

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival
for Young Audiences



Teachers' Resource: Sitting Next to Zoe

For ages 15+

Created by Gillian Cunningham

Discovery Film Festival: Sat 25 October – Sun 9 November 2014

discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts


EUROPA CINEMAS
MEDIA-PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

DUNDEE
ONE CITY, MANY DISCOVERIES

 
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With support from DCA Cinema and DCA Community & Education Team



Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery. They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals. Each resource aims to:

- Support and extend working with film in the classroom
- Help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit for delivery of CfE
- Develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21st Century Literacy / moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from www.discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/resources or via the Discovery Film Festival area on GLOW, which can be found within the Dundee 21st Century Literacy Group.

We do hope that you find this useful and enjoy your cinema experience with us,

- Discovery Film Festival team



Sitting Next to Zoe

Dir: Ivana Lalović
Switzerland / 2013 / 1h28m

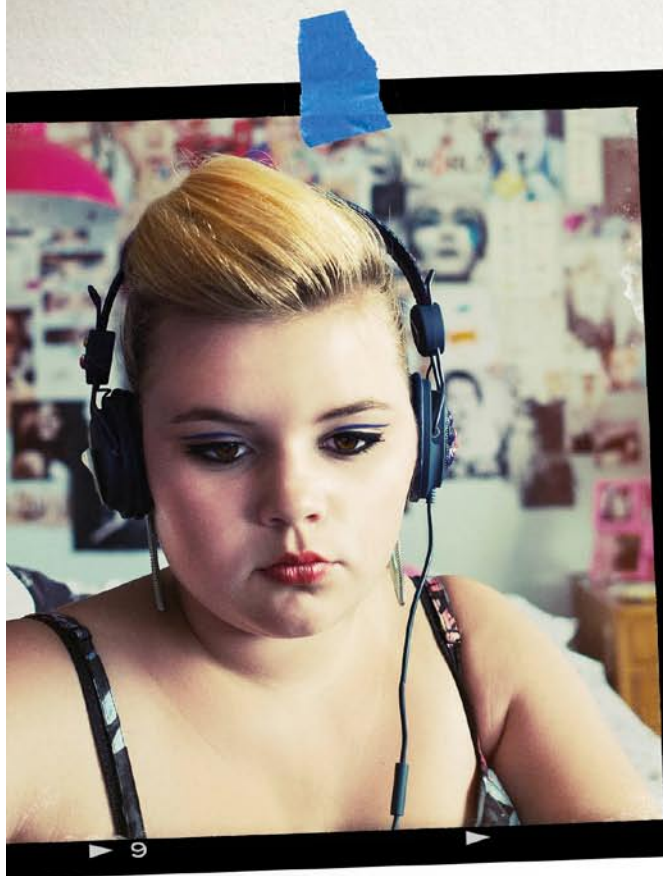
Synopsis

Sitting Next to Zoe is a coming of age piece focused on the trials and tribulations of two teenage girls - Zoe and Asal. Asal is a studious, family focused young woman who wants to make her family proud, whereas Zoe has somewhat more a chaotic life. The friendship of these two girls is strong, and they rely on each other to get through the tough times, until a young man named Kai upsets the balance of the friendship. This film has moderate swearing, references to sex and one scene involving sexual activity. It is recommended that this film is for 15+, and that it focuses most on female issues for this age group.

LEA BLOCH

RUNA GREINER

CHARLIE GUSTAFSSON



SITTING NEXT TO ZOE

A Film by Ivana Lalovic

"This summer will put their friendship to the test"

LANGFILM PRESENTS 'SITTING NEXT TO ZOE'
STARRING RUNA GREINER LEA BLOCH CHARLIE GUSTAFSSON AND BETTINA STUCKY SIIR ELOGLU ADNAN MARAL ROELAND WIESNEKKER
WRITTEN BY STEFANIE VEITH AND IVANA LALOVIC DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FILIP ZUMBRUNN EDITOR MYRIAM FLURY SCORE MARCEL VAID PRODUCTION DESIGNER NICOLE HOESLI
COSTUMES LINDA HARPER AND SARAH BACHMANN MAKE-UP CONNIE SACCHI SOUND MARCO TEUFEN SOUND DESIGN PETER BRÄKER CASTING CORINNA GLAUS AND MAGGIE WIDSTRAND
PRODUCERS OLIVIER ZOBRIST AND ANNE-CATHERINE LANG DIRECTED BY IVANA LALOVIC

A LANGFILM PRODUCTION IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH SCHWABER RADIO UND FERNSEHEN, SRG SSR AND TELELOU
WITH THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF FUNDESAKT FÜR KULTUR (ETD), SCHWYZ - ZÜRCHER FILMSTIFTUNG - AARGAUER KUNSTSTIFTUNG - KULTURFONDS SÜDSCHWYZ - SRS - ERNST GÖHNER STIFTUNG & STAGE POOL FOCAL & KANTON AARGAU - FOCAL





Comparison Project

Sitting Next to Zoe gives a female perspective on growing up, whereas *1987* (also in the festival) shows a male perspective. It can be useful for a mixed class to see both films and compare and contrast the differences between the sexes as well as the surprising similarities!

