

Film in Migration Classrooms: General Guide



FILM – A LANGUAGE WITHOUT BORDERS

A project by

VISION KINO
Netzwerk für Film und
Medienkompetenz

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Forever

IFILM
DET DANSKE FILMINSTITUT

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THE "FILM - A LANGUAGE WITHOUT BORDERS" PROGRAMME

The people behind this project believe that film is a 'language without borders', that can connect people regardless of their origin, age, gender and life experience. Modern societies are shaped by political and social processes such as industrialisation, colonisation, and globalisation, and we believe film can help us understand how. Based on this understanding, German non-profit organisation **VISION KINO**, together with the **BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE** and the **DANISH FILM INSTITUTE**, have developed an education programme, consisting of eight European feature films for children and young adults, as well as three classic shorts.

The selection of films is supplemented by educational materials which provide students and teachers with opportunities to discuss emotions, identity and the common exploration of European film. In Denmark, England and Germany researchers will examine the way in which the selected films might offer children and young adults a collective movie experience as well as an opportunity for intercultural learning. Joint results from the three countries will form the starting point for the dissemination of the programme in other European countries.

About us

"Film – A Language Without Borders" is a project of the British Film Institute, the Danish Film Institute and Vision Kino gGmbH and was developed by Mark Reid (BFI), Charlotte Giese (DFI) and Sarah Duve (Vision Kino gGmbH)

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Materials published by:
Vision Kino gGmbH
Network for Film and Media Competence
Sarah Duve (V.i.S.d.P.)
Große Präsidentenstraße 9
D-10178 Berlin
Tel: +49 (0)30 2757 7571

Concept and Text: Laura Caterina Zimmermann
Editorial: Elena Solte
Editor: Sabine Genz, Elena Solte
Design: Laura Caterina Zimmermann
Picture Credits: Danish Film Institute (Det Danske Filminstitut), British Film Institute, Bundesverband Jugend und Film e.V. (BJF)

INTRODUCTION TO THE MATERIALS

These teaching materials are aimed at teachers and educators in settings shaped by migration, who would like to work with films. The material explains the pedagogical approach developed for the film project "Film - A Language Without Borders", complementing the individual guides to films, and offering general suggestions and tasks for dealing with other films in class.

You can find the film selection and the corresponding teaching materials under the following link: www.visionkino.de/projekte/film-a-language-without-borders/ and in English at: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/education/film-language-without-borders>

FILM EDUCATION IN 'MIGRATION SETTINGS' (FOR GERMAN SCHOOLS ONLY)

The diversity of school classes in Germany differs greatly depending on the region or district. While more than 70% of children and young people in Frankfurt am Main and Offenbach have a migration background, the figures in eastern Germany are far below the national average of 33%. Since the number of children under the age of three with a migration background more than tripled from 2006-2015, it is assumed that the number of children and young people with a migration background in Germany will continue to rise continuously. These materials were expressly developed not only for children and young people with experience of escape or migration. Rather, mixed groups, of children both with and without a migration background, are regarded as target groups in the materials. Different social affiliations and individual characteristics are taken into account as well as different linguistic and cinematic experiences. The German language should not be regarded as the sole means of dealing with the films. A special sensitivity is to be developed for foreign images as well as stereotypes and prejudices with regard to minorities.

If you want to teach in a DAZ class and use film explicitly for teaching German, the material collection of VISION KINO "Learn German with Films: See, Understand & Discuss" is also suitable.

www.visionkino.de/projekte/deutsch-lernen-mit-filmen-sehen-verstehen-besprechen/

SPECIAL FEATURES OF CHILDREN'S FILM PERCEPTION

Children get up in the cinema and applaud, they give the protagonists tips or sing along. These observations show that children, the younger they are, see and experience films differently than adults. Events and characters in the film are often closer to them, because they take part personally

through the experience. Therefore we can approach certain topics more directly and without prejudice with children and film. The following peculiarities of children's film perception are also taken into account in the method proposals of these materials:

- Children perceive films very sensually and the film becomes a personal experience. This leads to children, on the one hand, interacting with the film, but, on the other hand, seeking a reference to reality through a need for communication and physical reactions. These reactions are often confused with a lack of attention.
- The focus of the film experience for children is clearly on the emotional experiences of the protagonists. Since children's film experiences are strongly marked by empathy, they should always have enough room to deal with these feelings. At the same time, they should never feel pressured to talk about their personal feelings if they do not want to.
- Children determine for themselves what is relevant in a film. The relationship of a film to everyday life and personal experiences is often the most important criterion for children. Since these connections can be very different, it is difficult to count on the fulfilment of all too clear expectations when viewing with children.
- Different interpretations are only produced when the whole film is experienced. Children's film perception is often free of the kinds of mental concepts with which we adults sort and organize our impressions (and/ or, children may well have their own 'conceptual organisers' in this regard). This makes it possible for groups of children to experience very different perspectives on the same situation at the same time, which in turn can lead to lively discussions with surprising moments.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS

Due to the different experiences that children and young people, but also adults have with films, we must expect that pedagogical ideas and goals can be reversed and reinterpreted at any time. That is why it makes sense to approach work as openly as possible. In order to create a common level from which the film is seen, discussed and edited together, teachers should get involved with the film in the same way as they expect from the children and young people. These film educational materials include observation tasks and food for thought for teachers in order to help them reflect on their own expectations and thoughts.

EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, TRAUMA

Films can trigger strong emotions. We cannot influence these, they arise immediately and can sometimes overwhelm us. We can observe emotions in other people's reactions, especially facial expressions, which are considered to be the mirror image of our emotions. Children and teenagers often react with the whole body to process emotions in a film. They might get up or talk to someone, or they might leave the room. If a child gets scared during the film, an accompanying adult should sit next to that child. Maybe their presence is enough to get a reference to reality that calms the child.

It is always to be expected that children and young people will be reminded of possible traumas

through films. We often do not know what the children and young people, especially children and young people with migration and refugee experiences, have experienced or still experience in advance. The following considerations will help in the selection of the film: What previous experience do my students have? What previous experience do I have myself? What previous experience could my students have had if I know nothing about them? How do I deal with sudden unexpected emotions of my students for which I cannot prepare myself?

AIMS OF FILM EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- Getting to know and analysing aesthetic choices in film
- Opportunities for reflection for students
- Awareness raising for film education in migration settings
- Possibility for teachers to reflect
- Creating a common experience for the classroom

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SELECT A FILM

Students can be included in the selection of a focus film. Perhaps the students know a film they would like to show in a group. Or a conversation about films and cinema in general might lead to deciding as a group on a certain film. Scenes, trailers or short film summaries can be used to weigh films against each other.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHER REFLECTION

It is always advisable to watch a film before watching it with children or young people. The following reflection questions for the selection of films aim at becoming aware of one's own attitudes and one's role in heterogeneous learning groups.

- How is society represented in the film? Is the society depicted in the film open to ‚strangeness‘ or ‚difference‘?
- Does the film represent injustices? Does the film offer solutions to these injustices?
- How are characters portrayed in the film? Are characters assigned to different groups in the film? Are boundaries of belonging shown in the film?
- Does the film offer identification possibilities for the students with whom I would like to see the film?
- If the film focuses on minorities, what is its perspective?
- Are different cultural practices and symbolic forms presented in the film (gender roles, norms such as religious taboos or public borders, languages)?
- Can different value systems be experienced in film? Are foreign images, stereotypes and prejudices (re)produced or broken in the film?

SUGGESTIONS FOR APPROACHES

The proposed methods for working with films in migration settings refer to three phases: before the film, during the film and after the film.

BEFORE THE FILM

Getting in the mood for the shared film experience

Experiences with films can be very different. Our family backgrounds, our socialisation, the importance of films in our countries of origin and our preferences mean that we each develop a different relationship to films. Which emotional effect films stimulate is individual, and everyone has their own ideas of what a good film is.

