly, in another George Eliot work, *Adam Bede*, the first two scenes introduce Hetty Sorrell in a way that telescopes the plot of the entire novel: our first view of a haggard woman in a courtroom as she is sentenced to death for the murder of her child is followed by a scene in her earlier life as, in a close-up of her arresting face and long wavy hair, she slowly eats a ripe berry. Compare how a character is introduced in a film with his or her introduction in a literary work. What are the differences? Which do you think is stronger?

4. Test how well an actor makes clear what is going on in the mind of his or her character by writing the interior monologue of this character during a scene in which this person is quiet. For example, you might watch the famous scenes toward the end of *Anna Karenina* as Anna’s thoughts race madly and she goes to the station to find Count Vronsky, just before she throws herself under the train. Try to make your version of her internal thoughts match the way the director uses tilting camera angles in these scenes to show how “off kilter” she is. Next, read your monologue aloud with the sound turned
down during the scene. Or flip this exercise, and take an internal monologue from a work of literature and read it aloud while a partner tries to convey these feelings through action.

5. Bring character analysis into the 21st century and learn about the art of interior monologue at the same time: Choose a major character from one of the MASTERPIECE films, select a picture and a username of some kind to represent him or her, then create a Twitter account from which you tweet the character’s “thoughts.” For instance, a great deal of the growth of the main character in Emma takes place through internal monologue as she wrestles with her own nature and feelings. Take a scene from the book (for example, chapter 16, a short chapter that is almost entirely interior monologue) and try to convert Emma’s thoughts into tweets written in contemporary language. Someone else in the class might do the same for other characters in the novel, such as Mr. Knightley, Harriet, or Mr. Elton. Finally, view the MASTERPIECE version of the scene to see how the filmmakers handled it. (For an example of how this might be done, you might check out SuchTweetSorrow, a Twitter project by the Royal Shakespeare Company in which six characters tweet the story of Romeo and Juliet over five weeks.)

6. In small groups, cast the major characters in a literary work you are reading by making a list of important traits for each one, then selecting a well-known actor who could portray those traits successfully. Who, in your opinion, would be hopelessly miscast in these roles? Now view a film version. What do you and/or your group think of the casting choices that were actually made? Why?

7. How does interesting casting challenge the way we see classic roles? For instance, Cokey Giedroye, director of the 2009 film version of Oliver Twist, purposely used an actor for Oliver who didn’t speak “like he’s been to Eton,” unlike the Olivers of previous productions. Writer Sarah Phelps wanted a “black or mixed-race Nancy,” since many period dramas have all-white casts that are not always true to the era. In what ways might your casting choices for a classic work help an audience see it anew? 

8. One hallmark of classic literature is that the characters seem deeply human and multifaceted—the very opposite of “stock” characters. Yet the most accomplished actors manage to show this depth in subtle ways. For example, Anne Frank’s mother, played by Tamsin Greig in The Diary of Anne Frank, has relatively few lines in the film, yet looms as a tragic presence because the actress is able to communicate so much through the character’s posture, facial expressions, and imploring eyes. Which characters in the film you are viewing are the most complex? Why? How does the filmmaker show this complexity?
9. How do filmmakers bring to life even minor characters? In an interview, *David Copperfield* director Simon Curtis commented on the joys of casting this film: “Every single character in Dickens has something about him or her that’s very actable. Even if it’s just a one-line part, every character has a back story and a life.” Try to imagine a “back story and a life” for one of the vivid secondary characters in a novel you are reading by creating a mock social networking page for him or her. Who would his or her “friends” be? What interests would the character advertise? What would a typical “status update” be? Then try acting this role. How does imagining a back story help bring this character to life?

10. Write, role-play, or film a mock interview with a character from a book in which this person speaks about how he or she was portrayed in the film. How does this person feel about the actor who was cast? The way he or she was costumed? How important lines were delivered? What about aspects of the book that were cut? For instance, how might the “real” Aunt Betsey Trotwood from *David Copperfield* feel about her portrayal by Maggie Smith?

11. A series of theater exercises in *Our Town: A Companion Guide for Teachers* takes actors from first read-through to rehearsal and opening night, with interesting suggestions for how to experiment with tone and staging to bring surprise to character interpretation. Adapt these for any other classic drama, or to experiment with a Reader’s Theater version of a scene from any literary work.

12. Actor Ian McKellen says, in a video interview about playing the nasty Mr. Creakle in *David Copperfield*, “Often the villains are the best part.” And no one writes villains more deliciously than Dickens. Take, for instance, Mr. Quilp from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, described by Dickens as ...