The film can be used as a springboard for English analysis, English creation and the portfolio at National 4/5 and Higher as well as raise discussions around aspects of lifeskills and social education. The film is in German language with English subtitles so may interesting for National 5 / Higher German pupils to gain a context of modern teenage life. The first task could also be used as a Media Studies at National 5 project as they learn to read movie posters and learn the key aspects. Each of the tasks can be adapted to suit the individual needs of the teacher / class.



Before the film

Task 1 - Before the Film Poster Review

The film poster can be found online, and should be displayed as large as possible to pupils (ideally on a projector or smart board. Alternatively an A4 colour print out can be given to pupils.)

Pupils should discuss what they would expect to see on a film poster, and how posters are used. A certain layout, or narrative is expected and many clues can be taken from a poster to determine not only what the film is about, but who it is aimed at.

- **Colour** - colour has powerful connotations and can suggest moods, emotions, events. Pupils should choose three colours used in the poster and make predictions on what they think this colour has been used for. Eg black usually signifies evil, darkness and shadows, whilst pink suggests romance, love and young girls / women.
- **Characters** - who are the main focus of the poster? What can you tell about them just from looking at the pictures in the poster? What is the relationship? Do you think this relationship changes?
- **Fonts / graphics** - why has a particular font been chosen? What does this font suggest? Why has the poster been laid out in this specific way?

The above points are not exhaustive - the key focus here is to get pupils to question what is in front of them, and whether or not they find it effective. It should also hold their interest so that they go into the film looking for answers to their questions in this session.

The above task could be reversed after they have seen the film - can pupils create their own movie poster based on traditional conventions of movie posters for *Sitting Next to Zoe* after watching?

Focus Points for Watching the Film

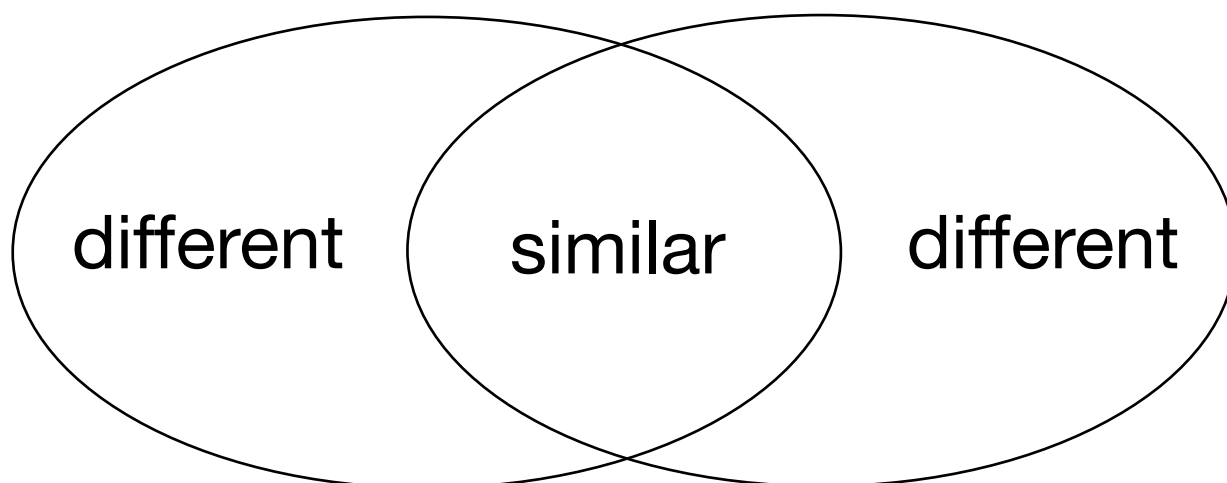
It is useful to give pupils focus points for discussion for directly after they have watched the film. It may be useful to allow pupils to take pencil and paper into the cinema with them to take notes as they watch.

- What are the main differences between Zoe and Asal's lives?
- Both girls have many things in common - what are they?
- Are Zoe and Asal different from teenagers else where in the world?

After the film

Task 2

Pupils should be given time to discuss the film as a whole, using the above points as a foundation. A useful visual exercise to give pupils understanding of the different characters would be to create a Venn diagram for the characters, displaying their differences and similarities.



This task can be useful to get pupils thinking about each character, and builds on skills needed throughout National 5 and Higher English when studying literature.

