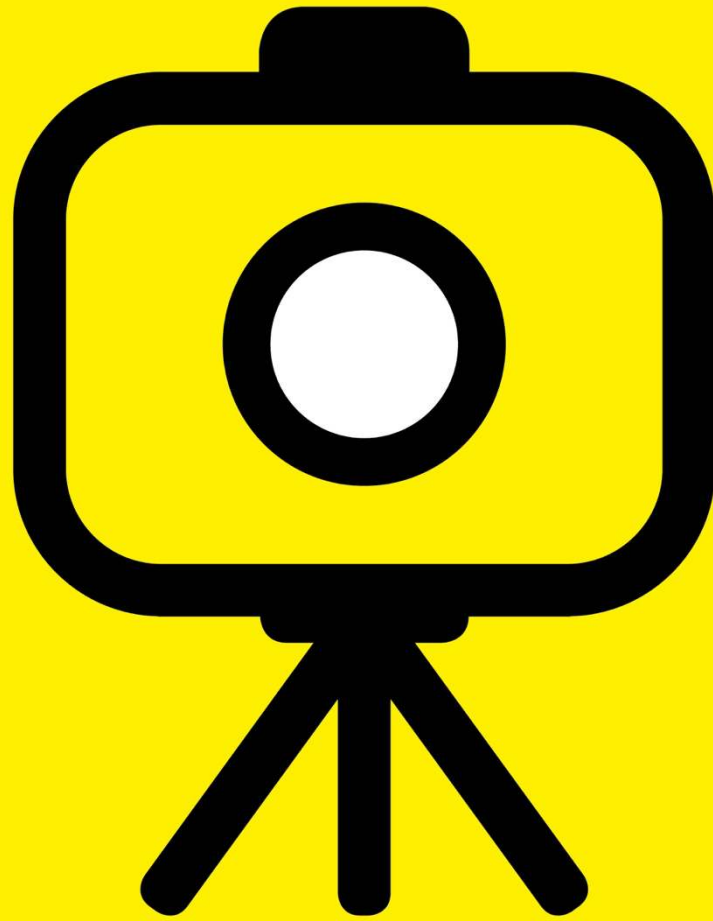


Marriage Story



Viewing Guide

**FILM
ENGLISH
CLUB**

**EXTENSIVE
VIEWING**

**THE
SCHOOL
FOR
TRAINING**

Marriage Story

Directed by: Noah Baumbach

Release date: November 2019

Running time: 137 mins

Genre: Drama; coming-of-age drama

VIEWING RECOMMENDATIONS

Read the viewing recommendations before viewing the film.

- **Read the Pre-viewing discussion questions.** Carefully read through the Pre-viewing discussion questions in preparation for discussing what you already know about the topic, setting and genre of the film in class or online.
- **Discuss the Pre-viewing questions.** After preparing your answers to the Pre-viewing questions, discuss them with your classmates in class or online.
- **Watch the film in English.** Watching films in English is an excellent way to improve your English because films are an example of multimodal input – the simultaneous presentation of audio, images and text – which makes comprehension easier.
- **Use subtitles.** Research findings strongly indicate that subtitles help students improve listening comprehension and learn more vocabulary.
- **Use subtitles in your first language at lower levels.** When watching a film, a minimum level is necessary to deal with subtitles in English. Therefore, for lower levels (A1, A2 and B1) it is better to watch with subtitles in your first language and progress to subtitles in English when you have reached a higher level.
- **Use subtitles in English at higher levels.** Students at higher levels (B1+, B2, C1 and C2) should watch films with subtitles in English.
- **Work on vocabulary before viewing.** Just watching films in English with subtitles will help you improve your vocabulary, but research shows that if you work on the words and expressions in the film before you watch, you learn even more vocabulary. So carefully read the glossary of words and expressions before viewing.
- **First viewing – watch the whole film for enjoyment and entertainment.** Before viewing the film for the first time read through the glossary and then watch the whole film without pausing. Try to follow the story and use the subtitles to help you understand the dialogues.
- **Second viewing – watch the film section by section.** After having watched the whole film, re-read the first section of the glossary and watch the corresponding section of the film a second time. As you watch try to notice how the vocabulary in the glossary is used in the film. Follow the same procedure for the other sections of the film.

- **Read the Post-viewing discussion questions.** Carefully read through the Post-viewing discussion questions in preparation for discussing the film and your reaction to it in class or online.
- **Discuss the Post-viewing questions.** After preparing your answers to the Post-viewing questions, discuss them with your classmates in class or online. Notice how you are analysing the multiple facets of the film and making a personal response to the film.
- **Make a personal multimodal response to the film.** After discussing the Post-viewing questions, make a personal response to the film by writing a multimodal review of the film using print text, screenshots, video clips, music etc. or writing an analysis of key scenes using print text and screenshots from the film, or recording a video summary of the film and your response to it. Try to use some of the vocabulary in the glossary in your response to the film.



TALK ABOUT THE FILM (Pre-viewing questions)

Discuss the questions before viewing the film.



