RE FRAME'S

Reel Kids

FILM FESTIVAL

2017 TEACHERS GUIDE

Table of Contents

Think Beyond the Screen

Storytelling is a tradition that has been practiced by people around the world for centuries. Storytellers use the spoken word, the written word, and visual images to communicate their messages.

Film is a powerful storytelling medium. Film can be used to: tell stories that entertain and inform the viewer, present stories that document events, share stories that challenge our way of looking at the world.

The films shown at REEL Kids Film Festival are carefully chosen to heighten student awareness of concepts and issues related to global culture and traditions, the environment, diversity, education and social action.

.

The content in this resource aims to assist teachers to:
- Actively engage their students in worthwhile viewing experiences
- Connect viewing experiences with the everyday lives of students
- Broaden student understanding of the world in which they live
- Promote student discussion about important personal and social issues
- Develop students' understanding of the structure of narrative
- Encourage students to understand how filmmakers communicate with aud

Before Attending Reframe's REELkids Film Festival

Read publicity material about ReFrame's REELkids Film Festival. Discuss why students think this festival has been planned. (For example look at the poster, visit the website).

Discussion Topics

1. What is the purpose of a children's film festival?
2. What are your expectations of REELkids Film Festival?

Check out www.reelkids.ca

1) Students identify:
    • the venues used for REELkids;
    • REELkids' target audience;
    • the sponsors of REELkids.
2) Encourage students to choose three films whose titles interest them. Research these films to find:
   • the country and language of origin of each film;
   • the screening history of each film (where and when);
   • if the films have won awards at other festivals.

Students could complete their assignment by choosing the film that they would most like to view and explain reasons for their choice.

Pre-Screening Questions

1) Compare and contrast the experience of viewing film in different venues:
    i)   Galaxy/television at home;
    ii)   Galaxy/REELkids.

2) Explore the film title(s) of the REELkids program that you will attend. Consider and suggest the filmmaker's purpose for each.

3) Recall past viewing experiences. What can we learn about a film by reading its credits?

Questions To Think About While Viewing Films

1) What are your thoughts as you view a specific film?
2) What feelings does the film provoke?
3) What are the techniques and conventions used by the filmmaker to convey the message and create the emotional tone(s) of the film? Consider: camera angles, lighting, use of colour, sound effects, music, costumes, props. Is the film's style animation or live action or a combination of both?

After the Trip to REELkids Film Festival

Share Your Thoughts:

• Did you enjoy the films? Why or why not?
• Can you make personal connections, connections to other films, literature, global issues/situations?
• Identify the values and character strengths reflected in the film(s), e.g., perseverance, compassion, tolerance, courage, generosity, cooperation, friendliness, determination, honesty, enthusiasm, fairness, kindness, forgiveness.

Written Response to a Favourite Film

Include:

1) What is the title of the film that you enjoyed the most? What is its genre? What is its style? How do you know?
2) What conventions or techniques were employed by the filmmaker to effectively communicate his/her message?
3) What is the setting of the film? Describe it.
4) Who is/are the main character(s)? Describe them – appearance and character attributes.
5) What is the problem in the film? Whose problem? Why is it a problem?
6) Is the problem solved? How? If the problem is not solved, why not?
7) What is the film's message or main idea?
8) What personal, text, world connections can you make based on the film?
9) Write an advertisement for this film.
10) What questions did the film encourage you to ask? Have those questions been answered? If not, how and where could you find these answers?

It's important for students to understand that a film is made up of several parts, and that filmmakers carefully consider each of those parts when producing a film. As students analyze a film, they should be considering the following film aspects to gain a deeper understanding of the piece.

Each aspect is described below with examples of how and why it is used. Simple activities follow each description to help students explore the aspect further.

Genre & Style

Most students will be familiar with at least a few film genres, and be able to identify films that fit into each category. The genre is important in defining what will happen in the film, giving it a narrative structure. Genres in film can easily be compared to genres in literature. Knowing a film's genre helps viewers predict what will happen in the film, where it will take place, and what types of characters will be featured. Many films will combine multiple genres. For example, the *Harry Potter* series has aspects of action-adventure, comedy, drama, fantasy, mystery, and romance, to name just a few.

Style compliments the genre by giving the film its *look*. Every filmmaker has his/her own filmmaking style, similar to how each author has his/her own writing style. Style in filmmaking refers to the techniques that the filmmaker uses to set the mood and feeling of the final film. Two films may be from the same genre but have different styles. For example, both *The Muppets* and *Cars 2* are adventure comedies, however *The Muppets* is live-action while *Cars 2* is an animation.

Genres include: action-adventure, art film, comedy, documentary, drama, educational, fantasy, horror, musical, mystery, romance, sci-fi, thriller, western, and many others.

