Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011–4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

http://www.cambridge.org

First published 2003

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in Sabon 10/12pt System QuarkXPress™ [OD&I]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for

ISBN 0 521 79961 9 paperback

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At all levels we are looking for ways of *maximising comprehension*, but we also have a logistical problem with feature films: movies are long, teaching hours are short, so we also need to be able to *fit films into* a classroom schedule. How can we meet these two aims at the same time? Here are some possibilities.

Illustrated talk

Tell the story of the film yourself, illustrating it by showing three or four key scenes chosen for their comprehensibility and impact. Leave the story at a climactic point and don't tell the ending (**Film presentation**). Afterwards offer the video cassette to whoever wants to see the whole film;

they should come back and report to the class on what happened in the end. This is a good way of doing a number of films in a short time; after one or two demonstrations by the teacher, groups of students can undertake to present a film of their choice in the same way (**Film presentation**).

Salami tactics

'Slice up' the film into five or six episodes and do it over several lessons. Start with a lead-in (**Lead-in**, **Plot idea 2**, **Schema**, **Seen it before**, **Voice 2**). After each section do:

- a recap activity (**Adopt a character**, **Before and after**, **Character network**, **Cross-cutting**, **Dossier** Variation 2, **Jumbled statements**, **Make a case**, **Make a case for character**, **Sequel and prequel** (Prequel), **Schema**, **Summary**, **Why and How?**)
- a prediction/anticipation activity (**Advice**, **Decisions**, **Speculations**) for comprehension of the next section; other possibilities, depending on the film, are **Chases** Variation 1, **Fights**, **Missing character** and **Seen it before** Variation 2

This approach is time-consuming but worth it for a very good film which everyone badly wants to see.

Front loading

Concentrate on the introduction. The director normally uses the first 15–20 minutes of a film for 'exposition', i.e. to establish the setting and set up the characters, relationships, plot and themes. Working on this introductory part therefore really helps in understanding the whole film. Use one lesson to view the introduction only, do suitable recap activities (see *Salami tactics* above), then view the introduction again. Make sure that the recap activities are used to raise questions for the second viewing of the introduction – avoid the teacherly temptation to provide right answers. In the following lesson(s) view the rest of the film. This can be followed (or not) by activities on

- the whole film (**Before and after**, **Best scene**, **Climax**, **Dossier**, **Eye on the object**, **Film presentation**, **Issues**, **Lifestyle**, **Misapprehensions**, **Oscar**, **Place and period**, **Puff**, **Sequel and prequel** (Sequel), **Turning points**)
- individual scenes for their action (**Act along**, **Body language**, **Cross-cutting**, **Feeling flow**, **Fights**, **Fly on the wall**, **Quotes**, **Speech acts**, **What's going on?**, **Writing the book**)
- individual scenes for their language (**Accents**, **Choose your words**, **Interactive language**, **Questions**, **Subtitles 1**, **Telephone conversations**, **Tenses**, **Transcript**, **Wordhunt**)

Box 2 outlines a possible sequence. Alternatively, do a series of single lessons on film introductions and get students to select the one they would like to see to the end, either in class or on their own; or get groups to view the remainder of each film outside class and report back to the class.

Independent film study

If films are available for independent viewing, discuss strategies with students (**Learning English with feature films**). If students are enthusiastic, suggest a more extensive independent film study project, done individually or in small groups. The project in Box 2 has been done many times with students from 16 to 30. It is organized on the 'front loading' principle, with a break and recap activities after the introduction, then a viewing of the rest of the film and activities on the plot, characters and language. Mature advanced students can work on their own, but still need *models* of the type of product required (see page 9). One solution is to use previous students' projects as models. Younger or lower-level students need more support. Work through one film together in class, following the project outline, and together produce a set of model answers which students can refer to when working on their own. Then get students to work on their own films in groups, dividing up the activities between them. Finish with mini-presentations by each group to the class as a whole: they need this prospect to keep them going.