SELF

- What are your expectations of film dramas? What are the characteristics of a film drama? Can you think of any examples that you have seen?
- The film is about a couple getting a divorce. What do you know about divorce laws in your country?
- The main characters are an actor and a stage director. What do you think their personalities will be like?
- The film is set in New York City and Los Angeles. What do you know about these cities? What are your expectations of how the film will look?
- Given the New York City and Los Angeles locations, what are your expectations about character based on this setting?
- Have you ever experienced a big change such as moving to a new city or starting a new school? What kind of feelings did you have about it? What were the positive and negative aspects?

FILM SYNOPSIS

Read the synopsis before viewing the film.

Marriage Story is a ¹**drama** film that follows a married couple, actress Nicole and ²**stage director** Charlie, going through a divorce. Charlie is a successful theatre director in New York. Nicole is offered a starring role in a television ³**pilot** in Los Angeles and decides to ⁴**temporarily** live with her mother in Hollywood taking Henry, the couple's young son, with her. In Los Angeles both Charlie and Nicole ⁵**contract** expensive and aggressive lawyers and their divorce case moves to court. Eventually the couple reach an ⁶**agreement** to finalise their divorce. A year, later, Charlie's play is having a successful Broadway ⁷**run**, while Nicole has a new boyfriend and has been ⁸**nominated** for an Emmy Award.

¹ drama: a type of film that is serious in tone with realistic settings and characters

² stage manager: the person who directs actors in a play or show

³ pilot: a single television programme that is made to test how popular it is

⁴ temporarily: in a way that is not permanent

⁵ contract: to make a legal agreement with someone to do work or have work done

⁶ agreement: an arrangement or contract made with someone

⁷ run: a successful play which performs at the same theatre for a long time

⁸ nominate: to formally suggest that someone should be chosen for an important prize

GLOSSARY

Read the section summaries and glossary of words and expressions before viewing the film.

Charlie and Nicole have a marriage mediation session as their marriage breaks up. The mediator suggests that they each write down what they like about one another, but Nicole is too embarrassed to read hers aloud and they decide to stop counselling. They have the final night of their theatre play and a party to celebrate.

comfortable /'kʌmfətəbl/ (**adj**) confident about something and not worried, nervous or afraid

- *I feel comfortable about taking the exam.*
- *I don't feel comfortable with him.*
- *She didn't look comfortable when she was giving her presentation.*

embarrassing /ɪm'bærəsɪŋ/ (**adj**) making you feel shy, ashamed or stupid

- *The situation was so embarrassing.*
- *He asked me some really embarrassing questions.*
- *It was so embarrassing for Tom when his boss caught him lying.*

actually /'æktʃʊəli/ (**adv**) in fact or really

- *I didn't actually see the accident – I just heard it.*
- *The meal wasn't actually that expensive.*
- *We're not Australian, actually. We're New Zealanders.*

citizen /'sɪtɪzən/ (**n**) a person who is legally accepted as belonging to a particular country

- *Clive became an American citizen when he married Maria.*
- *Her job involves educating citizens about their rights.*
- *In many countries, old people are treated like second-class citizens.*

grow up /grəʊ ʌp/ (**phr v**) to develop from being a child to being an adult

- *She grew up in Chicago.*
- *He's really growing up now.*
- *Why don't you grow up?*

close /kləʊs/ (**adj**) knowing someone very well and liking them very much

- *She's very close to her mother.*
- *They're a very close family.*
- *Sarah and I are close friends.*

goddamn /'ɡɒdɑm/ (**adj**) used informally for emphasising what you are saying, especially when you are annoyed or angry

- *Goddamn it! Where's my phone!*
- *She's so goddamn rude.*
- *I'm sick of this goddamn weather.*

competitive /kəm'petɪtɪv/ (**adj**) wanting to win and be more successful than other people

- *She's a fiercely competitive footballer.*
- *He has a strong competitive streak.*
- *He's always got to win – he's so competitive.*

amazing /ə'meɪzɪŋ/ (**adj**) extremely surprising; excellent

- *What an amazing coincidence!*
- *I'm reading the most amazing book.*
- *They make these amazing sandwiches.*

sexy /'seksi/ (**adj**) sexually attractive

- *Wow! You look really sexy.*
- *Don't you think he's sexy?*
- *That's a really sexy dress.*

brave /breɪv/ (**adj**) showing no fear of difficult, dangerous or painful things

- *It was very brave of you to speak so many people.*
- *I think you've been incredibly brave.*
- *It was very brave of you to tell the truth.*

infectious /ɪn'fɛkʃəs/ (**adj**) having an effect on everyone who is present and making them want to join in

- *Aina has the most infectious laugh.*
- *The students' enthusiasm is infectious.*
- *Paul's smile is so infectious.*

fake /feɪk/ (**v**) to make something look like something else, especially in order to deceive

- *She faked her own murder.*
- *She wept, but everybody know she was faking it.*
- *He faked his father's signature on the school report.*

figure out /'fɪgər aʊt/ (**phr v**) to understand or solve something

- *I took me a long time to figure out the new software at work.*
- *I couldn't figure out what he was talking about.*
- *We can't figure Mick out.*

undaunted /,ʌn'dɔːntɪd/ (**adj**) still determined and enthusiastic to do something even though it is difficult

- *She was undaunted by the opposition to her proposal.*
- *He was undaunted by the huge amount of work he'd have to do.*
- *Despite losing five games in a row, the team were undaunted.*

set back /'setbæk/ (**n**) a difficulty or problem that delays or prevents progress or makes a situation worse