…an elderly man of remarkably hard features and forbidding aspect, and so low in stature as to be quite a dwarf, though his head and face were large enough for the body of a giant. His black eyes were restless, sly, and cunning;...and his complexion was one of that kind which never looks clean or wholesome. But what added most to the grotesque expression of his face, was a ghastly smile, which...constantly revealed the few discoloured fangs that were yet scattered in his mouth, and gave him the aspect of a panting dog. His dress consisted of a large high-crowned hat, a worn dark suit, a pair of capacious shoes, and a dirty white neckerchief sufficiently limp and crumpled to disclose the greater portion of his wiry throat. Such hair as he had, was of a grizzled black, cut short and straight upon his temples, and hanging in a frowzy fringe about his ears. His hands...were very dirty; his finger-nails were crooked, long, and yellow.

How would you bring this description to life? How does the filmmaker do it? How, especially, are Quilp’s odd oral fixations portrayed?

13. Certain universal character “types” are instantly recognizable, no matter what century or culture they appear in—the comically nervous father in *Emma*, the social-climbing Mrs. Van Hopper in *Rebecca*, the inspiring yet unorthodox teacher in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, the womanizer Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park*. What characters in classic works can you name who would be instantly recognizable to a 21st-century audience because they are a “type” that is universal? In what other films or books do versions of these types appear?
Themes, Motifs, & Symbols

In most of the literature presented in Masterpiece productions, the “big” themes—love, honor, betrayal, family, evil, revenge, death, deception, class, race, and gender—are explored. Filmmakers choose to make films of these works, many of which are hundreds of years old, because they believe that they still have relevance for a contemporary audience. As Allan Cubitt, screenwriter of Anna Karenina, put it in an interview, “I wanted to do something that had the capacity to speak directly to a modern audience about their lives, their love affairs, or their difficult marriages, and not to make a piece that is enjoyable simply because it shows how people used to live.”

Film must bring home a theme in myriad small, subtle ways, and everything from the lighting to the makeup must enhance it. For example, The Mill on the Floss is, in many ways, the story of “twos”—of shifting alliances and pairings in a rural English village. The director emphasizes this so subtly that we barely notice it, but if you were to make a list of how many scenes feature two people alone, lit and staged to emphasize their particular relationship, you would find such scenes occur throughout the film.

Directors are always looking for an image that can be a metaphor for a theme—something dramatic and visual that will bring home the overall message, sometimes on a level that may not even register consciously with viewers. When this image is repeated, it becomes a motif or symbol in the film that reminds the viewers of an important idea. Captive birds are used as a visual symbol to show the hold General Tilney has over his daughter and sons in Northanger Abbey. In Wuthering Heights, there are frequent shots of windows, and of people looking in at others from outside or looking out from within. This motif strengthens the theme of being inside, loved, part of a family (like Cathy) versus being outside, abandoned, an orphan (like Heathcliff). The film version of Little Dorrit emphasizes the symbolic images of Arthur Clennam’s button and the pocket watch his father gave him by showing what they represent to different characters. The first line of the film of Middlemarch is “Look: the future,” while the political slogan “Progress and Reform” is repeated regularly, and Lydgate and Dorothea—the main characters, and both agents of “progress and reform”—are initially linked by scenes in which each is shown drawing plans for new buildings that will embody their own reform ideas. In Jane Eyre, the motif of drawing and painting—and its relationship to Jane’s imagination and place in the world—is emphasized literally from the unexpected image that opens the film to the satisfying scene that closes it. Each of these is an example of meaningful repetition that we might not notice if we are not aware of how filmmakers use thematic patterns.
**ACTIVITIES**

These activities can help students understand the interrelated concepts of theme, symbol and motif as they play out both film and literature.

1. The opening scenes in both film and literature are extremely important in establishing theme. After you have read a work or watched a film, talk about some of the important themes in it, then go back and revisit the opening. In how many ways did the author or filmmaker establish these themes right from the start? What do you notice now that you didn’t notice the first time? For example, see the first four minutes and fifteen seconds of Andrew Davies’s arresting version of *Sense and Sensibility*, examined in detail in The Language of Film (see page 9).

What do you think the filmmaker was trying to say by doing this? Don’t forget to note repetitious sounds as well. For example, the role of sound from the outside world in *The Diary of Anne Frank* is very important: though viewers will certainly notice the bombs that go off, they may miss the fact that knocks on the door function throughout as terrifying reminders of what is unknown about what the outside world might bring. In *The Turn of the Screw*, the sound of the two children whispering is repeated multiple times, and each time, as the story rises to its dramatic conclusion, it seems less innocent.

2. Notice as you watch a film how certain images, objects, colors, scenes, or sounds are repeated often or are lingered over by the camera. If you begin to notice repetition of any kind, make a list of when and how you see it as you continue to watch. What do you think the filmmaker was trying to say by doing this? Don’t forget to note repetitious sounds as well. For example, the role of sound from the outside world in *The Diary of Anne Frank* is very important: though viewers will certainly notice the bombs that go off, they may miss the fact that knocks on the door function throughout as terrifying reminders of what is unknown about what the outside world might bring. In *The Turn of the Screw*, the sound of the two children whispering is repeated multiple times, and each time, as the story rises to its dramatic conclusion, it seems less innocent.

