Working with film

Film is a powerful educational tool, and an ability to appreciate and interpret the medium is an empowering skill for learners and teachers alike. Part of Film Education's remit is to encourage young people to be active viewers and critical consumers of what they see on screen. We aim to offer teachers and students a wide variety of film within an educational context, representing a range of perspectives and enabling students to access film culture in its broadest sense.

What is sequence analysis?

This online resource consists of a feature film sequence of around two minutes duration, accompanied by stimulating and engaging questions that encourage detailed exploration of the film text and its context. All featured sequences come from recently released films or those soon to be released at the cinema. The site also comprises a helpful **pdf of key terms** to support the activity, along with a film trailer and synopsis to contextualise the sequence.

Why use sequence analysis?

A two-minute segment from a feature film provides an accessible focus for detailed discussion and close analysis, as well as a springboard for further study. This resource gives students a context in which to practise deconstructing meaning and developing detailed, critical responses to film.

Sequence analysis is ideal for use in Media, Film and related subjects but also has application across a range of other curricular areas, depending on the focus of the film. The supporting materials in the **key terms** section enable students to get to grips with film terminology and are also designed to support teachers looking to incorporate film language and analysis into their classroom practise. Whether you are familiar with film form and conventions, or new to this approach, this resource offers an effective and engaging classroom activity.

How to use the resource

This resource provides a suggested framework for analysing a film sequence and should be considered flexible and adaptable for purpose. Model answers are not provided, as there are no 'right' answers here: the questions are intended as a starting point for discussion and further exploration.

The questions pertaining to each sequence will vary, but broad areas for focus might include:

- narrative and genre elements
- characterisation and performance
- location, setting and props
- sound
- camerawork and editing

You may want your class to work through the sections on the site or you could pick and choose as appropriate for your students, perhaps designating areas of focus to groups or individuals. You

may also wish to supplement the questions with a more detailed investigation of areas of interest. We recommend teachers read all the questions and view the sequence at least twice before using with their students in order to make the experience in class as valuable as possible.

Possible classroom approaches:

- whole class work using a whiteboard or projector to view the sequence, and the questions as a focus for discussion
- group work where areas of focus are allocated to different groups, who then report their findings to the class. This works well when additional screens (laptops or computers) are available.
- homework tasks could include completing a section of analysis, researching topics linked to the film or investigating the marketing for the film and how it reinforces or redirects understanding from the sequence analysis.

Depending on your approach, we recommend devoting at least an hour (or a full lesson) plus one homework session to the sequence analysis questions.

You may find that the themes and ideas suggested by the sequence stimulate further discussion that may inform your forward planning.

Further suggestions for working with film

If the sequence has piqued your students' interest, encourage them to explore the whole film at the cinema either as a whole class or independently. Many films featured in our sequence analysis activities are also screened during National Schools Film Week (http://www.nsfw.org) in October (England, Wales and N Ireland) and November (Scotland) whilst others are on general release.

- Prediction activities linked to narrative, genre and character can be revisited once students have had an opportunity to view the entire film, comparing initial impressions with more developed views.
- Incorporate the film into a longer scheme of work on a related topic, or for Film or Media Studies explore the film's form and style.
- Film Education's website offers a wide range of accessible online teaching resources covering a range of subjects, levels and areas of interest.
- Film Education also offers Continued Professional Development programmes that will provide you with further skills and knowledge about how to embed film into your curriculum delivery.