BOX 2 Independent film study project

Instructions for students

1 **Selection**: View a number of film beginnings to get an idea of what makes a film understandable and to help you choose your own film. Then view the introduction (the first 15–20 minutes) of your selected film and write a difficulty report (see **Grading**).
2 **Activities on the introduction**: View the introduction again, then do two of these activities: **Adopt a character**, **Character network**, **Lifestyle**, **Make a case for character**, **Summary.** (N.B. It is a temptation to go on viewing all the way through, but it will really improve your comprehension if you view the beginning twice.)
3 **Viewing break**: View the rest of the film right through.
4 **Nitty-gritty**: View the rest of the film again in order to prepare a quiz for other viewers. This helps you to become familiar with the film, and also produces exercises which can be used by other students. Choose one of these activities: **Dossier**, **Jumbled statements** Variation.
5 **Overview**: Review the plot or the themes of the film with one of the following activities: **Climax**, **Issues**, **Misapprehensions**.
6 **Close focus**: Select your own two scenes for a close focus on the action and the language. For the action, choose **Fly on the wall**, **What's going on?** or **Writing the book**; and for language study, **Choose your words**, **Transcript** or **Wordhunt**.
7 **Evaluation**: If you are working alone, you should do the activity **Oscar**; if in a group, do **Film presentation.**

If your institution has a film library, self-access viewing facilities and an active viewing population, you can get students to create material for 'film files' on individual movies which can be used by other students. Ask them to grade the films for subsequent viewers (**Grading**) and include this grading as the first document in the file. Other items in the file can be quizzes on various aspects of the film (with keys) (**Dossier**, **Jumbled statements** Variation), questions about behaviour or issues (**Issues**), gapped dictations (**Transcript**) and critical reviews (**Oscar**).

Follow-up worksheets

Any film viewing, whether in class or independent, can be extended with independent work on reactions and interactions or on language (use part or all of the worksheets in Boxes 3 and 4).

BOX 3 Reaction and interaction

Instructions for students

1 Find three extended interactions in your film, name them and say what they are (**Speech acts**), e.g.:

Wanda introduces Otto to George.
Wendy grumbles about her day.
George briefs his team.

A Fish Called Wanda

2 Find three very clear reactions in your film and describe them (**Reaction shots**), e.g.:

Magnus is startled to realize that the house is already surrounded by police.
Mary is furious with the police for treating Magnus like a criminal.
Mrs P is perplexed when Magnus kisses her goodnight.

The Perfect Spy (BBC drama series)

3 Find a scene with a lot of clear verbal interaction. Describe it in terms of the 'speech acts', i.e. what people do with their words (**Speech acts**), e.g.:

Neil's father REPROACHES him for disobeying his orders.
He THREATENS to take him away from the school.
Neil PROTESTS.
He SAYS they don't take any notice of what he feels.
His father CHALLENGES him to say what he feels.
Neil is SPEECHLESS.
He MUMBLES 'Nothing'.

Dead Poets Society

4 Find a scene where body language shows feelings well (**Body language**). Describe what people do and what it shows, e.g.:

Helen and Paul meet on the landing.
She goes towards him and holds out her hands. (= She is pleased to meet him.)
He backs away, turns his head aside and slips past her. (= He is avoiding her.)
She moves after him, but stops. (= She realizes that he doesn't want to see her.)
She turns her head aside. (= She is puzzled.)

Howards End

5 Choose one whole scene and describe what's going on, bringing out the dynamic of the scene, the psychological interaction and its significance (**What's going on?**). As you tell the story, consider:
   - What feelings can you see?
   - What are the characters trying to do?
   - Is there a turning point in the scene? What causes it?
   - What is different by the end of the scene?
   - How does the scene move the action forward? What is its significance?

BOX 4 Language study for drama films

Instructions for students (examples from *Groundhog Day*)

1 **Accents**: Find an interesting accent in your film. Try to identify the features and imitate the accent. Then write down ten words which sound different from the English you know and be prepared to say them, e.g. (standard American):
hog first possibility talk altitudes thirty

2 **Questions**: Write down and classify ten questions spoken in your film, e.g.

You off to see the groundhog?
Question form, short, positive (present)
Did you sleep well?
Question form, positive (simple past)
I don't suppose there's any chance of getting an espresso?
Indirect question, negative (present)
Will you be checking out today?
Question form, positive (future continuous)

3 **Verb forms**: Find 12 verb forms, all different. Include at least two negatives, three modal verbs, one continuous form and one irregular past tense. Write down the sentences in which they occur and underline the verb, e.g.

You're missing all the fun.
Some of them have been partying all night.
It's that giant blizzard we're not supposed to get.
You should get your head examined.
I thought it was yesterday.
What would you do if you were stuck in one place and every day was exactly the same?

4 **Functional language:** Make a collection of 12 pieces of functional language which you think might be useful to you or your fellow students, e.g.

