



Irish Film Institute

# Short Course in Film for Junior Cycle

Student Resources

Strand 1: Exploring

Strand 1a: Sharing



## Strand 1- Exploring Film

### Student Learning Goals

In this strand I will...

#### Film Language

- Watch and explore a wide range of films.
- Discuss and share my thoughts on a wide range of films.
- Identify the elements of film language.
- Develop my own shots using different filmmaking techniques.
- Investigate the characteristics of different film genres.
- Select scenes from films that I enjoy and identify how they communicate meaning.

#### Watching Film

- Reflect on the different ways we can watch films today.
- Explore how films are marketed to audiences.
- Design a film poster for a favourite film and explore different trailers.
- Find out more about venues in my area where I can watch films.
- Plan a visit to a local cinema or arts centre to see a film with my class.

#### Irish Film

- Explore and compare the plots and styles of different Irish short films.
- Explore Irish feature films and compare their themes with other films I have seen.
- Get to know the work of one Irish film director in detail.
- Find out about the filmmaking industry in Ireland, including animation, and related careers.

#### World Cinema

- Discover films from around the world.
- Find out more about life in other countries and cultures through films from those places.
- Compare watching film in another language with watching films in my first language.



## Strand 1a - Sharing Film

- Choose a film scene I enjoyed to present to my class.
- Analyse the film language in that scene and share this with my class
- Find out more about the filmmaker, genre, or style of the film, and explore this in my presentation.

## My Film Notebook

### I will use my film notebook to...

- Write about the films I watch, both in and out of school, and my personal responses to them.
- Collect film reviews, listings, interviews and photos relating to the films I watch.
- Create my own drawings, photographs and other examples of different film techniques I have used.
- Keep a list of any films or filmmakers I want to find out more about.
- Reflect on my own learning and decide what I can do to improve my understanding of film.
- Prepare for oral discussions, group activities and group presentations.
- Come up with an idea for a film project to present to my group.



## Elements of Film Language

### Camera

#### Camera Shots

Wide Shot	Taken from far away, shows characters and a background
Medium Shot	Shows torso, face and some background
Close-up	Shows head and shoulders of a character
Point of View Shot	Shows you what a character is seeing

#### Camera Angles

Low angle	The camera is placed below eye level, looking up
High angle	The camera is placed above eye level, looking down

#### Camera Movement

Pan	The camera moves up, down or side to side
Tracking Shot	The camera is moved forwards, backwards or side to side on 'train' tracks

#### Focus

How clear or sharp an image is

In focus	When an image is clear and sharp
Out of Focus	When an image is blurry
Soft Focus	When a character or subject has soft edges
Deep Focus	When the foreground, middle ground and background are all in focus
Shallow Focus	When one part of the image is in focus, and another part is not

#### Mise-en-Scène

How the scene is set or staged

Composition	Describes how things are positioned in the frame
Colour Palette	The range of colours chosen for a scene
Setting	Where a scene takes place
Props	Any items used in a scene
Costume & Makeup	Anything worn by an actor



## Lighting

Hard Lighting  
Soft Lighting

Direct, e.g. a street on a sunny day, or a character in a spotlight  
Indirect, e.g. a street on a cloudy day, or a character at a candlelit dinner

## Sound and Music

Composed Score  
Dialogue  
Narration  
Sound Effects

Music written by a composer for a film  
Words spoken between characters  
A voice that tells the story  
Sounds that are added to a scene

## Editing

Cut  
Rapid cutting  
Slow cutting

How shots are put together  
  
When one shot ends and another one begins.  
e.g. action scenes  
e.g. suspenseful or dramatic scenes

## Performance

Performing

The way in which actors play with facial expressions, body language, voice as they perform.



## Film Language 1 – Getting to Know Film Language

1. Choose a scene from a film.
2. Watch the scene together and agree a title that best describes the scene.
3. Using your 'Elements of Film Language' sheet, and working in groups, pick one element of film language each.
4. Watch the scene again and focus on this element before completing the relevant section below.
5. Share your findings with the other groups to complete the sheet.

Scene Title:		
Camera		
Element of Film Language	What camera shots are used?	How does this affect the scene?
Camera		
Sound		
Element of Film Language	Describe the sound and music	How does this affect the scene?
Sound and music		
Mise-En-Scène		
Element of Film Language	Describe the mise-en-scène	How does this affect the scene?
Lighting		
Costume and Make-up		
Set or Location		
Performance		
Element of Film Language	Describe the performance	How does this affect the scene?
Facial Expressions and Voice		



## Film Language 2 - Exploring Images

Now that you have learnt to identify the different elements of film language, you can experiment and create your own images (shots) using your phone, camera or mobile device.

