

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival
for Young Audiences



Teachers' Resource: Dunkirk

Levels 3, 4 and Senior Phase

Created by Ian Cameron

Discovery Film Festival: Sat 21 October - Sun 5 November 2017

discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts


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DUNDEE
ONE CITY, MANY DISCOVERIES

 
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With support from DCA Cinema and Learning teams



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



Dunkirk

Dir: Christopher Nolan

USA/UK/France/Netherlands 2017 / 1h46m

Synopsis

The story follows a young soldier making his way out of Dunkirk during WW2. It shows the evacuation from three points of view: land, sea and air. Director, Nolan, weaves the story across the three narratives, and an ever-changing timeline, to give the viewer some understanding of the desperation of the situation the British, French and Belgian armed forces found themselves in during the evacuation.

Cast: Tom Hardy, Cillian Murphy, Kenneth Branagh, Mark Rylance, Harry Styles

Themes: Loss, realities of war



Before watching the film

Activity 1 - Timeline, creating context

Resources: Worksheet 1a+b, <https://goo.gl/HxoXff>, A3/4 paper, pens/pencils

Pupils should cut out each individual box and create a timeline on the A3 paper. They can work in groups or individuals to complete the task. Using the link above pupils should sort the individual cards into order to complete a timeline of the events leading up to Dunkirk and after. Pupils should devise a sensible scale for their timeline. Not all events need to be added to the timeline.

*I can discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence. **SOC 2-06a***

*I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since. **SOC 3-06a***

Activity 2 - Contextualising the text

Resources: <https://goo.gl/M3oFuA>

Pupils should watch the documentary from 14:00 to 25:05.

In small groups, pupils should discuss 5 main factors that lead to issues at Dunkirk. This can be shared with the class to ensure a consensus of opinion.

*I can discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence. **SOC 2-06a***

*Through researching, I can identify possible causes of a past conflict and report on the impact it has had on the lives of people at that time. **SOC 3-06b***



Activity 3 – Looking at “Spin”

Resources: <https://goo.gl/LR4R5e>

In this activity pupils will consider the role media plays in the reporting of news.

Pupils should discuss the ways we have of communicating information and news concerning current affairs to the public today. Give the pupils 4 mins in small groups to generate as many ideas as they can. These can be written down in jotters/paper or just retained. At the end of the time ideas can be shared on an interactive whiteboard/blackboard/orally.

Pupils should then generate ideas about what means of communication would have been available to the general public during WW2. These might include radio, newspaper and Pathe News (cinema).

Pupils should either be given a copy of the text at the link above (written by historian Duncan Anderson for BBC), or have it read out to them. This should be from the heading “Day of National Prayer” up to and including “A Very British Story”.

Pupils should be made aware of how the media twisted events as propaganda. This can be done through discussion of the text. Then generate discussion by asking the questions:

- Why were the public taken in by the version of events given by the media?
- Why was Churchill’s account dismissed so readily?
- Would that be different today?
- Does this happen now? Justify.

*To help me develop an informed view, I can identify and explain the difference between fact and opinion, recognise when I am being influenced, and have assessed how useful and believable my sources are. **LIT 2-18a***

*To help me develop an informed view, I am learning about the techniques used to influence opinion and how to assess the value of my sources, and I can recognise persuasion. **LIT 3-08a***

*I can discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence. **SOC 2-06a***

*I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since. **SOC 3-06a***

After watching the film




Activity 1 - Diary account/Letter home

Take one of the characters, pupils can decide on the most interesting one as a class. Ask pupils to consider their version of events. Give the pupils time in small groups to brainstorm thoughts, feelings, timeline of events for this character.

Pupils should then write a letter home from the character before they make it home/die/are captured. The letter should include details from the text including setting and main events.

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. **LIT 2-20a***

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I am developing my own style. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. **LIT 3-20a***



Activity 2 – Interview

Working in pairs, pupils should devise an interview with one of the characters and a Pathe News reporter. This could be the same character as in **Activity 1** to create more depth of understanding about the character, or could be a completely different character. Pupils should be given time to work on a short script and, as a class decide on potential appropriate questions to start off. Select some of the groups to show their interviews to the rest of the class. Particular attention should be given to ensure groups reference the film throughout the interview.

I have created and presented scripted or improvised drama, beginning to take account of audience and atmosphere. EXA 2-14a

Having developed ideas from a range of stimuli, I can contribute to devising, rehearsing and presenting drama or scripts. EXA 3-14a

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can:

- *identify and consider the purpose, main concerns or concepts and use supporting detail*
- *make inferences from key statements*
- *identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text.*

LIT 3-16a



Activity 3 – Comparing texts

Resources: jotters, *Atonement* film clip <https://goo.gl/pS9Ffa> (**Teacher judgement to be used for activity.** Please watch before showing to pupils as the film is a 15 rating, and has the words “fucking” and “bugger”, and depictions of horses being shot, in context with the text.)