How're you doing?	*It's been great seeing you.*
Watch out for that step.	*Over here!*
Take a look at this.	*I'm not making it up.*

'True stories'

There is no clear dividing line between fact and fiction in feature films but some films do claim to be about real-life events and try to reflect the awkwardness of reality, with its ambiguous and unpredictable events, complex social scenery and long undramatic time spans. They are particularly useful in projects since they often centre on a theme or issue and have vivid historical, social or geographical settings.

There are two main types of 'true story': biographical films ('biopics') (e.g. *Carrington, My Left Foot, Out of Africa, Shine, Wilde*), which put one individual's life at the centre of the story; and history films (e.g. *Amistad, Schindler's List, Waterloo*), which are more interested in events and show a range of characters. Films about real contemporary events (e.g. *Alive, Awakenings, Dead Man Walking, In the Name of the Father*) are either like history films (mainly about the event) or like biographies (mainly about the people). Most of the ideas suggested for fiction films above are just as appropriate for these 'true stories', but there are some alternatives and extras you may find useful for coping with their special difficulties and potentialities.

Though 'true story' films drastically select and simplify real-life events, they are still difficult to digest. They refer constantly to events which happened before the film began ('We don't want another civil war!'), or which are outside the visible action ('My lord, France has declared war!'), or they use the dialogue to interpret the visible scene to make sure we understand what is going on ('Now here we are at Fort William, Colonel, and that is the English army'). Thus a lot of the dialogue is explanation, saying what is happening and why, and how we ought to feel about it – a much-parodied feature. This creates an extra comprehension burden. To tackle this, **Heard and seen**, **Why and How?** are tough but necessary overview activities which highlight the significance of events before, during and beyond the film.

History films

These in particular have to establish a complex background very rapidly at the beginning (remember those historical parchment summaries scrolling up at the beginning of old history films?). It is therefore worth spending even more time than usual on the first 20 minutes (see *Front loading*, page 19) and preparing as much as possible (**Famous people**, **Maps and journeys**). For a recap of the introduction do **Character network**. There may also be overview exercises which are particularly suitable. Most history films involve military or political battles (**Fights**) and a lot of moving around (**Maps and journeys**). As period pieces they can be scanned for information on life in the past (**Place and period**). They deal with themes which are found in all countries' histories – lives of great men, civil war, rebellion, invasion, social oppression, discovery, struggles for human rights – so they give rich opportunities for comparisons with students' own countries (**Parallels**) and a good basis for oral presentations and discussion.

Films about contemporary events

These benefit from the same kind of background enrichment as history films, e.g. *In the Name of the Father* cries out for a sketch of the recent history of Northern Ireland and the issues involved. Many deal with issues (**Issues**) and present cases (legal, existential, medical, moral): how to survive on a snowbound mountain, how to cope with wrongful imprisonment, what's wrong with the comatose patients, etc. These inspire the same kinds of approach as drama series episodes (see pages 35–7). They focus on understanding the important facts of the situation (**Summary**, **Schema**, **Speculations**) and the interests involved (**Character network**); they show people deciding what to do about the case (**Case study**, **Decisions**) and getting it done (**Getting things done**), usually in the teeth of human opposition (**Fights**).

Biographical films

Films about relatively ordinary people invite comparison with oneself in all possible ways (**Lifestyle**, **Other people's shoes**, **Turning points** Follow-up). Do any of these before, during or after the film. Since real lives are full of pointers to the future but also full of surprises, such films are suitable for predictions in the middle of the movie (**Speculations**). With biopics about famous people or public figures, use **Famous people** and **Voice 2** to give an idea of the person before launching into the film. Films about national leaders, showbiz personalities, artists or famous criminals

make a good basis for comparison with national figures in other countries (**Parallels**). Unlike most fiction films, biographies of famous people usually have something to say (though not much) about the protagonist's work (**Famous people** Variation); they often also show success/failure very clearly and try with hindsight to make connections between circumstance, personality and society (**Turning points**). Films about creative artists tend to neglect the creative side in favour of life and loves, but you can often exploit the artist's music/art/poetry/prose for mood and background and use the artistic works to supply a framework for the action, moving from landmark to landmark. For example, the film *Amadeus* about Mozart was introduced with some of the musical highlights from the film (sound only) and a discussion of their mood (**Invisible music**). If there are voice-over readings from a writer (as in *Wilde* and *Out of Africa*), they can be studied separately before or after the film. For painters, you may be able to get copies of pictures which are seen in a film (try the Internet). Get students to discuss subject and mood before viewing; afterwards they can arrange the pictures in chronological order and explain their significance in the story.