- *The team suffered a setback when their captain was sent off.*
- *The bombing is a setback for the peace process.*
- *COVID-19 was a major setback for the global economy.*

mood /muːd/ (**n**) the way that someone is feeling at a particular time

- *She's always in a good mood.*
- *He's in a funny mood today.*
- *Don't speak to him – he's in one of his moods.*

dresser /ˈdresə/ (n) a person who dresses in a particular way

- *My grandmother was such a stylish dresser.*
- *My uncle Bob is a snappy dresser.*
- *Charlie's always been a great dresser.*

done /dʌn/ (adj) finished or completed

- *Are we done?*
- *We're done now.*
- *When you're done, can I have a word with you?*

frustrating /frʌˈstretɪŋ/ (adj) making you feel annoyed, upset or impatient because you cannot do or achieve what you want to do

- *It was a disappointing and frustrating experience for all of us.*
- *They never listen to what I say and it's so frustrating.*
- *It's extremely frustrating having to wait so long for an appointment.*

tantrum /ˈtæntɾəm/ (n) a sudden short period of uncontrolled anger and unreasonable behaviour, especially in a child

- *If he doesn't get his own way, he has temper tantrums.*
- *If she doesn't get what she wants, she throws a tantrum.*
- *He has a reputation for temper tantrums and being difficult to work with.*

annoying /əˈnɔɪɪŋ/ (adj) making you feel slightly angry or impatient

- *His voice is so annoying.*
- *She's got some really annoying habits.*
- *Nick is one of the most annoying people I've ever met.*

self-made /ˌselfˈmeɪd/ (adj) having become rich and successful as a result of your own hard work and not because of money from your family

- *Opray is proud of the fact she's a self-made woman.*
- *Antonio's a self-made man despite leaving school at 15 with no qualifications he became a billionaire.*
- *Mary's a self-made millionaire.*

safety net /'seɪftɪ net/ (**n**) a plan or system designed to protect people or prevent serious problems, especially financial problems

- *Unemployment benefit is a safety net for people who lose their jobs.*
- *The benefits system provides a safety net for low-income workers.*
- *Many people fell through the safety net and ended up homeless.*

brilliant /'brɪliənt/ (**adj**) extremely clever or impressive

- *His theory is quite brilliant.*
- *She has a brilliant mind.*
- *What a brilliant idea!*

intern /ɪn'tɜːn/ (**n**) someone, especially a student, who works in a job in order to get experience, often for no or little pay

- *She's working as an intern in the White House.*
- *He worked as an intern in a City bank before becoming an investment banker.*
- *I really enjoyed working as an intern in a design studio.*

split up /splɪt ʌp/ (**phr v**) to stop having a romantic relationship with someone

- *He's splitting up with his girlfriend.*
- *My parents split up last year.*
- *I split up with Tyson last month.*

make a toast /meɪk ə təʊst/ (**v**) to lift up and drink a glass of wine etc. to wish someone luck, or celebrate something

- *We made a toast to the happy couple.*
- *I'd like to make a toast to the bride and groom.*
- *I want to make a toast to our dear friend Jackie.*

in the meantime /ɪn ðə 'miːntaɪm/ (**idm**) in the period of time between two events or between the present time and a future event

- *She spent five years studying for her economics degree. In the meantime, she continued to work in the restaurant.*
- *Your phone won't arrive till next Tuesday. You can use mine, in the meantime.*
- *My laptop won't be repaired until next week. In the meantime, I'm using my sister's.*

posture /'pɒstʃə(r)/ (n) the way in which you hold your body when standing or sitting

- *I'm not surprised Pat's got back problems – he's got terrible posture.*
- *Doing yoga can really improve posture.*
- *Good posture is vital when working at a computer all day.*

Nicole and Henry go to live in Los Angeles where Nicole has been offered a starring role in a television pilot. Charlie travels between New York and Los Angeles. Nicole contracts a charismatic family lawyer, Nora. Charlie is served with divorce papers. He first sees an aggressive and very expensive divorce lawyer, Jay, but then decides to contract a retired family lawyer, Bert, who favours a civil approach.

surprise, surprise /sə'praɪz sə'praɪz/ (idm) used ironically to show that something is not a surprise as it is exactly what you expected

- *Tim completely forgot about the meeting, surprise, surprise.*
- *Rob says he's going to be late. Surprise, surprise.*
- *The boss gave the job to his nephew. Surprise, surprise.*

divorce /dɪ'vɔ:s/ (n) the legal ending of a marriage

- *If he's so unhappy, why doesn't he get a divorce?*
- *They've agreed to get a divorce.*
- *One in three marriages ends in divorce.*

weird /wiəd/ (adj) very strange or unusual and difficult to explain

- *That's weird – I thought I left my phone on the table but it's not there.*
- *I had a really weird dream last night.*
- *Her parents are weird but she's really nice.*

edgy /'edʒi/ (adj) a film, book, play, piece of music, etc. that is edgy is strange in a fashionable or exciting way

- *The director's films are clever and edgy.*
- *The book has an edgy plot that appeals to young people.*
- *Her new album is really edgy.*

nail /neɪl/ (**v**) to do something perfectly or impressively

- *I totally nailed it!*
- *She nailed her performance and got a standing ovation.*
- *He nailed his audition and got the lead role in the play.*

awesome /'ɔːsəm/ (**adj**) very good, great fun, etc.