3. Play filmmaker. What visual image or images might you choose to represent a theme in a literary work you are currently reading? If you like, make a montage of these images with a video camera. For instance, *The Old Curiosity Shop* is a kind of fairy tale made vivid by dramatic contrasts, especially between innocent youth and corrupt age. Dickens said about writing the book, “I had it always in my fancy to surround the lonely figure of a child with grotesque and wild but not impossible companions....” How does the film constantly contrast the “innocent face and pure intentions” of Little Nell with the “strange,” “uncongenial,” or “grim”?

5. Write the script for or role-play a talk show on a theme common to one or more works you have been studying. “Invite” characters, authors, filmmakers, actors, etc. to weigh in on the topic.

6. List five details from a film that show a particular theme. Then list five from the same literary work, or from a work that shares the same theme. (These details can include props, dialogue, description, music, some aspect of setting, etc.) Which details work best to convey the theme for you? Why?

7. Take the bare bones of the premise, plot, or theme of a novel or film and brainstorm a list of other stories that share it. Why do you think this is such an enduring premise? For example, the premise “Someone new comes to stay in an isolated place with which legends and mysteries are associated. This person’s life and/or sanity is threatened” could fit many films of the mystery, suspense, or horror genres, including Rebecca and The Turn of the Screw.

8. Make connections between a literary work or film and the “real world.” Bring several newspapers to class and find as many parallels and connections with the story as you can. Use both images and words, and find thematic connections as well as connections to character, setting, mood, and genre. For example, you might take Anne Frank’s contention that “In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart” and find evidence for or against that contention in a daily edition of a national newspaper.

9. Make a movie poster or print ad for a book or film in which something important about its theme is clear, but which is also eye-catching and appealing. You might also choose one significant line from the film or novel to use in your ad. You could also create a title sequence for your film that telegraphs important information about it. Two interesting but very different examples from the MASTERPIECE collection are: a) the title sequences that begin the Sherlock series, which shows a speeded-up and miniaturized view of London and its traffic, cut with “detecting” images, such as fluid under a microscope; and b) the title sequence for A Tale of Two Cities, which has black-and-white revolutionary images with a soundtrack of martial music. How important on screen are opening design elements such as the choice of the font, the color of the letters, the movement of the title sequence, and other aspects?

FAMOUS FIRST LINES

How are the famous first lines, below, represented in each of the MASTERPIECE films that re-envision the literary work they’re from? In some cases, the lines are never literally said but are simply illustrated throughout; in other cases, as in the famous first line from A Tale of Two Cities, they are used surprisingly.

- **It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.** (A Tale of Two Cities)
- **Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.** (Anna Karenina)
- **Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.** (David Copperfield)
- **Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.** (Emma)
- **There was no possibility of taking a walk that day.** (Jane Eyre)

You might use these lines as jumping-off points for your own screenplays or films, or find other works of literature or film that also illustrate them.
Setting

Although setting is often the aspect of narrative that viewers take most for granted, a great deal of painstaking work goes into creating sets, props, costumes, and makeup that are both historically accurate and dramatic. We can see that by looking at two films in particular: *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Our Town*.

In *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the secret annex in which the two families live for two years is so important to the plot that it almost functions as another character. Not only did the set designers have to get the period details right and remain faithful to both the descriptions in Anne’s diary and to the physical place itself (which visitors can still see today), but they also had to capture the metaphorical conflicts of the physical space: for the inhabitants, it was both a blessed refuge and a claustrophobic prison. Time and again, for instance, the filmmakers show us a low-angle shot of the narrow stairs, hidden behind a bookcase, that lead up to where the families hide. This shot emphasizes the flimsy distance between the refugees and the world that would persecute them, but it also shows how physically inadequate the space was for eight people. Similarly, many of the shots on the main floors of the attic are through windows covered in a pretty but transparent lace, emphasizing how little privacy the inhabitants had, but how the space was still home. The scenes between Peter and Anne under the eaves at the very top of the house are shot to give viewers a feeling of the comparative “breathing room” the teenagers found there.

By contrast, *Our Town*, famously, a play for which Thornton Wilder’s stage directions simply say: “No curtain. No scenery. The audience, arriving, sees an empty stage in half-light.” The bareness of the stage and the simplicity of the costumes and props serve to enhance his notion that this is a play about universal themes—those things, Wilder said, that “repeat and repeat and repeat in the lives of millions.” Indeed, Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward said they were originally interested in being involved in the play soon after 9/11, and they thought that simplicity would resonate particularly well.

**ACTIVITIES**

Use these exercises to discover just how much setting can reveal.