Talking about feature films

Since most students have extensive experience of feature films, they need little prompting to talk about them and to create scenes and plot ideas. These activities have the advantage that they can be done without any video equipment. The standard assignment 'Write about your favourite film' produces more interesting writing if there is some preliminary discussion (try the activity **Famous films**) or a focus on a **Favourite film scene**. Also illuminating is the creation of a climactic moment from one's own movie (**Your movie**). The more elaborate film-invention activity **Plot idea 1** gets good results with advanced students (**Plot idea 2** is a simpler version); while **Plan a chase** is suitable at any level for those who enjoy the excitement of a chase. All these activities contribute to critical evaluation of films (**Film presentation, Oscar, Over the top**).

The film and the book

Adopt a character 125 Before and after 129 Book and film 132
Casting couch 1 134 Casting couch 2 135 Changes 138
Climax 143 Effects 158 Famous people 162 Feeling flow 165
Lead-in 187 Make a case for character 195 Maps and journeys 196
One-liner 203 Picture it 209 Puff 220 Quotes 224
Reading aloud 228 Scriptwriter 236 Set the scene 238
Stage directions 247 Twin texts 259 Walkthrough 263
What's going on? 266 Writing the book 270

(Other activities for feature films can supplement work with film and book. See *Doing a film*, page 18.)

You sometimes find yourself in the joyful position of having the book as well as the film – not one text but two parallel versions of the same story, which are more or less faithful to one another. This offers rich possibilities: it gives you some of the filmscript and saves laborious transcribing; it allows you to use one text to improve literal comprehension of the other (**Climax**, **Twin texts**); it enables you to compare the two texts, shedding light on both (**Changes**); finally, it makes it possible to see how the film (or the book) has been created/adapted from the book (or the film) and to simulate the process yourself (**Writing the book** or the *Make the movie* sequence, page 29). One great advantage is in the study of classic literature, but most activities that can be done with *Romeo and Juliet*, *Room with a View* or *Great Expectations* can also be done with *Babe*, *Dances with Wolves* or *Michael Collins*.

When we talk about film and book, we usually think of a novel that has been made into a film or televised, but there are other relationships. Many novels are now written in the hope of being filmed and are virtually screenplays; some are written from and after the film (e.g. *Accidental Hero, Yes Prime Minister,* some of the *Star Trek* series). In some historical and biographical reconstructions the film is modelled on a specific book (e.g. *Schindler's List, 84 Charing Cross Road*), based on a stage play (*The Madness of King George, A Man for All Seasons*) or created from history books, reminiscences, letters, diaries, biographies, folklore, encyclopaedias and historical documents (*Out of Africa*, *Robin Hood*). These all give different possibilities.

Here are some things you may want to do:

- *Use single scenes.* You are not planning to use either the whole film or the whole book, but just work with one or two interesting parallel scenes (book and film) for the purpose of language activation.

- *Use the book to supplement and clarify the film*. You are mainly interested in doing the film, and plan to extend your study of the film with a few passages from the book.
- *Use the film to illuminate the book*. You are making a study of the book (or parts of it), probably as literature, and you want to use the film to throw light on it, engage interest, stimulate discussion.

Whatever your purpose, check the book for reading difficulty. A film may present problems of aural comprehension, but a novel has at least ten times as many words (a transcript of a film dialogue may reach 20 pages; a typical novel has 250 pages), and the vocabulary may be wide-ranging, so reading the book scene can be relatively long and demanding. You can, however, find easy single scenes; modern blockbuster novels written with the cinema in mind often use quite a limited vocabulary; children's books are often (not always) easier; there are some very good simplified readers adapted from books which have been filmed, and many great writers (e.g. Graham Greene, Hemingway, George Orwell, Oscar Wilde) have simple clear passages which are accessible to lower-intermediate learners. Even a rather heavy literary scene will lighten up if the comprehension demands are limited or if the film scene has been viewed first.

Using single scenes

Turning a novel into a film generally means removing many scenes, adding a few and drastically changing others, but there are usually scenes which are recognizably the same. These parallel scenes give good opportunities for observing differences and the reasons for them, and for trying one's hand at bringing the written scene to life as a film.