Aspects of Style include: animation or live-action, camera angles, cinematography (type of camera used, quality, 2D or 3D), colour, costumes, dialogue and language, editing, lighting, pace (slow or fast), period (past, present, future), perspective (first-person, third-person), setting, sound.

Activity

Select 5-10 movies that the students will be familiar with.

Guide the students in creating a list of genres for each of the movies. You can suggest they imagine themselves working in a video store and having to put the movies on the

different genre category shelves. Encourage the students to discuss the differences and similarities in the movies based on their style. This could involve the comparison of animation to live-action, happy stories to scary stories, or movies set in the past, present, and future.

Sound

Sound in a film includes speech, music, sound effects, and *silence*. Sound can impact the style of the film (music for mood) and play a large role in the story (dialogue). *Silence* is also considered a part of sound as some filmmakers use it intentionally, to create suspense during a film with sound or to produce a silent film.

Activity

Select a few short film pieces that are less than 5 minutes (commercials work great), and have the students *listen* to the piece without any visuals (cover the screen with fabric). Then encourage the students to make predictions about the genre and style of the film based on the music, sounds effects and dialogue. Afterward, play the film a second time with the visuals so students can see how close their predictions were.

Setting

The setting of a film is where and when it takes place. The setting is often suggested by the genre – a western will likely take place in the past and in the *wild west*, while sci-fi films are usually based in the future and in outer space.

Activity

Choose a selection of films from the REELKids program that your students will be attending. Direct them to locate the films' countries of origin on a map. Students can research these countries (climate, culture, religion, economy) and compare them Canada.

Colour

While colour may not seem like a conscious choice for filmmakers, many of them use it intentionally and artistically. Colour can imply a film's mood (bright colours in a happy film, dull colours in a sad film), target an audience (blue for boys, pink for girls), define character roles (light colours for good characters, dark colours for bad characters), or indicate something special about a certain character or object by contrasting its colour with the rest of the scene.

Activity

Based on the descriptions of the films from the REELKids program your students will be attending, have them make a list of colours that they think will be prominent in each film. Then have them watch the trailers for the films (found on the REELKids website) and see how many of the colours were prominent in the film.

Cinematography

Cinematography is what goes on behind the scenes of a film and what is seen in each shot. The type of film used (grainy 35mm or crisp HD), the lighting, camera angles (see *Camera Angles Information below*), camera movements (zooming and panning), and editing are all part of cinematography. It also includes any special effects, like slowing down or speeding up the film, using stop-motion animation, or *greenscreening* characters into computer animated scenes (like the film Avatar).

Activity

Select 2-3 trailers (found on the REELKids website) for films from the REELKids program your students will be attending. Using the *Camera Angles* handout, encourage the students to identify the various shots used in each trailer – you may want to have them watch it multiple times, or pause during each shot.

Camera Angles

Long Shot (LS)

Used to show the scenery (*establishing shot*), large objects or groups of people

Medium Shot (MS)

Used to focus people acting or a person talking and using their hands

Close Up (CU)

Used to focus on a single person talking or a facial expression

Extreme Close Up (XCU)

Used to emphasize a facial expression for focus on a small object

Bird's-Eye View (BEV)

Used to give a perspective from above or make objects and people look smaller

Worm's-Eye View (WEV)

Used to give a perspective from below or make objects and people look larger

FACT AND OPINION

It is important for all students to know the difference between films based on fact and films based on opinion.

Films based on **fact** are often called documentaries (although some documentaries are based on opinion), and give the viewer an accurate representation of an event or issue. They can also be presented as reenactments of a situation that the filmmaker wasn't able to capture on film. They are used to educate the viewer and to develop awareness of an issue or situation.

Films based on **opinion** can be represented by any genre or style (including documentary) and they share the filmmaker's viewpoint or perception of an event or issue with the viewer. The filmmaker of an opinion-based film hopes to convince the viewer to believe in something that he/she feels is important.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING FILM

- Who made this film?

- What techniques are used to create this film?

- Where was this film made?

- Who might the target audience of this film be?

- Is this film based on fact, opinion or something else?

- Who might the film benefit or harm?

- What actions might I take in response to this film?

ACTIVITY 1 – FILM PREDICTIONS

Before and After Festival

This activity has two parts, the first to be done prior to attending the festival, and the second to be done after.

Before the festival, take a selection of films from the program your students will be attending and provide them with the film titles and descriptions. Have students write individually or in groups what they think the film will be about, making predictions about characters, setting, style, genre, and the plot or story of the film.

After the festival, students can compare their predictions to the actual films to identify similarities and differences. Students can then discuss which parts they like better in their prediction or the actual film, and why they think those parts work best.