IDEAS FOR TEACHING

Round table on film

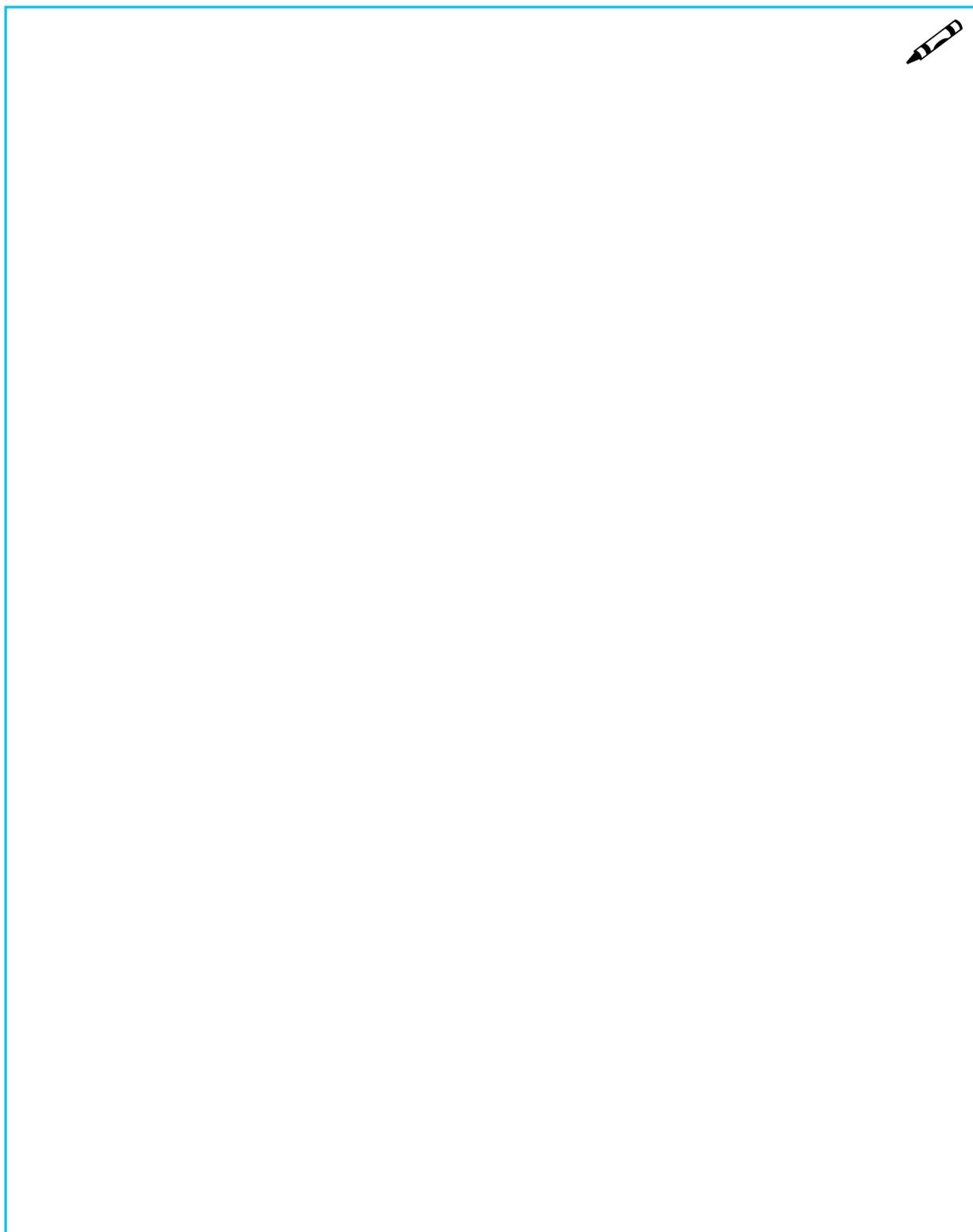
The following questions stimulate the exchange of previous experience and expectations:

- Where do you watch movies? In the cinema or at home on TV or on your computer, tablet or smartphone? (It is also possible to vote without words using picture cards.)
- What movies have you seen? (Pictures or collages can be made into your favourite film.)
- Which films do you like? Why?

As a more practical approach, a joint research of favourite films on the Internet is also a good way to get in the mood for the shared experience. Trailers on video portals or pictures and film posters are searched for and presented to each other.