1. What does a filmmaker’s use of setting say about the people and the society the story depicts? To investigate, you might team up with a history class to watch a film and make a long list of everything you can find that depicts a particular setting or milieu (for instance, working-class life in Victorian England). Include social, cultural, political, and historical aspects—the details of everyday life, work, class, gender, race, politics, customs, styles, leisure-time activities, inventions, famous people, sport, food, etc.—that define a time and place. Then form small groups and make observations from this list of details about the culture and values of the people who lived in this time and place. What was important to them? What connoted status? What were the society’s taboos? Which groups had power? Which groups didn’t? What other conclusions can you draw? Finally, think about how we should judge a film like this that depicts a time and place different from our own: Should we judge it by today’s standards or try to view it with the mindset of the period about which it was made?
2. Before you see a film, draw or create a diorama of a historical aspect that must be gotten absolutely right. If you have online access, you may want to use online tools like Glogster to create a multimedia poster or Museum Box to bring the diorama into the 21st century. You will have to research the item first. For example, you might design the parlor of a house in a Jane Austen novel, or the costume that a young woman might have worn to the ball in *Anna Karenina*. Now watch the film to see how the set or costume designer interpreted this same aspect.

3. Play with the idea of setting, whether to confront a problem in the original text, to emphasize the symbolic role of place, or to find a new setting that highlights some of the themes and ideas in an interesting way. In *Wuthering Heights* the filmmakers visually contrast the wild, natural world in which Heathcliff is at ease with the staid parlor life led by Edgar and Isabella Linton. For instance, Heathcliff emerges from emerald green hedges to look through the windows of the Grange and spy on Cathy and the Lintons in a parlor in which nearly every piece of furniture is white. If you were making a film of a work you are currently reading, or if you were making a new version of a film you have recently seen, consider how the significance of certain settings could be emphasized. Where else could the story be set? Why and how would that setting work? What would have to be adapted? What do you think of famous reworkings of classic texts like *Emma* transplanted to southern California in the 1990s in *Clueless*?

4. View various film treatments of the same setting and compare and contrast them. For instance, you could pair *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* with other stories of private boys’ schools (*The Emperor’s Club*, *Dead Poets Society* and so on), or look at the London of one of the Dickens films and that of the modern-day *Sherlock*. Make a list of several images that appear in both and that seem to represent this time and place in many films. What do you think these images stand for?

5. Choose a film or work of literature for which setting is as important as it is in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Describe the setting as if it were a person. What traits does it have? Which character in the story does it most resemble? How does it highlight the themes of the story?

6. Teaming up with a history class, choose a historical topic that is significant to a film or literary work you are studying (for example, child labor in *David Copperfield*, the changes the railroad brought to rural communities in *Middlemarch*, or World War I in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*). Imagine you are a history consultant to the film. Write a memo to the director in which you recommend ways to make the portrayal of this topic realistic or detailed. If you’ve already seen the film, write a review that analyzes the historical issues or accuracy of this topic.

7. “Establishing” shots often go unnoticed by viewers but are key elements of the plot, especially in the kind of sprawling epics featured in *Masterpiece* films and in many of the Austen and Dickens novels. Often these shots are of the great (or humble) homes in which the characters live.
Choose a house to track throughout an Austen or Dickens film to see how the filmmaker portrays the grounds and house. In what types of weather is it often shown? What do its décor, upkeep, and degree of grandness tell you about the social status and personalities of its inhabitants? How?

An interesting fact students might enjoy knowing is that, in order to save both time and money, the filmmakers of Bleak House decided to base themselves at one house for shooting, and production designer Simon Elliott then transformed its interior so that “you could pass from room to room, moving seamlessly from Chesney Wold to Bleak House to Tulkinghorn’s office and Kenge’s chambers. Upstairs in the eaves, the garrets above Krook’s shop were taking shape. Here Miss Flite and her birds would live and Nemo would die.” (For more Production Notes, go to http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/bleakhouse/notes.html.)

Authorial: This point of view cannot be attributed to any one character, but is provided by the director (or screenwriter) giving the audience information directly. For instance, in the example above, we might see a character looking around everywhere but behind him, then see a huge elephant running towards him, then cut back to the man, who is completely unaware of what is happening. Another way to establish this would be a high angle shot of the man looking vulnerable and helpless. In this way the director calls attention to an object or person to achieve a particular purpose.

Neutral: The far majority of shots are neutral, where no particular point of view is discernible. Eye-level shots, medium shots, and even lighting mark these shots. *

In film, point of view can shift quickly. We might begin looking at a scene of empty fields as a disinterested observer. The camera might then show us a little girl standing in this field, and through the use of an eye-line match (a shot of a person, followed by a shot of something he or she is looking at, followed by a shot of his or her reaction), we can see that she sees a venomous snake. We then see the reaction of the child as the snake comes closer and she cries out. Suddenly, the film will cut to a shot of her father as he hears her cry out and comes running. In those few frames we have seen from three points of view: omniscient observer, little girl, and father.