1. Work on your own or in pairs. Before you begin, decide the following:
  - **Who** or **What** will be the subject of your shot?
  - **Where** will your shot be set?
2. Now try the following:
  - a) **Camera Shots**  
Create a long-shot, a mid-shot and a close-up.
  - b) **Camera Angles**  
Create a shot of a subject from a high and low angle.
  - c) **Camera Movement**  
Create a short video or sequence of sequence of shots demonstrating a tracking shot, or panning shot.
  - d) **Pulling Focus**  
Create a short video or sequence of shots where the focus changes from the foreground to the background.
  - e) **Point of View Shot**  
Create a short video or sequence of shots where the camera cuts from a shot of a subject to that subject's point of view.
3. Print out your best shots and paste them into your film notebook.
4. Under each shot, explain your filmmaking choices:  
e.g. Type of shot used – What is the effect - Why did I choose this?
5. Reflection: When you have finished experimenting, look back on all the shots you have created and think about what you have learnt. Write the following into your film notebook and complete the sentences...
  - i) One thing I enjoyed about this project was...
  - ii) One thing I found difficult was...
  - iii) One thing I would do differently next time would be...



## Film Language 3 – Exploring Mise-en-Scène

Now that you have learnt to identify different elements of film language and experimented with different shots, you can now experiment with how the scene is set or staged.

1. Work on your own or in pairs. Before you set up each shot, decide the following:
  - **Who** or **What** will be the subject?
  - **Where** will the shot be set?
2. Now create some shots experimenting with the different elements of mise-en-scène as follows:
  - a) Composition:**
    - i) Create a shot with a subject in the foreground, and with a clear and defined background.
    - ii) Create a shot that has a different composition, and explain this contrast.
  - b) Lighting:** Use some interesting or dramatic lighting that draws your eye to the subject of the scene.
  - c) Set:** Choose a location for your subject and design the set so that it communicates something about them.
  - d) Costume & Makeup:** Capture an image of a subject where their costume or makeup tells us something about them.
  - e) Colour:** Capture two images with contrasting colour schemes using different lighting, sets and/or costumes.
3. Print out your best shots and paste them into your film notebook.
4. Under each shot, explain your filmmaking choices  
e.g. type of lighting, what effect this lighting has - why I chose this
5. Reflection: When you have finished experimenting, look back on all the shots you have created and think about what you have learnt. Write the following into your film notebook and complete the sentences...
  - a) One thing I enjoyed about this project was...
  - b) One thing I found difficult was...
  - c) One thing I would do differently next time would be...



## Watching Film 1 – The Film Poster

1. In your groups, brainstorm the different places you can see posters advertising films. Compare the effectiveness of each site. Which is the most effective poster site do you think?
2. Choose a film that you have recently seen and enjoyed. Find a poster for this film, and paste it into your film notebook.
3. Identify the following elements from the chosen poster:

Film title:

Film director:

Leading cast:

Tagline:

Age classification:

Target audience:

4. What other information is conveyed through the poster's text?
5. What does the imagery tell you about the story, characters, or type (genre) of film?
6. Imagine you work for the marketing team for this film. Would you use this poster to promote this film, or would you change anything? Explain your answer.
7. Design a film poster of your own! Choose a film that you have seen recently and design a poster to attract two of the following audiences:
  - a) teens
  - b) families
  - c) men
  - d) women
  - e) general audience

Include all the elements outlined in Q3 above.



## Watching Film 2 – The Film Trailer

1. In groups, choose an upcoming film that you would all like to see. Find the trailer for the film online.
2. Watch the trailer through once and discuss the following:
  - Who is the trailer trying to attract?
  - Does the trailer make you want to see the film? Why/Why Not?
  - Do you think the trailer is trying to attract fans of a particular genre, or franchise? Explain your answer.
3. Trailers are usually made up of certain recognisable elements. These are listed below.

Watch the trailer through a second time and make a note each time an element is used. Describe why you think they are used in this trailer.