- *'How are you doing?' 'I'm awesome!'*
- *Wow! You look totally awesome in that dress!*
- *The movie was totally awesome!*

tirelessly /'taɪələsli/ (**adv**) working very hard and without stopping over a long period of time

- *She worked tirelessly to provide for her family.*
- *They've worked tirelessly for peace.*
- *She's campaigned tirelessly for equality.*

narcissistic /,nɑːsɪ'sɪstɪk/ (**adj**) admiring yourself too much, especially your appearance

- *Many people consider the president to be extremely narcissistic and lacking in empathy.*
- *The therapist specialises in narcissistic personality disorders.*
- *Our society is becoming increasingly narcissistic.*

abusive /ə'bjʊːsɪv/ (**adj**) treating someone in a cruel or violent way

- *He became very abusive when he was drunk.*
- *More than one in ten women lives in an abusive relationship.*
- *Both parents were emotionally abusive to their children.*

hope /həʊp/ (**n**) something good you want to happen in the future; a feeling that something you desire will happen

- *Where there is life, there is hope.*
- *She had lots of hopes and dreams, when she arrived in New York.*
- *I'm full of hope for the future.*

articulate /ɑ:ˈtɪkjuleɪt/ (**v**) to express your thoughts and ideas clearly in words

- *The president struggled to articulate his ideas.*
- *I found it difficult to articulate my true feelings.*
- *We have to articulate our vision to our customers.*

engaged /ɪnˈgeɪdʒd/ (**adj**) having formally agreed to get married

- *How long were you engaged before you got married?*
- *Sam and Sean have just got engaged.*
- *She's engaged to a guy she met on holiday.*

delicious /dɪˈlɪʃəs/ (**adj**) having a very pleasant taste or smell

- *The cake smells delicious.*
- *We had a delicious meal in the new Indian restaurant.*
- *The recipe sounds delicious.*

draw /drɔ:z/ (**n**) someone or something that causes a lot of people to come to a place

- *The Hollywood actor was the big draw to the play.*
- *We need someone famous at the event who'll be a big draw.*
- *The Picasso paintings are the main draw to the art gallery.*

flattered /ˈflætəd/ (**adj**) to feel pleased and proud because someone has said good things about you or made you feel important or special

- *I'm flattered you asked me to do a keynote at your conference.*
- *We were flattered to be invited to lunch by the president.*
- *He was flattered by her attention.*

pregnant /ˈpregnənt/ (**adj**) (of a woman) having a baby or babies developing inside her body

- *My sister got pregnant when she was sixteen.*
- *My wife's pregnant with twins.*
- *Her sister's heavily pregnant.*

taste /teɪst/ (**n**) what a person likes or prefers

- *You've got great taste in music.*
- *Her taste in books is really similar to mine.*
- *He has very expensive taste in clothes.*

suggest /sə'dʒest/ (v) to offer an idea or a plan for someone else to think about

- *Can I suggest something?*
- *I don't know what to eat – what would you suggest?*
- *I suggested taking a taxi.*

own /əʊn/ (v) to accept responsibility for something

- *It's your life – just own it!*
- *It was your decision to have an affair – own it!*
- *It's important to own who you are. You have to take responsibility for your actions.*

embarrass /ɪm'bærəs/ (v) to make someone feel shy, nervous or uncomfortable,

- *I didn't mean to embarrass you in front of your friends.*
- *All their questions about my private life really embarrassed me.*
- *I really embarrassed myself when I fell over in the bar.*

asshole /'æshəʊl/ (n) **US offensive** an unpleasant, annoying or stupid person

- *Some asshole broke into my car and stole my laptop.*
- *Why is Chris always such an asshole?*
- *What kind of asshole keeps a loaded gun in their home?*

serve /sɜ:v/ (v) to give or send someone a legal document, demanding they go to court or obey an order

- *His wife's lawyers served him with the divorce papers.*
- *The customer served a writ on the company for a breach of contract.*
- *The defendant was served with a summons to appear in court.*

nervous /'nɜ:vəs/ (adj) worried and anxious about something

- *I get so nervous before exams.*
- *She was nervous about the interview she couldn't sleep.*
- *I always get nervous when I have to do a presentation.*

change your mind /tʃeɪndʒ jɔː maɪnd/ (**idm**) to change your opinion or decision about something

- *I was going to go out tonight, but I've changed my mind.*
- *If you change your mind about the party, just give me a call.*
- *But what if she changes her mind?*

relationship /rɪ'leɪʃnʃɪp/ (**n**) the way in which two or more feel and behave towards each other

- *I have really close relationship with my parents.*
- *We've always had a good relationship with our neighbours.*
- *How would you describe your relationship with your mother?*

grant /grɑːnt/ /grænt/ (**n**) an amount of money given by the government or other organisation to a person or organisation for a specific purpose

- *The government gave me a grant to study abroad for six months.*
- *I'm going to apply for a grant to study at university.*
- *The theatre company director won a MacArthur Grant.*

genius /'dʒiːniəs/ (**n**) a person who has an exceptionally high level of intelligence, mental skill or ability