REFLECTION OFFER FOR TEACHERS

- How many of my students go to the cinema regularly? How do I rate that? (Am I surprised?)
- What contribution can film make to schools and education? What do I expect from working with a film with my class?



From the idea to the screen: film production

A lot of work was done before a film could be seen on the screen or a screen. From the idea of the film to the shooting, through post-production to sales and marketing, a film goes through many stages in which countless people were involved.

IDEAS FOR TEACHING

Film Production Idea Collection

The question is written on the blackboard or on a poster: "What is needed to make a film?"

Students could mime different aspects: it can be people, professions, objects, work processes or something else. The other students are guessing out loud what is being shown. The terms are written around the question. Then an order is considered together.

- What happens before the shooting?
- What happens during the shooting?
- What happens after the shooting?
- The individual terms are surrounded by three different colors.
- Which role in the film would you like to take on yourself?

DURING THE FILM

The visit to the cinema

IDEAS FOR TEACHING

Round of talks on going to the cinema

Immediately before going to the cinema (on the way there, in the cinema on site...) and especially if the students have never been to the cinema before or not so often, a conversation about the course of a cinema performance is a good idea. Darkness and loud noises can be unsettling. An exact idea of the process can take away fears and give the students inside security.

- What happens in the cinema? It's getting dark. Maybe a curtain will open. It gets loud and the screen is very large. Where does the picture come from?

- Where are the toilets? Can students eat and drink? Are there other school classes coming? How long does the film last?
- The mobile phones are switched off. The bright screens disturb others.
- What do the students do when they get scared?

REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

The peculiarities of children's film perception can be traced in the cinema when we observe the students. Young people perceive films less physically and respond or control themselves internally more than younger children, but even so, films have a more direct and emotional effect on them than on adults.

- How do the students behave during the film?
- What are the students' physical reactions to the film?
- Which scenes do the students find funny? What scenes scare them?



AFTER THE FILM

Talk about the film experience

The need for children and young people to communicate, which is often already perceptible during the film, makes it almost necessary to give children and young people the opportunity to exchange experiences directly after the film.

IDEAS FOR TEACHING

The following lesson suggestions for debriefing can be combined with each other or implemented individually.

Debriefing without words

The children draw an emoticon to tell how they liked the film. Then they paint or replay the most important scene of the film.

The children are read aloud or shown adjectives in turn: boring, beautiful, fast, slow, loud, quiet, funny, adventurous, creepy, surprising. If the adjective matches their film experience, they stand up. Then they sit down again.