Based on this work, pupils should choose either Zoe or Asal and write a creative piece / short story on what happens after the film ends. If a good enough piece, this can be submitted for National 5 / Higher English folio work, or as part of National 4 coursework.

Related Outcomes - National 5 / Higher English

Literacy Outcome 2

The learner will:

- 2 Listen to and understand detailed spoken communication by:
- 2.1 Selecting and using relevant information
- 2.2 Explaining a range of aspects
- 2.3 Evaluating effectiveness

Literacy Outcome 4

The learner will:

- 4 Talk to communicate, as appropriate to audience and purpose, by:
- 4.1 Selecting and using detailed language
- 4.2 Organising spoken communication
- 4.3 Using a range of non-verbal conventions



Task 3 - Friendship - Personal Writing

A key theme running throughout this film is friendship. Teenage girls, especially, have complex dynamics in these relationships. It can be useful for personal writing to ask pupils to draw on their experiences of friendship and tackle some of the issues that they relate to in the film - especially the introduction of Kai to the demise of their friendship.

Pupils should be asked to write an “open letter” to one of their friends from past or present. This does not need to be someone they still see, or speak to or even someone that they like. Pupils should address it to someone they have some sort of relationship with and who they have a shared experience with. They should be encouraged to write honestly, and reflectively where appropriate. This can be a therapeutic experience for many who have bottled up feelings for a long time, therefore producing a genuine and thoughtful personal piece which many pupils can struggle with.

A useful website is openletters.net which has a search function and allows readers to see letters directed to someone they love / loathe. The Guardian online also has a large section of letters directed to many different types of people.

If a reasonable length and standard is given, this piece can be used for submission of writing folio. National 5 maximum length is 1000 words, Higher is 1300.

Related Outcomes - National 5 / Higher English

This task will help pupils work toward the expected standard of the National 5 / Higher Folio for a “broadly creative piece.” The piece of work should focus on personal feelings and thoughts to create a meaningful, and at times reflective, piece. If looking to be submitted, the length of the piece should be no more than 1000 words for National 5, and 1300 words for Higher.



Task 4 - Parental Pressure

In the film, both sets of parents pressure the two girls in different ways.

Asal - Pressure to do well at school, to dress appropriately and to go on to further education. They celebrate her successful exam results.

Zoe - Her mother is not so involved in Zoe's day to day life, but insists she gets a job to pay her way and dismisses her dream to go to Paris. Her mother is more concerned with her own love life than how Zoe is. When Zoe calls her father to ask if she can move in, it is clear he has another family to take care of now.

Both families had their own dreams they did not reach, and now are pushing their daughters in the direction they feel they should be going.

Writing / Research / Debate Task

How much control should a parent have in their child's life?

This question could be answered in many ways in the classroom, and could lead to a broadly discursive writing piece for the English folio at National 5 / Higher.



Writing / Research / Debate Task (continued)

Research

Pupils should choose one piece of media discussing parental involvement in a child's achievement. Some contemporary examples would be *Blinging up Baby*, *Dance Moms* or *Toddlers and Tiaras* (all available on YouTube) which are extreme examples of pushy parents. The key to discussion could be whether or not pupils think it is right that children are pushed in a direction they may not necessarily want to go in. There are also some interesting pieces online discussing this topic such as the following article:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationopinion/10601340/The-problem-with-pushy-parents.html>

Pupils should discuss their findings in groups, which can contribute to the talking and listening outcomes at National 4/5 and Higher in English.

Pupils can then go on to write a discursive or persuasive piece about a particular aspect of their findings and discussions of the above task.

Related Outcomes - National 5 English

Creation and Production

1. Create and produce detailed written texts by:

- 1.1 Selecting significant ideas and content, using a format and structure appropriate to audience.
- 1.2 Applying knowledge and understanding in terms of language choice and technical accuracy.

2. Participate actively in spoken activities by:

- 2.1 Selecting significant ideas and content, using a format and structure appropriate to purpose and audience.
- 2.2 Applying knowledge and understanding of language in terms of language choice.
- 2.3 Communicating meaning at first hearing.



Comparison Tasks

The genre of this film is very common - a teenage focus on attaining certain goals before going off into adulthood.

Pupils could be tasked with finding a similar film, play or novel / short story in which one of the key areas is explored in a different way.

An example:

How does the film compare with the life of teenagers compared to *Mean Girls*?

Talk about similarities and differences.

How does this film compare with fairytale stories that little girls grow up with?

These usually end in a “happy ever after” scenario - is this film much more true to life?



Useful References / Resources

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2536366/>

Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWqu5uwXq8s>

Website: <http://sittingnexttozoe.ch/en/>



Evaluating this resource

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate.

Please do send us film reviews, letters from your pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback by e-mailing mike.tait@dca.org.uk

Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels.

Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival websites. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included.

If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please e-mail sarah.derrick@dca.org.uk