ACTIVITY 2 – ANALYZING ADVERTISMENTS

Before or After Festival

Although REFRAME'S REELKids Film Festival focuses on international films, advertisements make a great entry point for teaching media literacy. Advertisements are short, direct, and familiar to students, making if easier to analyze them in depth.

Select a number of **simple advertisement media texts** (television commercials, magazine adverts, promotional websites) and discuss the questions below with your class to investigate each piece. Listed with each question are prompt questions and further suggestions about what to look for.

1. **What do you see or hear in the advertisement?**
   What objects and items play a role in the piece? Are there people in it? Who are they (age, gender, race)? Where does the advertisement take place? What

colours, shapes or text are used? Is there music, and does it add to the mood? What sound effects are used, and are they used at particular times?

2. **What style is used in the advertisement?**

   Is it made using animation or live-action? What is the mood (happy, sad, scary)? What part of the advertisement suggests the mood (music, colours, characters)? Is it based on real life (documentary) or opinion (scripted)? Most advertisements are based on opinion, but it is important for students to identify this to contrast with media texts based on real life (ie documentaries).

3. **What is the advertisement promoting?**

   Is it a product or service or something else? Is it something being sold to make a profit or something that will better the community? Does the advertisement promote certain values or beliefs?

4. **Who created the advertisement?**

   Is it a company selling a product or service? Who would be involved with the production of the piece (videographers, sound technicians, make-up artists, editors, writers, web developers, etc)?

5. **Who do you think is the target audience?**

   Is it for children/youth? If yes, what age? Is it for adults? Is it for men or women? Is it for people of a certain race? Have students look back at who is in the advertisement, what style was used, and what is being promoted to see if this relates to the target audience that they predicted.

6. **What action might the advertisement want the viewer to take?**

   Does it simply want them to buy something? Does it want them to go somewhere (a location or a website)? Does it want viewers to talk to their friends about the ad?

Having gone through each of the questions, have students reflect on all of the details and work that go into making a simple advertisement.

Before or After Festival

Students will imagine their own short films and consider the many factors that must be discussed and decided upon before a film can actually be made.

Create a list of issues, both local and global, that would be suitable film topics. Some suggestions of topics are environmental issues, health and mental health, bullying, new Canadians, issues related to Indigenous Peoples. Direct small groups of 3-5 students to select a message from the list that interests them.

Working through the following steps, the groups will go through the development process (or *pre-production*) of a short film. This will help students to better understand how short films are made and enable them to analyze screen media with greater confidence.

1. **Identify your target audience.**
   Who do you want to hear your message? Who will be most likely to listen to your message?

2. **Determine whether you want to do a scripted film or make a documentary.**
   In order to communicate your message, will you write a script and have characters act out scenes, or will you capture real life situations?

3. **Choose a style and genre for your short film.**
   Would animation or live-action be better at capturing the attention of your target audience? Will it be a comedy, action adventure, parody, musical, or something else?

4. **Determine what action you want your viewer to take.**
   Do you want your viewers to change their thinking and consequently a part of their lifestyle? Do you want your viewers talk to their friends and family about your message? Or do you simply want your viewers to be aware of the issue?

5. **Create a simple story or scenario to tell your message.**
   What will happen at the beginning? In the middle? How will it end?

With their short film ideas finished, groups can present them to their class as *film pitches* or even *skits*.

<div style="background-color:orange; text-align:center">ACTIVITY 4 - ANIMATION</div>

Before <u>or</u> After Festival

Create a simple stop motion animation using plasticine and a digital camera. Students will gain an understanding of how much work goes into creating an animated film.

- Make a simple object from plasticine such as a worm

- Draw/make a simple background to put your worm in front of or on top

- Use a digital camera to take a photo of your worm and the background

- Move the worm along the background a little bit and then take another photo

- Continue until you have 24 photos. This is the number of images you would need to create one second of film using a video camera

- If you print the photos as thumbnails on light cardstock and then staple them together you would make a flip book

-

<div style="background-color:orange; text-align:center">ACTIVITY 5 – HAVE YOUR SAY</div>

Write a review for one of the films you have watched at ReFrame's REELkids. Below are five tips to help write a great review.

1. **Lights, camera, action!**

There are many people whose decisions influence the film you eventually see. Writers, directors, actors, set designers, sound technicians and editors all play an important role in this process. Identify some elements of the film you respond to most and explain why they do or do not work.

2. **Don't give away the plot.**

This is key to writing a film review. Explain a bit about the plot but be careful not to reveal any surprises or major twists. Most importantly—do not give away the ending.

3. Grab our attention!

Beginning your review with "This film is about…" doesn't scream "READ ME!" Write creatively and edit your work to be sure your review keeps the reader interested from beginning to end.