Consider a key scene early in Mansfield Park where the main characters first meet one another. It is solely through the use of the eye-line match that this scene sets up tensions that will be played out for the rest of the film. In it, the worldly London siblings, Mary and Henry Crawford, first meet Fanny and the Bertram siblings at their country home. As polite parlor conversation swirls around the group, we see the upright Edmund, who is to be a clergyman, notice Mary Crawford’s shapely leg—and then we see Fanny, his cousin who has been in love with Edmund all her life, notice him notice it. We then see Henry Crawford look flirtatiously at Maria, Edmund’s older, betrothed sister, who is sitting demurely next to her fiancé. The

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* Adapted from Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom by John Golden, copyright 2001 by the National Council of Teachers of English. (www.ncte.org) Reprinted with permission.
camera next cuts to Maria, looking brazenly back—and Henry returning her glance. Next the camera rests on Julia, Maria’s eligible sister who might have expected Henry’s interest for herself, as she intercepts the looks between the two. A few minutes later, as the Bertram siblings’ mother prattles on about Maria’s upcoming wedding, we see Maria and Henry exchange another significant look, but this time the camera shows Maria’s fiancé noticing it. In a classroom, this scene could be slowed down and discussed both when it first appears and again at the end of the film when all the conflicts revealed here have been played out.

Because the illusion of reality is so strong in movies, filmmakers have invented techniques to inform viewers when the point of view changes. Besides the eye-line match, there are techniques such as the voice-over, the flashback, slow motion, distorting lenses, and even special sound effects to tell us we are in a character’s imagination, not reality. In Northanger Abbey, the camera circles, the images blur, and the music begins to pound when we enter Catherine’s fantasies. In Wuthering Heights, we depend on camerawork to let us know that Heathcliff has lost his mind: When he looks into Cathy’s grave, an eye-line match lets us know he sees the skeleton inside as the still-alive young woman he once loved.

An interesting example of the power of point of view can be seen in the 2008 film version of Jane Austen’s Persuasion. The entire film focuses on Anne Elliot, and we see all the characters and events from her point of view. Anne was forced by her family to give up the man she loved eight years earlier, and the palpable sense of her loneliness and loss pervades the entire film. If you were to count the shots of her alone, and specifically of her face in close-up, they would no doubt make up much of the film—a subtlety that works on viewers as they watch, but of which they may not consciously be aware. Any fan of Jane Austen will be able to guess, however, how the film ends: If most of the shots show Anne alone, what do you predict the final shot will feature?

ACTIVITIES

Use these activities to experiment with the use of point of view.

1. Choose a key scene in a film and identify the point, or points, of view from which the action is shown. From what other point of view could this scene be told? How could the director or screenwriter make sure the viewer sees this different point of view? Storyboard, film, or write a script to depict this.

2. Experiment with point of view after you have viewed the film version of a literary work you have not read. Choose any character, and write a diary entry as if you were that person in the film. Read it aloud and have your classmates guess who is writing and at what point in the story.

3. In literature, a narrator can give the reader information about what a character is really thinking, even if that character is silent or is saying something entirely different. In a film, the actors must usually make these emotions clear to the viewer without the help of any “asides.” You might team up with a drama class to take a critical scene from a work of literature in which the author uses narration to explain how a character feels and try to make these feelings clear solely through acting. Have a partner watch and tell you what the character seemed to be thinking.
**Tone & Mood**

From the first scene in *The Turn of the Screw*, the filmmakers manage to imply that there is something insidious just below the sunny surface of the action. Critics have long found Henry James’s novella ambiguous. (Are there really ghosts in the house, or is the governess mad?) The director of this film played with both of these notions by shooting many of the scenes so that the camera seems to watch this governess in a way that could imply either possibility. Throughout, with a combination of eerie lighting, music, and camera angles, the director creates a mood that leaves the viewer unsettled and frightened.

However, directors also use their tools to bring comic relief. The Dickens films, like the Dickens novels, provide myriad examples of this. At one of the lowest moments in *David Copperfield*, as David toils in the blacking factory, we hear the horrible sounds of other children working and moaning in the background. But then the music changes and the light brightens, and we get our first glimpse of Mr. Micawber, who will become David’s great friend. In stories like this, where tragedy and comedy constantly play off each other, all the elements of filmmaking must work together to manipulate the viewer’s emotions.

**ACTIVITIES**

Analyze how mood and tone are created in film with these activities.

1. How are different moods created in film? How does a director make us feel suspense? Sympathy and pathos? Choose a strong emotion that you experience while reading or viewing a story and list all the ways you can find through which the emotion is created. Now watch or read a version of this same story in another medium. How is this same emotion elicited in this medium?

2. Choose a scene or chapter from the novel and create a soundtrack of songs or music that would enhance the mood of that section. What do you think, for instance, of the choice of Coldplay’s song “Trouble” as background for this *montage* of four *Masterpiece* Dickens adaptations? How would a different music choice change the information you get from this trailer?

