

SERIES

TEACHING FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

# Teaching Contemporary British Cinema

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Education



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# What is a British film?

You will need to conduct your research using a website such as the Internet Movie Database: <http://uk.imdb.com> or relevant back issues of a film magazine, such as *Sight and Sound* or *Empire*.

## Activity 1

- 1 The British Academy of Film and TV Arts (BAFTA) awards, sometimes referred to as the British Oscars, have a Best British Film category (as well as a Best Film category). The nominations for 2004 were:  
*Cold Mountain* (Anthony Minghella)  
*Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Peter Webber)  
*In This World* (Michael Winterbottom)  
*Love Actually* (Richard Curtis)  
*Touching the Void* (Kevin MacDonald).
- 2 Research these films to discover what you think made them eligible for the British film award nomination. You should consider:
  - Story and plot: What is the film about? Does it relate to British subject matter?
  - Actors: What nationality? Are stars used in the film?
  - Director: Who is the director of the film? What nationality are they? Do you know any other films that they have directed?
  - Style: How would you characterise the style of the film?
  - Genre: Does it belong to a specific genre? If so which? Does it remind you of any other films?
  - Production company: Who financed the film? Where is the production company based? Is it a co-production from different countries? Did any of the films receive funding from the Film Council?
  - Distribution: Who promoted the film? Where and how was it promoted?
  - Exhibition: When was it released? What kind of release strategy did it have, how many prints were available? What was the competition?
- 3 Do you consider all of these films to be British? Give arguments for and against their classification as British films.

## Activity 2

Choose one of the films and research the marketing campaign (you can refer to film posters, the film's website, DVD or video cover etc)

- How has the film been sold? What features have been emphasised? (Star, genre, country of origin etc)