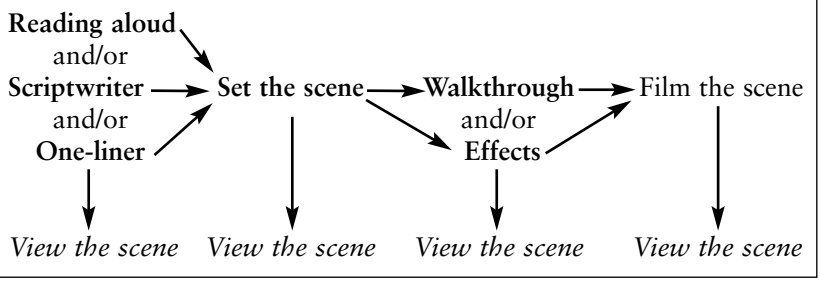
Comprehension, of all kinds, is the payoff. The changes the scriptwriter and director have made to the scene are there in the film to be noticed and discussed, and make for quite compelling close-focus listening comprehension and reading activities (**Changes**) going back and forth between the text and the film. You can precede or follow these with a discussion of the general differences between film and novels (**Book and film**), illustrated by parallel scenes. The activity **Writing the book** demands good aural understanding as well as a feeling for the conventions of written fiction.

Most of all, creating a film scene from a written one may well be the ultimate exercise in reading comprehension, since the director, the scriptwriter and the actors all have to understand the intentions of the writer in order to bring them to life. Experienced readers of fiction (e.g. teachers) often assume that students are as adept as they are at breathing

life into the written page, but 'reading' the conventions of a novel is a learned art, and novice readers can learn a lot from the process of turning text into film. *Make the movie* (Box 5) is a series of activities in which students try out their talents as film directors on a scene from written fiction. They visualize the action (**Reading aloud**), produce a simple script (**Scriptwriter**), try out particular lines (**One-liner**), sketch the setting and test it out (**Set the scene**, **Walkthrough**), and decide on lighting, sound effects and shot sequences (**Effects**). The process can be halted at any stage in order to view the corresponding scene from the film and compare it with students' own directorial decisions. The complete project exercises a range of language skills. The possible sequences and combinations are in Box 5.

Choose short scenes which are explicit about settings, actions and reactions and have a fair amount of interactive dialogue.

BOX 5 Make the movie: activity sequence



Don't do more than three activities on any one scene, or interest will flag. If you get as far as the final stage, and have a video camera, do allow students to film their own self-selected scenes (see also *Make your own movie*, page 33). The results are inevitably at the home-movie level but the motivation generated is tremendous. (N.B. The difference between hopeless failure and moderate success is almost entirely in the quality of the sound recording – drive home this message!)

Parallel scenes in stage plays and film offer much the same opportunities, with the advantage that the two media are closer to each other, and the script (often with stage directions) is already given. Scenes from Shakespeare are worth comparing (**Changes**) and students can easily 'make the movie' from a drama script with the activity sequence **One-liner**, **Set the scene**, **Walkthrough** and **Effects**.

Using the book to supplement and clarify the film

A book which is the source of a feature film is generally longer and more complex than the film and has more background information, more detail, more explanations and often more subtle interpretations of character and relationships. Often films make huge changes in the book: cutting whole themes, characters or story lines, introducing new characters, changing the setting or rewriting the plot, and bringing howls of protest from authors and purist readers. Nevertheless, there's generally enough common ground to give a lot of scope for using bits of the book to extend the film experience and to help with literal comprehension. The following suggestions apply to novels, drama and non-fiction books.

Bear in mind the pressure of time: it takes a long time to do a feature film and adding passages from the book may extend it. Be sure that the film you are going to work on deserves this amount of attention, and take steps to reduce the time spent in class (e.g. give the reading for homework or substitute reading an extract from the book for viewing a part of the film).

Before viewing the film, read a scene from the book to lift overall viewing comprehension. If the opening film scene is also in the book, the book scene can be used as a lead-in (**Reading aloud**) especially if it has a rich mixture of setting, action and dialogue to establish plot, character and themes. Use an early book scene to feed speculation about characters' appearance (**Casting couch 2**) before seeing them in the film.

Later in the viewing, make a difficult but crucial video scene more accessible by getting students to read it first. You can focus the reading on complicated action, motivations, or the exact words spoken (**Adopt a character**, **One-liner**, **Reading aloud**, **Scriptwriter**). In-depth knowledge of any written scene makes a good basis for discussing differences in the parallel film scene (**Changes**). If you are doing the film as an illustrated talk (see page 18), vary the approach by having students view some parts and read others; if you are doing it in sections (see page 19), give scenes (already viewed) from the book as follow-up reading homework, or give a forthcoming book scene for homework and ask students to report on it as the lead-in to the next section. In any case, if the book is suitable for the level, make it available to students who are interested in doing extra reading; they may also like to report to the class on the major differences.