3. The use of dramatic music in *Northanger Abbey* is so important to the mood of the film that the entire meaning might change if it were replaced with something upbeat and light. Suggest a scene in a film you are viewing in which the music is very important, then suggest how the scene could be entirely reinterpreted if a different kind of music were playing.

4. Filmmakers use color and lighting very deliberately to enhance mood or to be symbolic. What particular uses of color (or lack of color) do you remember from the film you are watching? How did it affect you? What “message” do specific colors seem to carry? How, for instance, does the contrast between the gray palette of Oliver Twist’s workhouse life and the color-rich scenes in Fagin’s lair work to bring to life what Tom Hardy, the actor who plays Bill Sikes, describes in an interview on the DVD as “Taxi Driver mixed with Disney...Silly, then violent, then silly”?
WRAP UP

Use the following questions, activity, and theme/plot elements to conclude your study of a particular film or of film as a genre.

After-Viewing Questions*

1. What were the most memorable or striking images in this film?
2. What images or scenes are you still unsure how to interpret?
3. Look back at your Viewing Logs. What patterns can you see there?
4. How did your emotional reactions change as you watched?
5. What are all the things you can think of that this film seems to be about? Make a list.
6. How would you review this film?
7. What changes did you notice in the film as you watched?
8. What conflicts did you notice as you watched?
9. Did this film remind you of other stories you have read or movies you have seen? Which ones? Why?
10. In your opinion, is this film neutral or does it clearly take a particular position on an issue?

*Adaptation from *Reel Conversations: Reading Films with Young Adults* by Alan B. Teasley and Ann Wilder. Copyright ©1997 by Alan B. Teasley and Ann Wilder. Published by Boynton Cook, Portsmouth, NH. Used by permission of the publishers.

Film Scavenger Hunt

To help students integrate what they have learned, create a “scavenger hunt” through a film they are about to watch—a checklist of significant aspects of the film they have to find as they watch. This “hunt” should be as open ended as possible so there is room for interpretation: “Find a scene that shows the power relationship between two major characters,” or “Find an image that is repeated more than twice. Why do you think this is?” The scavenger hunt could also include specific questions about the use of camera angles (“What long shots do you remember from this film?”) or other aspects of filmmaking (“Record one thing you notice about the use of color, costumes, lighting, etc. in this film.”). These can then be used as starting points to discuss what students saw in the film.

HENRY TILNEY (J.J. FEILD) AND CATHERINE MORLAND (FELICITY JONES) IN NORTHANGER ABBEY
Theme/Plot Elements

Consider using Masterpiece titles as companion texts to teach some of the most common themes in classic literature, such as family relationships, coming of age, search for identity, love and marriage, corruption and evil, and the role of class, race, and gender in society. You might show the whole film or just excerpts with interesting parallels. Visit the Masterpiece website for additional titles. (See also About the Films.)

For instance, if you are reading *Pride and Prejudice* together as a class, you could show *Northanger Abbey* to look at similarities in Austen’s characters and themes. You could also show excerpts from *The Mill on the Floss*, another English classic by a woman writer, to draw parallels between the portrayal of women’s roles and a woman’s search for identity. Or, if your aim is to look at class in English society while reading *Pride and Prejudice*, you could show part of a film depicting Victorian-era English society, such as *David Copperfield*.

Another approach is to use a key plot point or conflict that is central to one or more Masterpiece films featured in the guide. These can be used as jumping-off points for students to create their own scenes, scripts, storyboards, films, or improvisations. They can also be used to brainstorm other works of film or literature that feature similar scenes, and then compare the two. As the examples below show, you will be able to find many different combinations of films and plot lines. You may want to discover additional ideas as an exercise or assignment with your students.

- A vulnerable child is terrified by an adult who has power over him or her. (*David Copperfield*)
- A child stands up to an adult who is mistreating him or her. (*Oliver Twist*)
- A poor relation must depend on the kindness of family. (*Mansfield Park*)
- A character under pressure slowly goes mad. (*Anna Karenina*)
- A woman ponders whether or not she is in love—and what love is. (*Emma*)
- A man and a woman from different social worlds have a forbidden romance. (*Jane Eyre*)
- Two people who are in love are kept apart by family complications. (*Wuthering Heights*)
- A child is very different than the rest of his/her family and struggles to be true to self and break free as he/she grows up. (*Persuasion*)
- A teenager chafes against her parents’ rules. (*The Diary of Anne Frank*)
- A stranger comes to a provincial place with new ideas and threatens the status quo. (*Middlemarch*)
- A family is challenged by the upheavals of the outside world. (*A Tale of Two Cities*)
STORYBOARD

Use this storyboarding framework to recast the words from a literary text into image and sound. Feel free to adapt the prompts below to suit your particular text or aim.

Adapted from Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom by John Golden, copyright 2001 by the National Council of Teachers of English (www.ncte.org). Reprinted with permission.