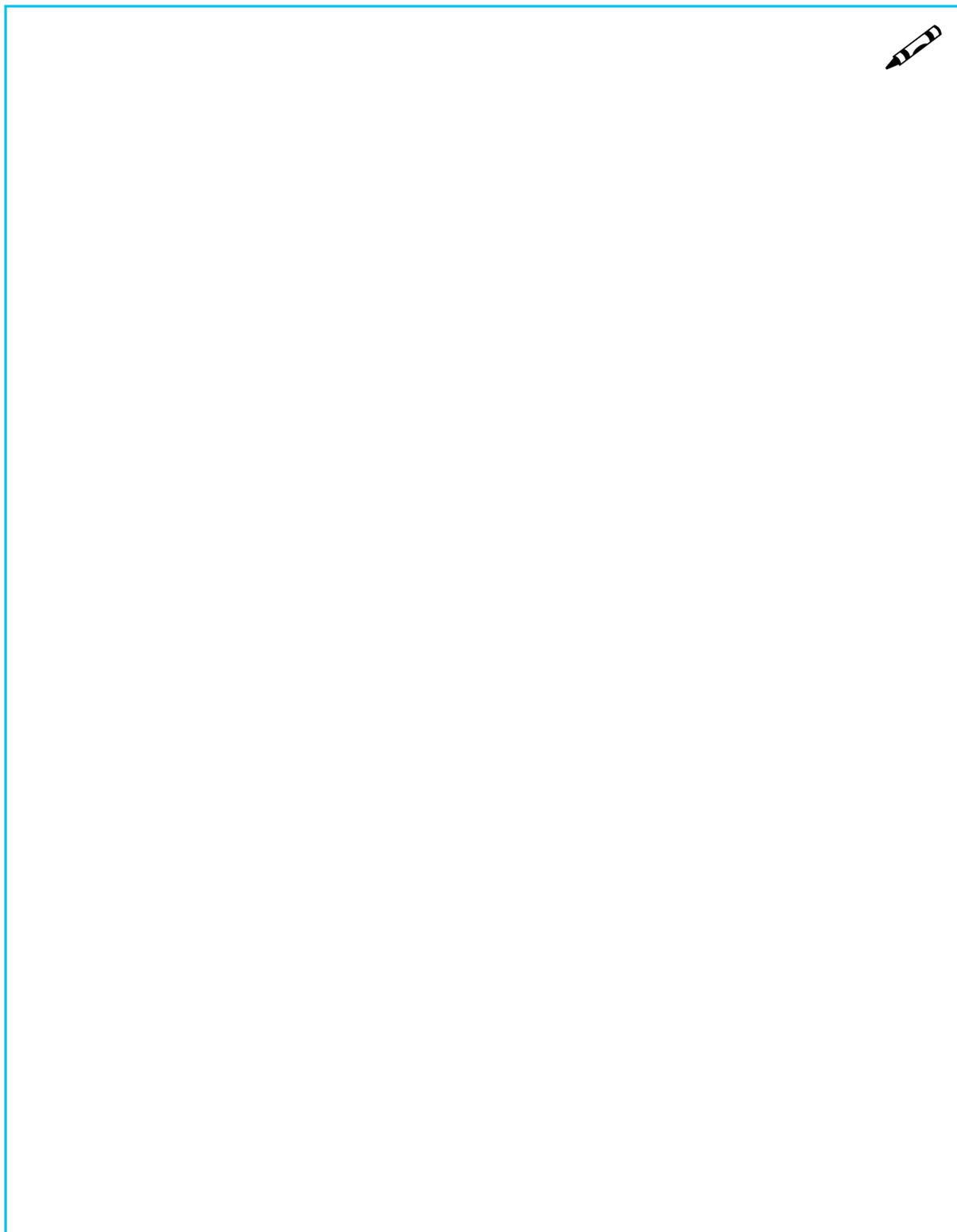
Round of talks on the film

Pupils and teachers describe their first impressions. (The teachers describe their impressions last, in order not to lead any opinions.) The first associations can also be written down or painted on. This alternative is particularly suitable if the group is very large, and there would be very long waiting times or if there are linguistic differences between the pupils in the class. Student impressions can then be presented.

- What would you like to say about the film?
- Do you have any questions about the film?
- What were your feelings during the movie? How did you feel after the movie?

REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

- What reactions and observations of the students surprised me? Did they differ greatly?
- Which of my observations as well as comments and questions of the pupils have I noticed that the pupils lack background knowledge?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for writing reflections. In the top right corner of the box, there is a small, stylized icon of a pencil.

Feelings in the film

Facial expression is considered the mirror image of our emotions, but how often do we really stand in front of the mirror and observe our own emotions? In the cinema we follow the protagonists up close and often experience them in very emotional situations. Thus, a person who has a completely different world to ours, or a person whose actions or opinions we disagree with, can suddenly be very close to us. On the emotional level, we reflect on different perspectives without talking about them, possibly using linguistic clichés, ascriptions and patterns of interpretation. Since children and young people perceive films particularly emotionally, there is a great opportunity for them to deal particularly intensively with certain topics through the level of feeling in the film.

IDEAS FOR TEACHING

Round table on emotions

The focus can be on individual situations in the film, in which the pupils' impressions from the film are presented. Here the bow to one's own world can be stretched by starting from the emotions in the film in order to talk about one's own emotions. At this level, the heterogeneity of the pupils' living environments plays a less important role, and problems, fears and wishes can be communicated more easily.

- How do the protagonists feel in the pictures? What did they just experience?
- Do you know those feelings?
- Did you ever feel alike? How did the protagonists deal with these emotions?

Creative task on the role of facial expressions

In small groups of no more than four people, the students include the feelings the protagonists in the film had. In turn, they put themselves into one of these feelings and photograph their facial expressions. They can use their smartphones or other cameras if provided.

