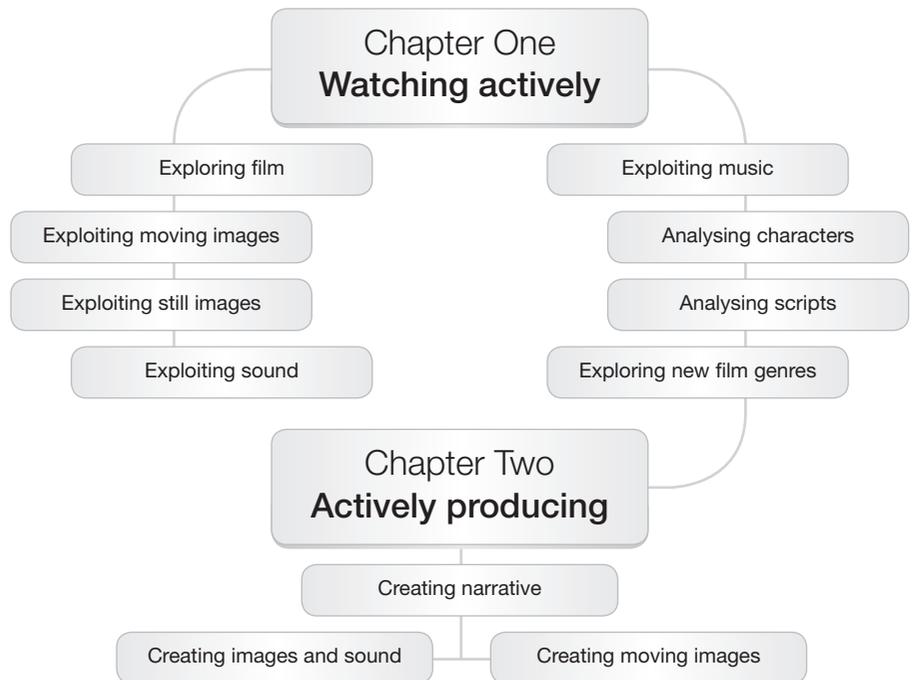


B

Film in Action has so far argued on behalf of using film in the language classroom and beyond. We are now ready to turn our attention to some practical activities that you can carry out with your learners.

In Chapter One, there is an emphasis on encouraging the learners to actively watch and engage with a wide variety of moving image texts, and improve their language skills while at the same time developing their visual literacy.

In Chapter Two, the emphasis is on the learners actively producing their own short films and videos, and all the activities have the common aim of promoting language learning and the development of communicative competence.



Three Ss and three Cs

To analyse a film clip, generating discussion on the multi-faceted nature of film.

Pre-production

Choose a film clip which takes place in one setting and has interaction between two or more characters. Prepare at least three questions for each of the areas you are going to discuss, as in the example opposite.

Teachers who don't have time to source films for themselves will find a link to a suitable film clip here:

<http://bit.ly/19z4Axi>

Action!

- Write the alliterations *Story*, *Setting* and *Sound* and *Characters*, *Colour* and *Camera* on the board, and ask the learners to write them down.
- Explain that you are going to show a short film clip, and that you want them to make notes in each category on what they see and hear.
- Go through each category, and give three questions you would like the learners to think about as they watch.
- Play the film.
- Give the learners a few minutes to complete their notes:
 - When they are ready, pair them and ask them to compare their notes.
- Play the film again.
- Hold a plenary discussion on each of the categories.

Post-production

For homework, you can ask the learners to write a composition, analysing the scene you showed.

Alternatively, the learners choose a scene from one of their favourite films and analyse it, using the three Ss and three Cs. They write a composition, or download the film and do a voice-over analysing it (see *Voice-over* on page 54).

Story:

- What story does the film tell?*
- What happened before this scene?*
- What's going to happen after this scene?*

Setting:

- Where does the action take place?*
- How quickly can we establish where the story takes place?*
- Does the setting lead to certain expectations?*

Sound:

- Is there any music?*
- Does the music create an atmosphere?*
- How do the characters speak?*

Characters:

- What do we learn about the characters through what they say?*
- What do we learn about the characters through what they do?*
- What do we learn about the characters through visual clues?*

Colour:

- What colours are used in this scene?*
- Are the colours warm or cold?*
- How do the colours make you feel?*

Camera:

- Note down any close-up, medium and wide shots in the scene. Why were these shots used?*
- If there are any close-up shots, what emotions do they represent?*
- Can you think of any adjectives or phrases to describe these emotions?*

Note: There is more information on camera shots in the next activity on page 35.

How do they seem?

To imagine a character's appearance and character from listening to them.

Pre-production

Select a clip from a feature-length film, documentary, interview or news item where the main character speaks clearly and distinctively.

Teachers who don't have time to source films for themselves will find a link to a suitable film clip here:

<http://bit.ly/1iXZjSW>

Action!