- *Hitchcock was a genius at visual storytelling.*
- *She's a mathematical genius.*
- *You don't have to be a genius to know the plan will never work.*

starving /'stɑːvɪŋ/ (**adj**) to feel very hungry

- *I haven't eaten since breakfast – I'm starving!*
- *The NGO helps starving children all over the world*
- *The photos of starving children were deeply disturbing.*

lawyer /'lɔɪə(r)/ (**n**) a person whose job is to advise people about laws and to represent them in court

- *Have you spoken to a lawyer?*
- *If you're not sure of your legal rights, I'd check with a lawyer.*
- *My lawyer thinks I've got a good case.*

check out /tʃek aʊt/ (**phr v**) to look at someone or something because they are interesting or attractive

- *You've got to check out her new film – it's brilliant!*
- *Check out the article, I think you'll like it.*
- *Hey, check out that motorbike!*

trust /trʌst/ (**v**) to believe that someone is good, fair and honest and will not harm you

- *Trust me. I'm telling you the truth.*
- *I just don't trust Richard.*
- *Can they be trusted to do the job properly?*

private investigator /ˌpraɪvət dɪ'tektɪv/ (**n**) a person whose job is to find out information, find a missing person, follow someone, etc. but who is not a police officer

- *When John retired as a policeman, he decided to become a private investigator.*
- *He hired a private investigator to follow his wife.*
- *Sherlock Holmes is probably the most famous private investigator.*

coke /kəʊk/ (**n**) cocaine = a powerful, addictive drug some people take for pleasure

- *He was filmed snorting coke in a car.*
- *He was a coke addict and had to go to a rehab clinic.*
- *Police found coke in his car.*

prepared /prɪ'peəd/ (**adj**) willing to do something; ready

- *I'm prepared to listen to their side of the story.*
- *Would you be prepared to help me with the project?*
- *I'm not prepared to lie for you.*

struggle /'strʌɡl/ (**v**) to try hard to do something when it is very difficult

- *He struggled to get out of his wheelchair.*
- *I'm unemployed and struggling to pay my bills.*
- *I'm struggling to understand this chapter.*

afford /ə'fɔ:d/ (v) to have enough money to be able to buy or do something

- *We can't afford to go on holiday this year.*
- *Can we afford to buy a new fridge?*
- *There's no way I could afford to buy a flat in London.*

torture yourself /'tɔ:tʃə(r) jə'self/ (v) to cause mental pain to yourself

- *She tortured herself for years with the thought that she could have done more to prevent the accident.*
- *After his divorce he tortured himself for months with the thought he hadn't done all he could to save his marriage.*
- *Accept your mistake, stop torturing yourself and move on.*

attorney /ə'tɜ:ni/ (n) US a lawyer

- *I've got a meeting with my divorce attorney this afternoon.*
- *She hired a high-profile defence attorney to represent her.*
- *She's an attorney specializing in copyright law*

rush /rʌʃ/ (n) a situation in which you are in a hurry and need to move somewhere quickly or do things quickly

- *What's the rush? We've got plenty of time.*
- *'I'll give you back the money tomorrow.' 'There's no rush.'*
- *She was in a rush to get home.*

take your time /teɪk jɔ: taɪm/ (idm) to use as much time as you need to say or do something without hurrying

- *There's absolutely no hurry – take your time.*
- *Maria took her time over lunch.*
- *They certainly took their time answering my letter.*

custody /'kʌstədi/ (n) the legal right or duty to take care of someone, especially a child after its parents have divorced

- *He's going to try and get custody of his kids.*
- *The parents were given joint custody of their children.*
- *The mother got custody of the child.*

fucking /'fʌkɪŋ/ (adj) **offensive** used to emphasise a comment or an angry statement

- *I'm fucking sick of my boss!*
- *He's a fucking idiot!*
- *Just get in the fucking car!*

whatever /wɒt'evə(r)/ (**pron, det**) used to say that you do not mind what you do, have, etc. and that anything is acceptable

- *'What would you like to do this evening?' 'Whatever. I really don't mind'*
- *'What flavour do you want? Vanilla, strawberry ...?' 'I don't mind. Whatever.'*
- *'Should I dress casually or do I have to dress up?' 'Whatever you want.'*

hire /'haɪə(r)/ (**v**) to give someone a job or pay someone to do a particular job

- *They hired a lawyer to handle the case.*
- *I'm sorry, we're not hiring at the moment.*
- *I hired someone to paint the house.*

survive /sə'vaɪv/ (**n**) to continue to live or exist especially after a dangerous event or time

- *Many families are struggling to survive in the present crisis.*
- *We've had a tough few months but we'll survive.*
- *A lot of companies didn't survive the recession.*

ridiculous /rɪ'dɪkjələs/ (**adj**) silly, stupid or unreasonable

- *Do I look ridiculous in these shoes?*
- *Don't be ridiculous! I can't afford to pay \$1,000 on a phone!*
- *It's ridiculous to expect people to live on \$50 a week.*

dye /daɪ/ (**v**) to change the colour of something using a special liquid

- *Susie's dyed her hair black.*
- *He dyed his hair pink.*
- *My hair's not dyed, I'm a natural blonde.*

check in /tʃɛk ɪn/ (**phr v**) to go to a desk in a hotel or an airport, and tell an employee there that you have arrived