Afterwards we will discuss together:

- How different can facial expressions be from a feeling?
- What feelings are always expressed in the same way?

Body language game

1. Every corner of the room is assigned a feeling: Pride, sadness, joy, courage. The students are evenly distributed over the four corners of the room and put themselves in the feeling assigned to them. Then they are presented with different tasks in turn: Express the feeling with your body and your facial expressions.

2. start a conversation with another person in your corner: greeting, exchange a few words, goodbye. Always remember your feelings!
3. Three, imagine it's raining: Then what are you doing? React out of your feelings.
4. Four: Imagine that you have forgotten your homework.
5. Imagine you can do magic all of a sudden.
6. start a conversation with a person in another corner: greeting, exchange a few words, goodbye.
7. Start a conversation with a person in another corner: Imagine you had a fight with that person and you meet for the first time.
8. Start a conversation with a person in another corner: Imagine you are friends with that person, but you haven't seen him in a long time.

The game is evaluated together:

- Did you identify with the feeling?
- In which situations was it difficult to play the feeling, in which was it easy?
- How did the situation change when you spoke to students from another corner?

REFLECTION OFFER FOR TEACHERS

- What different approaches to emotions do my students have? Who finds it easy to express emotions? Who's having a hard time? Who expresses feelings more physically and who less?
- In which situations was I surprised by my students?



How film uses techniques to create atmosphere

Film techniques can be used to underline the mood and atmosphere of the story told in the film, for example through colouring, light, music, camera settings and editing techniques.

IDEAS FOR TEACHING

Creative task on the subject of colour and lighting in film

The choice of colour of a film determines its mood. Dark colours seem rather sad to us, bright colours make us rather cheerful. Before viewing the film, the students receive one of the two observation assignments.

- Watch how color is used in the film.
- Watch how light is used in the film.

After the film we will discuss together:

- Did you notice anything special about the colours or the light?
- In which scene did you particularly notice the choice of colour and the light?
- How did the respective colouring and lighting design affect you?

Painting and changing a scene

- How does the mood in a scene change when the colour and light change?

Each selects a scene from the film, which he/she remembers well and paints a picture from it by changing the colors and the light. From a rather "dark/grey" scene design s/he makes it "bright/colored" or the other way around.

Working with photos and color filters

Every computer and smartphone provides an easy way to edit photos in an image editing program. With different color filters, photos can be changed in their mood with a click.

Depending on the age of the students inside color filters can be tried out with their own photo on their own Smartphone or it can be shown to them on a whiteboard with an image processing program on the computer.

Practical task on the subject of film music

Film music is an effective means of creating a mood. Film music can create the atmosphere of a film or make the feelings and thoughts of characters in the film clear.

A scene in which music can be heard in the background can be selected from any film. The scene is then shown once without sound and then once with sound. You can also play other music to the scene to make the effect clearer.

Afterwards we will discuss together:

- How did the scene without music in the background affect you? What kind of mood did it create?
- How has the effect of the scene changed through the use of the original music?
- Which of the other music changed the scenes the most?
- Which music was a good match for the scene and which not? Justify your opinion.

Creative task on the subject of cutting/assembly

At first glance, a photo story has a visible cut, since it consists of individual images that are put into an order.

In small groups, the students include a story on an important theme from the film (friendship, family, courage...). This story will be told with 10 pictures. In preparation for their photo story, the students think about possible places, objects, people and settings for the pictures and draw a corresponding storyboard.