- Ask the learners what information you can obtain from the way a person speaks.
- Tell them they are going to *hear*, but not *see*, a character speaking in a film.
- As they listen, they imagine what the speaker looks like:
 - age*
 - height*
 - build*
 - hairstyle*
 - face*
 - posture*
 - clothing*
 - accessories*
- Play the film, with sound only:
 - The learners have five minutes to write notes on the speaker's *appearance*.
- Divide the class into pairs, to exchange ideas.
- Tell them they are going to listen a second time:
 - As they listen, they speculate on the speaker's character.
- Play the film again, with sound only:
 - The learners have five minutes to write notes on the speaker's character.
- The pairs exchange ideas.
- Now play the film with the sound *and* image on:
 - Is the speaker how they imagined him or her?*
- Hold a feedback session with the whole class.

Post-production

For homework, the learners can choose one of their favourite film characters. They write about their physical appearance and personality.

How do they sound?

To describe how characters feel, by listening for clues.

Pre-production

Select a short film or clip in which more than one person speaks.

Make a list of adjectives that describe emotion. For example:

- angry*
- bored*
- confused*
- envious*
- excited*
- grateful*
- nervous*
- relaxed*
- relieved*
- surprised*
- upset*

Teachers who don't have time to source films for themselves will find a link to a suitable short film here:

<http://bit.ly/1oVeU6z>

Action!

- Dictate your list of adjectives to the learners.
- Tell them they are going to *hear*, but not *see*, a short film:
 - As they listen, their task is to circle the adjectives which they think best describe the characters' emotions.
- Play the film – with sound only.
- Pair the learners, to compare their answers.
- Play the film with both sound and vision:
 - Would they still use the same adjectives to describe the characters?*
- Hold a feedback session with the whole class.

Post-production

For homework, you can ask the learners to write a description of one of the characters in the film.

Viral videos

To discuss why films become viral, and analyse a viral film.

Pre-production

Find a viral film (a short film that becomes popular through the process of internet sharing, typically through film-sharing websites, social media and email) which you think your learners will enjoy.

For teachers who don't have time to source films themselves, here is a link to a suitable viral film:

<http://bit.ly/1bz43FU>

Action!

- Ask the learners to think of examples of viral films which they have seen. Explain what a viral film is, if necessary:
 - Why are these films so popular?*
- Tell them they are going to watch a viral film:
 - Their task is to analyse the film and explain why they think it is so popular.
- Show the film.
- Put the learners into groups of three, to discuss why the film is so popular.
- Finally, hold a plenary discussion based on these questions:
 - Why do they think the film is so popular?*
 - Who does the film appeal to?*
 - Would they share the film?*

Post-production

For homework, you can ask the learners to choose a viral film they like and then write a review, based on the following questions:

- Why do they like it in particular?*
- Why is the film so popular in general?*
- Who does the film appeal to?*

You can also select a viral film on YouTube which has caused a lot of controversy. (See <http://bit.ly/1l0YhBx>.)

You go to the 'Comments' section of the video and choose three very *favourable* comments and three very *unfavourable*.

Copy them into a Word document, jumble them and prepare copies for the learners:

- Do they ever read the YouTube comments section?*
- If so, what sorts of comments do people make?*

Give them the jumbled worksheet:

- They underline the words and expressions which helped them decide which are favourable/unfavourable.

The learners write a commentary in a short paragraph. You correct any mistakes, before they add it to YouTube.

Branded shorts

To watch a short film, and describe what the creators are trying to communicate.

Pre-production

Select a 'branded short' (a short film which has been created for a company or product).

Teachers who don't have time to source films for themselves will find a link to a suitable short film here:

<http://bit.ly/1hldOzK>

Action!

- Tell the learners they are going to watch a short film which is actually an advertisement for a company or product – a 'branded short':
 - Their task is to decide what type of company or product is being advertised.
- Show the film:
 - So the learners don't see the company's name or logo, you may have to pause before the closing credits.
- Divide the class into groups of three or four:
 - The learners discuss what type of company or product they think has commissioned the film or is being advertised.
 - They give reasons to support their opinion.
- Hold a feedback session on their opinions.
- Show the film a second time:
 - Pause when the advertiser's name or logo appears in the closing credits.
 - Ask the learners what they know about the company or product.
- Hold a plenary session based on these questions:
 - How does the film support the brand?*
 - What is the film saying about the company or product?*
 - Why is advertising increasingly using short films?*

Post-production

For homework, the learners can find a branded short they like.

They write a review, answering the following questions:

- How does the film support the brand?*
- What is the film saying to the audience about the company or product?*

You can see an example of this activity here:

<http://bit.ly/KnY2pf>

Every second counts!

Creating and compiling very short videos.

One-second films

Pre-production

Select a video which is a compilation of one-second-long videos – here is a link to a suitable compilation video:
<http://bit.ly/1p7vsbf>

You can see an example of this activity here:
<http://bit.ly/19WGsFd>

Action!