- *She's already checked in at the hotel.*
- *Please check in two hours before the flight.*
- *Checking in online saves a lot of time.*

Charlie, Nicole and Henry celebrate Halloween in Los Angeles. Charlie is angry when he finds out Nicole wants to remain in Los Angeles with Henry. Nicole and Charlie's lawyers meet but then Charles fires Bert and contracts the aggressive lawyer, Jay. The case moves to court, where Nora and Jay argue aggressively on behalf of their clients.

what the fuck /wɒt ðə fʌk / (**n**) **offensive** used to show that you are angry or that you are not able to believe something

- *I mean, what the fuck! What planet is he on?*
- *What the fuck was that?*
- *What the fuck were you thinking when you gave Dave a job?*

bullshit /'bʊlʃɪt/ (**n, exclam.**) **vulgar** complete nonsense or something that is not true

- *Don't listen to John – he's full of bullshit.*
- *Bullshit! I never said that.*
- *Tony gave me some excuse but it was a load of bullshit.*

dumb /dʌm/ (**adj**) stupid or foolish

- *That was a dumb thing to say.*
- *You gave him your email address? That was a dumb thing to do.*
- *What a dumb question.*

motherfucker /'mʌðəfʌkə(r)/ (**n**) **US offensive** used for someone, especially a man, who you hate or who has made you angry

- *I can't stand that motherfucker!*
- *I'm gonna kill the motherfucker!*
- *I hate working with the motherfucker.*

guilty /'gɪlti/ (**adj**) feeling ashamed and sad because you know that you have done something wrong or have not done something that you should have done

- *I feel guilty about forgetting his birthday.*
- *He felt guilty about what had happened.*
- *I felt guilty for not helping them more.*

literally /'lɪtərəli/ (**adv**) using the real meaning of a word or phrase

- *It was literally my favourite play last year.*
- *I live literally around the corner from you.*
- *There were literally thousands of complaints about the programme.*

deal /di:l/ (**n**) an agreement or an arrangement, especially in business

- *I got a good deal on my new house.*
- *I'll make a deal with you – I'll cook and you do the dishes.*
- *After a lot of negotiation, we finally agreed on a deal.*

settle /'setl/ (**v**) to end an argument or disagreement by making an agreement

- *They went to court to settle the disagreement.*
- *The case was settled by negotiation.*
- *Both sides are keen to settle their differences.*

reasonable /'ri:znəbl/ (**adj**) fair, sensible and practical

- *It's a perfectly reasonable request.*
- *Speak to Anna – she's a reasonable person.*
- *Come on, be reasonable – I can't lend you \$10,000!*

burden /'bɜ:dn/ (**n**) something difficult, unpleasant or worrying that you are responsible for

- *She doesn't want to become a burden to her children when she gets old.*
- *I don't like being a burden on other people.*
- *At the age of 18, Mike had to bear the burden of providing for his family.*

prestigious /preˈstɪdʒəs/ (**adj**) admired and respected by people, because of a reputation for high quality, success or social influence

- *Harvard is one of the most prestigious universities in the world.*
- *Her parents sent her to a prestigious private school.*
- *The Pulitzer is the most prestigious literary prize in the USA.*

turn down /tɜːn daʊn/ (**phr v**) to reject an offer or proposal, or the person who makes it.

- *She thanked him for the offer but turned it down.*
- *They offered me the job but I turned it down.*
- *He asked her to marry him but she turned him down.*

lucrative /ˈluːkrətɪv/ (**adj**) producing a large amount of money

- *She's just signed a lucrative new contract.*
- *He received a number of lucrative offers from Hollywood.*
- *There are a lot of lucrative business opportunities in China.*

split /splɪt/ (**v**) to divide into two or more parts and share it between different people

- *Let's split the bill.*
- *My girlfriend and I split the rent.*
- *We're going to split the profits four ways.*

turn something upside down /tɜːn ˈsʌmθɪŋ ˈʌpsaɪd daʊn / (**idm**) to cause a person's life to change completely in a bad way

- *My mother's death turned my world upside down.*
- *When his wife left him, his world was turned upside down.*
- *Our lives were turned upside down when our daughter got ill.*

pick someone up /pɪk ˈsʌmwʌn ʌp/ (**phr v**) to go somewhere in your car and collect someone who is waiting for you

- *I'll pick you up at ten.*
- *It's my turn to pick up the kids from school, isn't it?*
- *I'm sorry but I can't pick you up from the train station tomorrow.*

Nicole and Charlie have a huge argument. Charlie punches a hole in a wall and says he wishes that Nicole were dead. He then breaks down in shame and apologises; Nicole comforts him.

flexible /'fleksəbl/ (**adj**) able to change to different conditions and circumstances