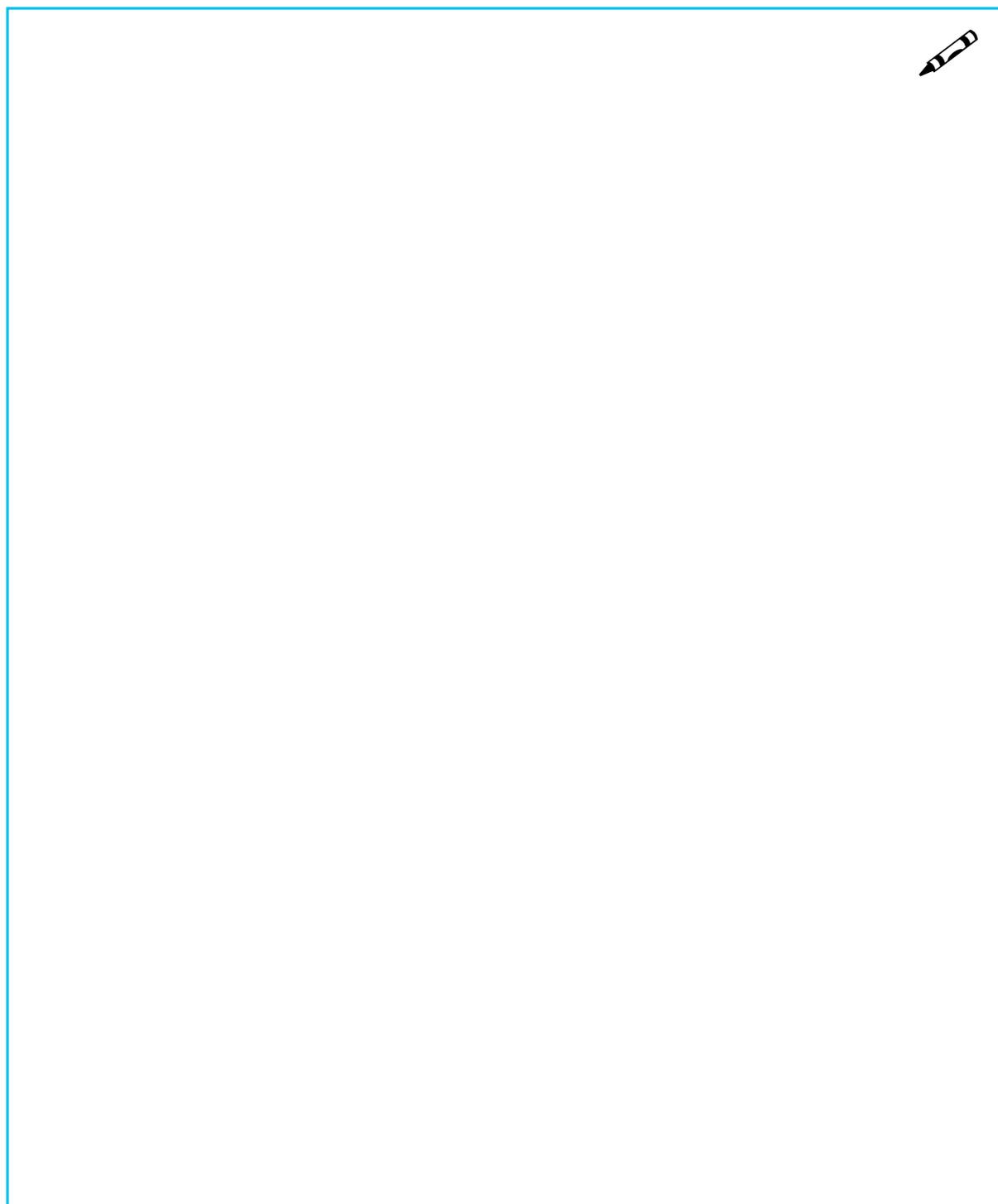
- What should be on each photo? Draw a storyboard as a template for your photos. (Works for example also with detail shots, close-ups or wide shots etc.)

Students can use their smartphones to take photos or get a camera. Afterwards the photos can be shown on a whiteboard or printed out and stuck on a poster. The stories can then be discussed using the following questions:

- Which elements of the plot are shown in the photos, which have you left out?
- Why did you decide on a certain attitude? How do they support the story? Also take a close look at the transitions between the individual images.
- Do the images follow a chronological order or are there time jumps into the past or future?
- Which different places can be seen on the individual pictures and how are they connected?

REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

- How did the students work together in the small groups?
- Are the photo stories very different in their implementation?
- What is the focus of the picture design of the pupils inside?
- How did the students react to the work with the film?
- Did I choose the right film?

A large empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for reflection. In the top right corner of the box, there is a small black and white icon of a pencil.