Image:

Sound:

(optional) Lines from the text that gave you this idea:

_________________________________________________________________________

Image:

Sound:

(optional) Lines from the text that gave you this idea:

_________________________________________________________________________

Image:

Sound:

(optional) Lines from the text that gave you this idea:

_________________________________________________________________________

Image:

Sound:

(optional) Lines from the text that gave you this idea:

_________________________________________________________________________
**VIEWING LOG**

Below is a sample viewing log that you can keep as you watch a film, to track both literary and cinematic details and to make predictions about what will happen. Feel free to adapt the prompts to suit your particular film or aim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you noticed (cinematic/literary characteristics):</th>
<th>Your reaction:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>images, sounds, effective scenes, dialogue, lighting, costumes, mood, aspects of character, plot, theme, conflicts, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictions:</th>
<th>Reasons for predictions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**What you noticed** and **Predictions** are key components of the viewing log. They help you track and remember details about the film as you watch it. **Your reaction** is a space for you to reflect on what you’ve noticed and what predictions you’ve made.

**Reasons for predictions** is where you can explain why you made your predictions. This could include insights from the **What you noticed** section or other thoughts that influence your prediction.
Each of the films below is available from ShopPBS.org. In some cases you may find that the film is available as part of an author set (availability of films may change). The date listed is when the film first aired on MASTERPIECE.

**About the films**

Adam Bede (1992)
(no website available)
Director: Giles Foster
Adapted by: Maggie Wadey
Starring: Iain Glen, Patsy Kensit, Susannah Harker

Anna Karenina (2002)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/anna/
Director: David Blair
Adapted by: Allan Cubitt
Starring: Helen McCrory, Kevin McKidd, Stephen Dillane

Bleak House (2006)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/bleakhouse/
Directors: Justin Chadwick, Susanna White
Screenplay: Andrew Davies
Starring: Gillian Anderson, Charles Dance

Daniel Deronda (2003)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/deronda/index.html
Director: Tom Hooper
Adapted by: Andrew Davies
Starring: Hugh Dancy, Hugh Bonneville, Romola Garai

David Copperfield (2000)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/copperfield/
Director: Simon Curtis
Screenplay: Adrian Hodges
Starring: Maggie Smith, Bob Hoskins, Daniel Radcliffe

The Diary of Anne Frank (2010)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/annefrank/
Director: Tom Jones
Adapted by: Deborah Moggach
Starring: Ellie Kendrick, Tamsin Grieg, Iain Glen

Emma (2010)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/emma/
Director: Jim O’Hanlon
Written by: Sandy Welch
Starring: Romola Garai, Jonny Lee Miller, Michael Gambon

Goodbye, Mr. Chips (2003)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/mrchips/
Director: Stuart Orne
Writers: Brian Finch, Frank Delaney
Starring: Martin Clunes, Victoria Hamilton

Jane Eyre (2007)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/janeeyre/
Director: Susanna White
Adapted by: Sandy Welch
Starring: Toby Stephens, Ruth Wilson, Francesca Annis

Little Dorrit (2009)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/littledorrit/
Directors: Adam Smith, Dearbhla Walsh, Diarmuid Lawrence
Adapted by: Andrew Davies
Starring: Claire Foy, Tom Courtenay, Matthew Macfadyen

Mansfield Park (2008)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/mansfieldpark/
Director: Iain B. Macdonald
Screenplay by: Maggie Wadey
Starring: Billie Piper, Blake Ritson, Jemma Redgrave
Middlemarch (1994)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/archive/programs/middlemarch/tguide.html
Director: Anthony Page
Adapted by: Andrew Davies
Starring: Juliet Aubrey, Robert Hardy, Rufus Sewell

The Mill on the Floss (1997)
(no website available)
Director: Graham Theakston
Screenplay: Hugh Stoddart
Starring: Emily Watson, Cheryl Campbell, James Frain

Northanger Abbey (2008)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/northangerabbey/
Director: Jon Jones
Adapted by: Andrew Davies
Starring: Felicity Jones, J. J. Field

The Old Curiosity Shop (2009)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/curiosityshop/
Director: Brian Percival
Screenplay by: Martyn Hesford
Starring: Derek Jacobi, Sophie Vavasseur, Toby Jones

Oliver Twist (2009)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/twist/
Director: Coky Giedroyc
Adapted by: Sarah Phelps
Starring: Tom Hardy, Timothy Spall, Sophie Okonedo

Our Town (2003)
www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/americancollection/ourtown/
Director: James Naughton
Starring: Paul Newman

Persuasion (2008)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/persuasion/
Director: Adrian Shergold
Screenplay by: Simon Burke
Starring: Sally Hawkins, Rupert Penry-Jones

Rebecca (1997)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/archive/programs/rebecca/
Director: Jim O’Brien
Screenplay by: Arthur Hopcraft
Starring: Charles Dance, Emilia Fox, Diana Rigg

Sense and Sensibility (2008)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/senseandsensibility/
Director: John Alexander
Adapted by: Andrew Davies
Starring: Hattie Morahan, Charity Wakefield, Dan Stevens