- *The teacher is flexible with her students about when they need to hand in their homework.*
- *My schedule is flexible – I can meet you whenever suits you.*
- *The company has offered me flexible working hours.*

distracted /dɪ'straktɪd/ (**adj**) not able to concentrate on something

- *Paul seemed distracted and not really interested in the conversation.*
- *Antonia's easily distracted from her studies.*
- *The students were distracted by the shouting outside the classroom.*

quit /kwɪt/ (**v**) to stop doing something

- *He quits doing things when he's bored.*
- *Quit wasting my time!*
- *Just quit it!*

enemy /'enəmi/ (**n**) a person who hates someone or who acts against someone

- *He's made a lot of enemies in his career.*
- *They used to be close friends but now they're sworn enemies.*
- *He's a dangerous enemy to have.*

awful /'ɔ:fl/ (**adj**) very bad or unpleasant

- *There's an awful smell of fish in here.*
- *He has an awful boss.*
- *The last year has been awful for her.*

regress /rɪ'gres/ (**v**) to return to a previous or less advanced state, condition or behaviour

- *Mayar's speech has regressed since she changed school.*
- *The country seems to have regressed in terms of equality.*
- *The reading skills of some students has regressed.*

selfish /'selfɪ/ (**adj**) thinking and caring only about yourself rather than about other people

- *He's being so selfish. He's only concerned with himself.*
- *Her behaviour's so selfish – she never thinks of anyone else.*
- *What an incredibly selfish thing to do!*

blame /bleɪm/ (v) to think or say that someone or something is responsible for something bad

- *Paul blames all his problems on his family.*
- *You can't blame all your problems on the government.*
- *Do what you want, but don't blame me if it doesn't work.*

cheat /tʃi:t/ (v) to be unfaithful to your romantic partner

- *His wife found out he'd been cheating on her for months.*
- *Everyone in town knows she's cheating on him.*
- *If you ever cheat on me, I'll leave you.*

insane /ɪn'seɪn/ (adj) very stupid or crazy often in a dangerous way

- *Her story is completely insane.*
- *I must have been insane to give George a job.*
- *You must have been completely insane to agree to the idea.*

dick /dɪk/ (n) vulgar an unkind, stupid or annoying person

- *That guy is such a dick!*
- *Why is Joe acting like a dick?*
- *Mike was a bit of a dick at the party.*

Charlie decorates his apartment in Los Angeles. An appointed expert evaluator interviews Nicole, and monitors a night in with Charlie and Henry in which Charlie accidentally cuts himself.

pot /pɒt/ (n) cannabis

- *She smoked a lot of pot when she was at university.*
- *The President denied having smoked pot when he was a student.*
- *He bought some pot off a dealer.*

strength /streŋθ/ (n) a positive characteristic

- *Her greatest strength is her ability to motivate her team.*
- *His greatest strengths are his creativity and imagination.*
- *Modesty is not one of his strengths.*

take care of someone /teɪk keər ɒv 'sʌmwʌn/ (**idm**) to look after someone

- *I love taking care of my kids*
- *Would you mind taking care of the dogs while we're away?*
- *Can you take care of this customer, please?*

weakness /'wi:knəs/ (**n**) a negative characteristic

- *Joan's biggest weakness is her impatience.*
- *Carl's main weakness as a manager is his inability to listen.*
- *One of Mike's weaknesses is his lack of humility.*

piss off /pɪs ɒf/ (**phr v**) to annoy someone

- *His attitude pisses me off!*
- *The way she treats me pisses me off.*
- *I was really pissed off with his selfish behaviour.*

show up /ʃəʊ ʌp/ (**phr v**) to arrive where you have arranged to meet someone or do something, especially late or unexpectedly

- *He showed up two hours late.*
- *We were expecting 100 people but only 50 showed up.*
- *The electrician was supposed to come at 2 but he didn't show up.*

fucked up /fʌkt ʌp/ (**adj**) **offensive** broken, damaged, stupid or unreasonable

- *This whole situation is so fucked up!*
- *The world is such a fucked-up place to be growing up.*
- *Our political system is fucked up*

sturdy /'stɜ:di/ (**adj**) physically strong and not easily broken or damaged

- *My desk is really sturdy.*
- *You'd better wear a pair of sturdy boots for the hike.*
- *She's a short, sturdy woman.*

set the table /set ðə'teɪbl/ (**phr**) put a cloth, knives, fork, etc. on a table

- *Kids, set the table.*
- *Whose turn is it to set the table?*
- *Set the table for eight.*

help out /help aʊt/ (**phr v**) to help someone because they are busy or have problems

- *Do you need me to help you out?*
- *My sister said she'd help out.*
- *I'm always willing to help out.*

kid /kɪd/ (**v**) to tell someone something that is not true, especially as a joke

- *She said that? You're kidding me.*
- *I'm just kidding you!*
- *I forgot to get you a present. Hey, only kidding!*

Nicole and Charlie agree to relax their demands and sign their divorce settlement. A year later, they have both moved on with their lives – Charlie's play has a successful Broadway run but he is going to move to Los Angeles for a period, while Nicole has a new boyfriend and is nominated for an Emmy Award.

brag /bræg/ (**v**) to talk too proudly about what you have done or what you own

- *Clara's always bragging about how much money she earns.*
- *I wish he'd stop bragging about how rich his parents are.*
- *Robert's always bragging about his famous cousin.*

self-pitying /,self 'pɪtɪɪŋ/ (**adj**) feeling sadness for yourself, especially because of something unpleasant or unfair that has happened to you

- *He never stops moaning – he's very self-pitying.*
- *Your situation's no worse than mine. Don't be so self-pitying!*
- *Although she was seriously ill, she was never self-pitying.*

obsessed /əb'sest/ (**adj**) unable to stop thinking about someone or something

- *He's completely obsessed with Kanye west.*
- *She's obsessed by computers.*
- *He obsessed by sci-fi movies.*

fall in love /fɔ:l ɪn lʌv/ (**idm**) to be very attracted to someone and start to love them in a romantic way

- *They met, fell madly in love and have been together ever since.*
- *I fell in love with her because of her kindness.*
- *It's a romantic comedy about two young artists who fall in love.*

TALK ABOUT THE FILM (Post-viewing questions)

Discuss the questions after viewing the film.