Element of trailer	Why is this element used in the trailer?
Voiceover	
Famous names	
Key plot points	
Dramatic camera angles	
Pieces of dialogue	
Clips from different scenes edited together	
Recognisable genre/franchise elements	

4. Which of the elements you have listed is the most effective in attracting an audience?
5. Look at the poster for the same film. Do you think the film trailer is more effective than the poster? Explain your answer.
6. Aside from this trailer and the poster, has this film been marketed in any other way?

Imagine you are in charge of marketing a new film with your favourite Hollywood star. Come up with three things you would do to attract an audience to your film.



## Watching Film 3 - Visiting my local cinema/arts centre

For this section, you will find out about places in your local area that show film. Compare them, and choose a venue and film to attend. Find out the following and note the information in your film notebook.

1. Where can you see films in your local area? List all the places you know.
2. What are the main differences between these places?
3. Plan a research visit to the local cinema or arts centre to find out what they do.
  - How many screens or auditoriums auditoria are there?
  - Find out what mainstream, international or Irish films are now showing or coming soon.
  - If it's an arts centre, what other programmes or events does the centre offer?
  - Are there programmes or events targeted at different audiences?
  - Are there opportunities to learn about film or the arts at the venue?
  - Are there special opportunities for young people?
  - Where can you find information about the programme and tickets?
  - What other facilities are there for customers?
4. Find out about the different types of jobs people have at the cinema.

Job Title	Responsibilities
1	
2	
3	

5. In groups, plan a trip to your local cinema to see a film. Share out responsibilities for organising the trip. Include planning and your role in your film notebook.



## Watching Film 4 - Comparing viewing experiences

1. How do you like to watch films: alone/with friends/with family?
2. Describe the experience of watching film in the cinema. Consider all the elements that make it enjoyable - the furnishing, speakers, lights, screen, refreshments...
3. Describe the atmosphere in the cinema before, during and after the film.
4. Describe the atmosphere during the following types of films:  
Comedy, Action/Adventure, Horror, Family film  
Which type of atmosphere do you prefer? Explain your answer.
5. In groups, brainstorm all the different ways that people can access and watch films today.
6. Which is the better experience in terms of watching a film? Compare the experiences by rating them 1-5 (1 = worst, 5 = best) under the following headings:

Format	Location	Who with?	Atmosphere?	Effects?	Cost?
Cinema					
TV					

### 7. Age Classification

All films shown in regular cinemas are given an age classification by IFCO. Look up their website [www.ifco.ie](http://www.ifco.ie) and find out about the different age ratings. According to IFCO, what is appropriate for your age group? What do you think?

8. Is classification important do you think? What about stuff you watch at home – who classifies this?
9. What is copyright? Why is it important to filmmakers?
10. Find out about this campaign: [www.lovemovies.ie](http://www.lovemovies.ie). What is this campaign about? What is the campaign's message, and who is the message for?



## Irish Film 1 - How Well do You Know Irish Film?

Match up each Irish film title below with its correct plot, director, and lead actor. Research online to help.

Film Titles			
Gold	Life's a Breeze	Sing Street	The Quiet Man
Michael Collins	My Left Foot	Brooklyn	Song of the Sea

Plot
A young Irish woman leaves her small town in Ireland for America, in the 1950s.
True story about an Irish revolutionary who fought for Irish independence.
An American returns home to the Irish village he comes from, where he falls in love.
The true story of Christy Brown who became a celebrated writer in spite of having cerebral palsy.
Saoirse and Ben go on adventure to free the faeries and discover the truth about Saoirse's magical gift.
A boy in 1980's Dublin forms a band to impress a girl.
A family discover that their mother hid her life's savings in an old mattress and the search begins!
A teenage girl's life is disrupted when her estranged father shows up out of the blue.

Director			
Tomm Moore	Neil Jordan	Jim Sheridan	John Ford
Lance Daly	John Carney	John Crowley	Niall Heery

Lead Actor			
David Rawle	Daniel Day-Lewis	Maureen O'Hara	Liam Neeson
Jack Reynor	Fionnula Flanagan	Saoirse Ronan	Maisie Williams



- Using these films and any other Irish films you have seen, in groups brainstorm a list of character types, settings, themes and plots that you might expect to find in Irish film.

Characters	Settings	Plots	Themes
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- Compare your findings with your class. Would you expect to find these elements in Hollywood films? How would Hollywood films be similar or different?

### Watching Irish Film

- Watch an Irish film with your class and note the name of the film, director, year, and leading cast.
- What did you enjoy most about the film?
- Which character did you relate to the most in the film, and why?
- In groups discuss the characters, settings, and themes of this film, and then share them with your class.