- Tell the learners they are going to watch a compilation of very short videos:
 - As they watch, they should try to remember as many of the 'moments' as they can.
- Show the film.
- Ask the learners to call out the moments they remember.
- Tell them that they should imagine they are film-makers taking part in a 'One-second film competition':
 - They should record a second of something beautiful, important or moving for them.
 - They can use any digital format: digital camera, mobile phone, tablet or camcorder.
 - They should bring their 'moment' to the next lesson.
- In the following lesson, put the students into small groups:
 - They show their films.
 - They explain why they chose this moment to the others.
- Ask the learners to vote on the best/most original/most beautiful film.

Five-second videos

Pre-production

Using a mobile device, record a five-second clip of something which is important to you in your everyday life.

Action!

- Show the class your five-second clip, and explain why it is important for you.
- Pair the learners:
 - They tell their partner about a normal day in their life.
- Ask them to share something in their everyday life with the rest of the class:
 - Something which is important to them.
 - Something they enjoy.
 - Something interesting or beautiful.

- Tell them that you want them to record a five-second clip of something related to their daily life:
 - They do this every day – for five days.
- After a week, ask the learners to send you the five files:
 - Alternatively, they share them on a file-sharing site such as Dropbox.
- Create a video compilation of their videos, using video-editing software such as Windows Movie Maker or Apple iMovie.
- Show the learners the video:
 - They comment on the things which are important to them in their daily lives.

Sixty-second descriptions

Pre-production

Prepare a one-minute description of one of your favourite actors.

Action!

- Tell the learners about your favourite actor:
 - Is there any additional information they would like to know?*
- Tell the learners that their task is to create a one-minute-long description of one of *their* favourite actors:
 - You set a time limit of 10 minutes.
 - You walk round, providing help with language as necessary.
 - They practise reading their descriptions aloud several times.
- In pairs, they film each other performing their descriptions on a mobile phone or other mobile device.
- Finally, ask the learners to upload their videos to YouTube – you share them with all the class, and encourage the learners to comment on each other's descriptions.

Post-production

- As a longer-term project, the learners can record two-second videos of things which are beautiful or important for them – every day for thirty days.
 - Each learner creates their own 60-second compilation.
 - They upload their videos to YouTube.
- They show the videos to the rest of the class, and explain the reasons for their choices.

Making a branded short

Preparing and giving a short presentation on a short film for a brand.

Pre-production

Select a branded short (a short film which has been created for a company or product).

Teachers who don't have time to source films for themselves will find a link to a suitable short film here:
<http://bit.ly/1k9ypUE>

Action!

- Elicit or explain that a branded short is a short film created for a company or product.
- Show your branded short:
 - What company or product is being advertised?*
 - How does the film support this brand?*
- Ask the learners to imagine that they are advertising executives who want to make a short film for a company or product.
- Divide the class into groups of three:
 - Each group chooses the company or product they want to advertise.
- Tell the groups their task is:
 - To decide how they would make their short.
 - To break the film into important points.
 - To write very brief notes on the action, dialogue, camera shots and angles, and sound effects and music.
- Tell them they are going to perform and film their presentation.
- Two learners perform the presentation, while the third learner is the film director whose role is:
 - To make sure the executives know their lines by heart.
 - To set up the scene (choose the location, arrange the furniture and any props, etc).
 - To tell the executives where to stand or sit.
 - To plan the shots.
- When the 'director' is happy that the others know their lines and has set up the scene:
 - The two 'executives' perform their dialogue.
 - The director records it on a mobile phone or other mobile device.

Post-production

The director sends you a video file. You watch the video files and give the learners feedback on performance and pronunciation.

This is an excellent follow-up to *Branded shorts* on page 68.

Making a response video

Thinking critically about viral short films and videos commissioned by companies.

Pre-production

Select a short film commissioned by a large company, which has gone viral and provoked a response video by another film-maker.

For teachers who don't have time to source films themselves, here is a link to a suitable short film:
<http://bit.ly/1p07ywu>

Action!

- Tell the learners they are going to watch a short film which was commissioned by a big company:
 - Introduce the theme of the film.
 - Pre-teach any necessary vocabulary.
 - Dictate some discussion questions.
 - Ask the learners to discuss them in pairs.
- Tell the class that after watching the film, they are going to imagine they are film-makers who want to parody or criticise the original film.
- Show the film.
- Give the name of the company which has commissioned the film:
 - Do they know anything about it?*
- If not, give them some information about it, then divide the class into small groups:
 - As film-makers, how could they make a response film which criticises or parodies the original film?*
- They write the script.
- They read their script aloud several times:
 - They video themselves criticising or parodying the film.
 - You set a time limit of 20 minutes.
- Each group presents their video on a mobile phone or other mobile device to another group.
- Hold a plenary session, based on the learners' proposals.

Post-production

After the lesson, the learners send you a video file. You watch their videos and give them feedback.

For homework, they can find viral videos which have had a strong impact on them. They write a script, and create a response video.

This is an excellent follow-up to *Response films* on page 69.