STORY

- Why do Nicole and Charlie decide to get divorced? Is it a mutual decision?
- Why does Charlie decide to fire Bert and contract Jay?
- Why does Nicole decide to stay in Los Angeles?
- Why does Charlie decide not to live in Los Angeles?
- How does Henry cope with his parents' separation and divorce?
- What for you were the key conflicts in the film? How effective was the film in portraying these?
- What did you think of the film's ending?



CHARACTER

- What are the similarities and differences between the characters of Nicole and Charlie?
- How does Nicole and Charlie's relationship change over the course of the film?
- How would you describe Henry's character?
- How does Henry interact with his mother and father?
- How would you describe the characters of Nicole's sister and mother?
- In what ways are the lawyers Nora and Jay similar?



COMPOSITION

- Discuss what you think of Adam Driver's performance in the film. Does it feel convincing and how does he draw you into the character?
- How would you describe the performance of Scarlett Johansson? Why do you think Noah Baumbach chose to cast her in this role?
- What do Nora's costumes and makeup tell us about her character?



SETTING

- How important are the settings of New York and Los Angeles to the film's story?
- How are New York and Los Angeles represented in the film?
- Why do you think the director decided to set the film over a year?



COLOUR AND LIGHT

- How are the colours in New York and Los Angeles different?
- How is the light in New York and Los Angeles different?
- What colours do you associate with Nicole, Charlie and Nora?



SELF

- How does the film compare to other film dramas you have seen?
- Did you find the film easy to follow or confusing? Why?
- What did you find most memorable about the film?
- What did you learn about the divorce process in the USA? How is it similar or different to the divorce process in your country?
- How did the film make you feel?
- Which character did you empathise with most? Why?
- The film was very popular with audiences. What do you think is the film's appeal for audiences?
- Who would you recommend the film to?
- The film won a number of awards. Do you think they were deserved? Why or why not?
- What do you think the message of the film is?

A PERSONAL MULTIMODAL RESPONSE TO THE FILM

Choose one of the three options to make your own personal response to the film.



Write a multimodal review of the film. Include:

- a summary of the film's plot
- descriptions and screenshots of the main characters
- descriptions and screenshots of the main settings
- the performances of the main actors
- the film's message
- what you particularly liked or disliked
- some vocabulary from the glossary



Write an analysis of a key scene in the film. Include:

- a screenshot of the key scene.
- a link to a video of the key scene
- an analysis of the key scene. Use the 5Ss (Story, Setting, Sound, Social Issues, Self) and 5Cs (Character, Camera, Colour, Composition, Culture and Language) framework to help you analyse the scene.
- some vocabulary from the glossary.



Make a short video (3–4 minutes) of yourself giving a review of the film. Include:

- a summary of the film's plot
- a description of the main characters
- a description of the setting or settings
- the performances of the main actors
- the film's message
- what you particularly liked or disliked
- some vocabulary from the glossary.

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About the Author



Kieran Donaghy is a freelance award-winning writer, international conference speaker and teacher trainer.

He is the author of books for students and teachers of English as a foreign language. His publications include *Film in Action* (Delta Publishing), *Writing Activities for Film* (ELT Teacher2Writer) and *Video, The Image in ELT* (ELT Council) and *Language Hub* (Macmillan). He trains teachers in Barcelona and online at his specialist teacher development institute, The School for Training.

He is the founder of the independent publisher *Film English* which has won a British Council ELTons Award, an English Speaking Union Award and the MEDEA Award.

He is the founder of The Image Conference and co-founder of the Visual Arts Circle.

Find out more about Film English at: <http://kierandonaghy.com/>

You can contact Kieran at: kieran@theschoolfortraining.com

About Film English



Film English is an independent publisher founded in 2009 specialised in the field of English language teaching and learning. The lesson plans designed around short films, viewing guides for feature-length films and other teaching resources on Film English make up the largest online resource bank of materials for teaching and learning English using film and video. Film English has won numerous awards including a British Council ELTons Award for Innovation in Teacher Resources, the most prestigious European media in education prize, the MEDEA Award, and an English-Speaking Union Award.

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Membership of Film English Club allows unlimited access to all the lesson plans designed around short films, viewing guides for feature-length films and other teaching resources from the award-winning publisher Film English. Members can download our complete collection of materials and get regular updates each week.

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The School for Training is a centre of excellence in teacher development offering innovative courses to language teachers in the centre of Barcelona and online. The school offers innovative courses on important areas of language pedagogy not normally covered on CELTA or DELTA courses such as how to use short films and videos, the role of empathy in language education, how to introduce social justice issues in the language classroom, and the fifth skill of Viewing in the language curriculum.

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FILM ENGLISH