Characters	Settings	Themes
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- Compare your findings to the list you compiled in Q.3 before watching this film. Has your opinion of Irish film changed since watching this film? Discuss as a class and explain your answers.
- Which was your favourite scene from the film?
  - Write a personal response to your favourite scene in the film, explaining what you liked about it, and how you related to it.



## Irish Film 2 – The Irish Film Industry

1. Choose an Irish filmmaker or Irish actor to research.

Watch one of their films and make a short (5 mins) presentation on the filmmaker or film actor and the film to your class. Use the questions below to help you prepare for the presentation.

- a) Where is the filmmaker/film actor from? Where did they grow up?
  - b) How did they become a filmmaker/film actor?
  - c) Name some of the films they have made or acted / performed in.
  - d) Which of their films did you choose to watch and why?
  - e) Describe the characters, settings and themes of the film.
  - f) What did you like about the film?
  - g) What contribution does this filmmaker or actor make to the Irish film industry in your opinion?
2. Did you know that 1/3 of film and TV made in Ireland is animation? Find out about an animation studio working in Ireland today.
    - a) Do they produce films or content for TV? Who is their target audience?
    - b) Name two productions the studio has made.
    - c) What style of animation do they specialise in (2D, 3D, hand drawn, CGI etc.)?
  3. List three different jobs a person can do at each of the following.
    - a) On a film set
    - b) At a production company
    - c) At a TV studio
    - d) At an animation studio
  4. Choose a particular role above that interests you, and write an article entitled 'A Day in the Life of a ... '  
e.g. scriptwriter/ animator/ casting agent / actor
  5. Find out about a local film production company and whether you can contact them to see what their work involves. Arrange this with your teacher.

Alternatively, contact someone you know that works in the film or TV industry.



## Irish Film 3 – Irish Short Films

1. Watch a number of Irish short films in class, and note down the plot, characters, and setting for each one.
2. Why do you think Irish filmmakers make short films? Discuss with your class using the films you have watched as examples.
3. Visit [www.irishfilmboard.ie](http://www.irishfilmboard.ie) . What does the Irish Film Board do?
4. In pairs, take one Irish short film and give a short presentation (1-2 minutes) to the class about the film. Use these questions to help you prepare for your presentation.
  - What did you like about this film?
  - Come up with a tagline for the film.
  - Are there any interesting filmmaking or animation techniques in the film?
  - Who directed the film? What else can you find out about them?
  - Has the film won any awards in Ireland or internationally?
5. What themes would you like to see an Irish short film about?
6. Come up with your own idea for a short film which would explore this theme.



## World Cinema

1. What do you think 'World Cinema' means? Brainstorm in pairs or groups and come up an explanation and some examples.
2. Fill in the chart below with your chosen examples.

Film title	Location or Setting	Plot	Theme	What do you learn about the country?
Whale Rider	New Zealand			

3. Think of a Hollywood film that has the same theme as one of the films you have listed above. Compare the two films under the following headings:

Setting	Characters	Costume and Props	Music	Special Effects

What are the main differences between the two types of film? Which do you prefer? Explain your answer.

4. Share these with your class. Are there any common themes or stories? What kinds of things can you learn about different countries through films?
5. What do you think is the main different between watching a film in your own language with a film in another language in with subtitles?
6. Refer to your Going to the Cinema worksheet. Does your local cinema show any films from around the world? Do you think they should?
7. Which countries would you like to see more film from and why? Or which cultures and traditions would you like to learn more about through film?



## Strand 1a - Sharing Film:

### My Reflection Note

As you prepare to present a scene of your choice to your class, this is a good opportunity to reflect back upon the course and what you've learned.

It's also a good time to think ahead and consider what excites you about making your own film project in Strand 2.

#### Looking Back

1. One aspect of film I enjoyed learning about was \_\_\_\_\_ because...
2. One film I identified with was \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
3. One way I've learned to think differently about films I watch is...
4. One thing I found difficult in this course was \_\_\_\_\_ because...
5. I watch films differently now than I did before,
6. One piece from my film notebook which best show my learning on this course is \_\_\_\_\_ . I chose this because...

#### Looking Ahead

7. One aspect of film I would like to learn more about is \_\_\_\_\_ because...
8. One aspect I would like to incorporate into my film project is \_\_\_\_\_ because...