Dunkirk has featured in other films. The link above is a scene from the film *Atonement*, directed by Joe Wright. It features the main character on the beach. Nearly the whole scene is done in one take as the camera tracks the characters’ journey across the beach. Before showing the clip, ask the pupils to work in small groups to think of adjectives/adverbs to describe the beach depicted by Christopher Nolan in *Dunkirk*. These should be written down in jotters/paper.

Pupils should then watch the clip and consider words/phrases to describe the beach as depicted in *Atonement*. Ask the pupils to discuss with shoulder partners the ways in which the two scenes are similar, and the ways they are different. These could be noted by creating a table in their jotters to record their observations.

Further extension could be undertaken by considering the 1958 *Dunkirk* film and looking at how the attitudes towards war and the use of it on film have changed.

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text and use supporting detail. LIT 2-16a

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can:

- *identify and consider the purpose, main concerns or concepts and use supporting detail*
- *make inferences from key statements*
- *identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text.*

LIT 3-16a



Activity 4 – The Director’s Craft

Christopher Nolan likes to use symbolism in the films he has created/directed. Throughout *Dunkirk*, Nolan uses set pieces to symbolise the components of the war and the spirit of the British resolve during the event. Ask pupils if they were aware of any symbolic moments. They might mention the burning plane at the end, the soldiers carrying the stretcher, the older Kenneth Branagh character, the shifting of time, the shivering soldier (Cillian Murphy), the damaged fuel gauge.

Working in pairs or threes, pupils should discuss the burning plane at the end of the film. Ask the groups to consider beyond the character’s motivation to stop the Germans getting the plane and ask them to think about reasons why Christopher Nolan would end with this scene. Ideas should be put into a mind map. The mind map should have the headings Fire/Burning, Sunset, Churchill’s Narrative. Pupils should be asked to consider the ideas that come to their mind when they think about these things and add these to the mind map. All reasonable possibilities should be considered. These may include ideas such as: ending, lonely, defeat, determination, resolve, stoicism, fear, conclusion, death etc.

Pupils should then have an opportunity to share their ideas. This can be done by numbering the pupils in the group and one number (e.g. 2s) moving on to another group. The original pupil should hold on to the mindmap and share it with the new group member. This can be repeated until pupils have experienced the ideas of 2-3 groups and should then return to their original group/pair. Pupils can then have an opportunity to add any ideas they have thought worthwhile to their original mind map.

This can then be repeated with one or more of the other set pieces e.g. the soldiers with the stretcher.

*To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text and use supporting detail. **LIT 2-16a***

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can:

- *identify and consider the purpose, main concerns or concepts and use supporting detail*
- *make inferences from key statements*
- *identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text.*

LIT 3-16a



Activity 5 – The Director’s Craft 2

In this task, pupils should consider the ways Nolan creates tension in the first half hour of the film.

Pupils should again create a mind map to record their thoughts. In the middle the title should be “Creating Tension” then the pupils should use the three Nolan headings of “The Mole”, “The Sea” and “The Air”. Pupils should then complete the mind map either individually or in small groups. They should consider different examples of how the director increases the tension or makes the reader feel uncomfortable as he lets the story unfold. Pupils should be encouraged to think about types of shot, camera angles, colour and sound/dialogue.

Pupils should then be encouraged to think of any themes that are common throughout all the areas. These should be the crescendo of music, wide camera angles, periods of slower action, contrast of light, short/quick cuts between shots.

Further extension could be created by re-visiting the clip used in **Activity 3** looking for any similarities between the ways the directors approached the scenes and differences in style.

*To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text and use supporting detail. **LIT 2-16a***

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can:

- *identify and consider the purpose, main concerns or concepts and use supporting detail*
- *make inferences from key statements*
- *identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text.*

LIT 3-16a



Activity 6 – Continue the Story

Pupils should consider the back story to the soldier who survives the attack at the beginning of the movie. By using information gathered in the **Before the Film** activities, and supporting evidence from the film, the pupils should plan and write the account of the day before the film starts with the six young soldiers.

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. **LIT 2-20a***

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I am developing my own style. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. **LIT 3-20a***

Further Resources



Atonement (2007) Dunkirk Clip

<https://goo.gl/pS9Ffa>

Pathe News Clips – Dunkirk Homecoming

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdAaZFpxdLM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSoDLfQKhGI>

Audio clips of survivors

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/dunkirk_audio_01.shtml

Worksheet 1a

Paris is liberated by
the Allies

The Battle of the
Bulge begins

The Battle of Britain
begins

France Surrender

German troops
enter Paris

Blitz of London
begins

Victory in Japan
Day signals end of
WW2

America and Britain
declare war on
Japan

Battle of Java Sea

Malta attacked by
800 Axis aircraft

Worksheet 1b

German army in
North Africa
surrender

D-Day landings at
Normandy

The first V1
(Doodlebug) lands
in Britain

Germany Invades
Poland

German troops
enter Paris

Germany ignores
British ultimatum.
War is Declared

Hitler shoots himself
as Russian troops
advance

Victory in Europe
(VE) Day

First atomic bomb is
dropped on
Hiroshima

Japanese attack
Pearl Harbour



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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