4. Consider the actors/documentary subjects

Did the characters do a good job? Were they believable? If your film was a documentary, did the individual(s) make you care what happens to them? Tell the readers your opinion.

5. Consider how the film made you feel

Filmmakers want audiences to respond to their films. Be aware of how you are feeling while you are watching the film. Do you feel happy, sad, bored, excited or inspired? Detail your overall feeling at the end of the film.

ReFrame's REELkids would love to hear your opinions about the films you have viewed. Send your reviews to us at info@reelkids.ca

ACTIVITY 6 – CREATE A STORYBOARD

A storyboard is a panel or series of panels on which a set of sketches is arranged depicting consecutively the important changes of scene and action in a series of shots (as for film, television shows or commercials). Storyboards are a visual script or plan of camera shots that will tell the story.

Divide students into small groups. Have them decide what their story will be. For example, if they were planning to film a day in the life of the average intermediate student, they would need to decide on specific scenes that would best represent what happens at school on a typical day.

Once they have decided which scenes they felt were representative, the following must be decided:

- Who will appear in each scene?

- Which camera angel is best for each scene? Refer to the camera angles information on page 11 of this manual

- What transitions will work best between scenes?

- Should music or sound effects be used to enhance particular scenes?

Use index cards—one per scene—so they can be moved around easily if the sequence changes.

Tips for successful storyboarding

1. Storyboards are not meant to be the end product (meaning they are part of the pre-production process of film making), and thus students do not need to make them perfectly. Stick figures, circles, boxes and other substitutes for figures are recommended.

2. Everything should be done in pencil for ease of editing.

3. Remember to number each index card so they can be placed in the correct order.

4. Every scene on the storyboard should somehow contribute to the message/purpose of the intended video/film.

5. Storyboards depict major scenes. They are not a frame by frame recreation of the intended video/film.

EXPLORING THE THEMATIC ELEMENTS OF OUR FILMS

The following activities can be used to further explore the themes found in the films shown at ReFrame's REELkids. Whether you choose to have class discussions, break into small groups, write, or create an artistic piece, students can be given the opportunity to think critically about some of the themes presented at the festival.

Belonging

'Belonging' is a difficult term to define, but it is something that people feel emotionally and recognize as being an important part of our social well-being.

Explore Further

A number of these films focus on issues and problems faced by young people.

- Why is belonging a recurring theme in these films?

- How can young people deal with the challenges they face when they feel separated from others?

- Who can help them when the challenges get too complicated?

- Find out about resources available for young people who are struggling to deal with an issue or problem

- Create a poster depicting the theme of belonging

Imagination

Imagination is the ability to form new images and sensations that are not visible to others. These new ideas help us see the world and ourselves differently.

Explore Further

- Why is animation a particularly effective form of film making for exploring the world of imagination?

- Discuss where filmmakers get their ideas when creating a film set in a make believe world

- Draw a picture of a world that could only exist in your imagination

- Classify ReFrame's REELkids films using a Venn diagram according to those that the students think are based in reality, those that take the viewer on a journey of fantasy led by the filmmaker's imagination, and then those that combine both fantasy and reality

Differences

Everyone is different but sometimes our differences can make us feel excluded.

<u>Explore Further</u>

- What are some of the challenges faced by individuals in these films that make them feel different from others?

- What are some of the ways these characters deal with being different?

- Have you had the experience of being stereotyped because of one aspect of your identity, i.e. the way you look, your gender, ethnicity, clothes, etc.?

Change

Life is about change. Nothing and nobody ever stays the same, but this is not always easy to accept. In many of these films, characters are either facing changes in their lives or are deciding to make a change.

<u>Explore Further</u>

- What are some of the changes explored in these films and how did the characters deal with them?

- What are some of the reasons a person will decide to make a change?

- Sometimes change comes with great uncertainty. What are some of the uncertainties faced by the individuals in these films?

- Write a fictional story about someone who is facing a big change

- Write a journal entry about a change you had to face or are now facing

World Issues

Environment, poverty, refugees, education, racism, war, human rights, religion…the list goes on and on. Whether the issues are local or global, we all have a responsibility to be aware of the challenges that affect our world.

<u>Explore Further</u>

- ReFrame's REELkids committee members are dedicated to finding age appropriate films that explore a variety of world issues. Why do you think the committee feels it is extremely important for their audiences to view these types of films?

- Comprise a Venn diagram classifying issues that affect us locally, those that affect us globally, and those that can be considered both local and global

- Often times there are no easy answers when it comes to solving world issues. Divide into small groups and choose an issue raised in one of the films screened. Investigate possible solutions. Debate why/why not your ideas could work