Sherlock (2010)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/sherlock/
Directors: Paul McGuigan, Euros Lynn
Written by: Mark Gatiss, Steven Moffat
Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch, Martin Freeman

Silas Marner (1987)
(No website available)
Director: Giles Foster
Starring: Ben Kingsley, Jenny Agutter, Patrick Ryecart

A Tale of Two Cities (1989)
(No website available)
Director: Philippe Monnier
Starring: James Wilby, Xavier Deluc, Serena Gordon

The Turn of the Screw (2000)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/archive/programs/turnofthescrew/
Director: Ben Bolt
Screenwriter: Nick Dear
Starring: Jodhi May, Colin Firth, Pam Ferris

Wuthering Heights (2009)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/wutheringheights/index.html
Director: Coky Giedroyc
Screenplay by: Peter Bowker
Starring: Tom Hardy, Charlotte Riley
RESOURCES

In addition to the materials listed here, the DVD of the film often includes “extras”—production notes, interviews with actors, directors, screenwriters, and so on. Use these features to find out more about the specific film and filmmaking in general.

Books


Websites

For Educators

Annenberg/CPB Project
http://www.learner.org/resources/series67.html
This part of the site describes a series of videos for the classroom that analyze American filmmaking, with clips from 300 of the “greatest movies ever made.” Divided into genres such as Westerns, Romantic Comedy, and Film Noir, the series shows teachers how to teach film and connect it with history and literature.

Course Handouts
http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~fc76/
Although developed for a course on “Mass Culture in Nazi Germany/Nazi Films,” two general handouts on this site are useful for any film course: “Reading the Opening Sequence” and “Reading a Film Sequence.”

Film Education
http://www.filmeducation.org/resources/
Supported by the UK film industry, this site offers lesson plans, film study guides, and other educator resources.

The Film Foundation
www.film-foundation.org
The Film Foundation, established by Martin Scorsese and other directors, helps protect and preserve motion picture history. Teachers and students can download and print out Making Movies: A Guide for Young Filmmakers, a comprehensive production manual for young people.

The Great Books Foundation
http://greatbooks.org
The Great Books Foundation, which provides professional development for teachers interested in using literature as the foundation for reading and critical thinking instruction, offers resources for literature-based classroom discussion, including guides for classic novels such as Emma, Persuasion, Jane Eyre, Middlemarch, Persuasion, and Anna Karenina.

The Media Awareness Network
http://www.media-awareness.ca/
Teaching activities and units that encourage critical thinking about the media, including film, advertising, journalism, and the Internet, are provided on this Canadian website. The film section links to lessons on film genres, violence in film, heroes in popular film, movie reviewing, and other topics.

The New York Times Learning Network’s Film in the Classroom Page
This site provides lesson plans, games, and other resources for teaching film, using New York Times articles, features, reviews, and multimedia.

Scenarios USA
http://scenariosusa.org/
Scenarios USA holds an annual topical writing contest to pair student screenwriters in underserved communities with Hollywood filmmakers, who turn the students’ stories into short films. The website also includes materials for teachers.

Web English Teacher
http://www.webenglishteacher.com/media.html
This site contains many general links for English teachers. The Media Literacy section lists specific links to lessons on “Greatest Films,” “Directors in the Classroom,” “How the Media Shapes Perception,” and other relevant topics.

Yale Film Analysis Website
http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/
Developed for faculty and students at Yale, this site offers definitions of basic terms as well as information about cinema techniques such as cinematography, sound, and editing. Yale University Libraries also host a research guide on film studies, with related articles and publications, at http://guides.library.yale.edu/film.

Please note:
Although all sites were verified at the time of publication, website URLs and content are frequently subject to change.
General Film Resources

**American Film Institute**
http://www.afi.com/
This national organization, dedicated to “advancing and preserving film, television and other forms of the moving image,” offers news and information about film and the organization’s educational programs.

**Filmsite.org**
http://www.filmsite.org/
Written and edited by Tim Dirks, this site contains plot synopses, film analysis, and various lists of films by subject and topic.

**Internet Movie Database**
www.imdb.com
This site contains extensive movie reviews plus background information, full cast and credits, production details, and biographies of actors, directors, and others involved in film.

**Movie Review Query Engine**
http://www.mrqe.com/
This database contains thousands of movie reviews, plus many “best of” lists.

**The New York Times Movie Page**
http://www.nytimes.com/pages/movies/
This site offers 20 years of movie reviews from the New York Times, as well as a list of the “1,000 Best Movies” and information on current releases.

**Rotten Tomatoes Reviews**
http://www.rottentomatoes.com/
A compendium of reviews of over 100,000 films and videos, this site compiles the range of critical response to each film.

**Simply Scripts**
http://www.simplyscripts.com/
This site links to hundreds of free, downloadable movie scripts and screenplays.

**Articles**


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