'True stories' about famous people or historical events tend to glide rather rapidly over the historical background and rarely present unbiased accounts. Extra depth and accuracy, as well as a feeling for the time frame and the geography of the events, can be added by using extracts from encyclopaedias, dictionaries of national biography, atlases or Internet information (**Famous people**, **Maps and journeys**), which bring a welcome touch of factual reality.

Using the film to illuminate the book

Many school and university students study English literary classics as part of their English syllabus (e.g. *Hamlet, The Picture of Dorian Grey, Great Expectations, Howard's End*). Most of these have been made into high-quality films (some several times) which are widely available. When students are having a hard time reading extensively in English and are resorting to translations to get them through, video materials are a great gift. But what is the best way to use the video to throw light on the book and raise interest in it? If your students have some knowledge of the book but haven't seen the film, your great advantage is surprise and you shouldn't waste it. Tease your audience – delay viewing: use scenes and activities which will reinforce and extend students' knowledge of the written text *before* they see the whole film. Whet the appetite with a lead-in, then do an overview activity to get the feeling of the whole and to frame the activities which come next. Follow with one or two close-focus exercises and some activities on how particular aspects of the book can be realized on film. If you have time, plan a film scene from a book scene and then view the video version. Then, when you've got the most out of the suspense, view the whole film. Here are some suggestions:

- *Lead-ins* Try interpreting aspects of the whole book as a director would do, e.g. by getting students to suggest appropriate images to introduce the film (**Lead-in**), or to find suitable bodies for the characters (**Casting couch 1** and **2**). Simpler lead-ins are matching a video scene with a scene in the book (**Twin texts**), identifying significant utterances (**Quotes**), or focusing on details of the lifestyle (**Picture it** Variation 3) to raise awareness of the cultural realities of place and period.
- *Overview activities* Look at the plot briefly (**Puff**) or in some depth (**Climax**), or at important characters (**Make a case for character**). Or use a few short film sequences (**Before and after**) to review what students know (or don't know) about the overall action in the book.
- *Close-focus activities* As a third stage, give students a choice of scenes for doing one activity on individual feelings or character interaction (**Adopt a character**, **Feeling flow**, **Quotes**, **What's going on?**), and another on how the written text is brought to life in film (**Changes**, **One-liner**, **Reading aloud**, **Stage directions**).
- *Make the movie* All this gives a feeling for the style of the film, so that students can step into the director's shoes and choose a particular scene to use to *Make the movie* (see page 29).

Revealing the film in this way, bit by bit, means that by the time students come to see the whole film, they will have much greater insight into both film and book, will have revised the book quite thoroughly and will also find the film much easier to follow.

Independent work

If your institution has self-access listening comprehension exercises, they can easily be supplemented with activities based on single parallel scenes: The activity **Changes** is good for stand-alone comprehension, with scenes pre-selected by teachers or by students themselves.

If there are some book-film pairs in the resources library, leave some suggestions for students (see Box 6). You can run this as an advanced project, culminating in an essay or oral report.

BOX 6 Book and film

Independent work: instructions for students

Choose a book and film you'd like to study. You may have already seen the film or read the book, or you may not know either of them. Read first or view first, as you wish, and then:

- Find the place in the book where the film begins (before the book starts, at the beginning, later?).
- Find a scene which is in both the film and book and do the activity **Changes**.
- Find a character in the book/film who is not in the film/book.
- Find a scene in the book/film which is not in the film/book.
- Find a physical description of a person, place or thing and compare it with the film version.
- Look at the list in **Book and film** and find two examples of things well done in the book, and two examples of things well done in the film.
- Comment on a few of the main changes you have noticed.

Once the *Make the movie* sequence (see page 29) has been tried out in class, students can have a go independently at making a scene from a book, culminating in filming with a camcorder if available (see Box 7 for instructions). This activity has been successfully linked with an independent book-reading project for advanced students, who themselves selected the scenes they wanted to film; lower levels can choose a scene from a class reader, a simplified reader or a drama script, or be given a book scene by their teacher. The choice of scene is crucial. One lower-intermediate class did excellent work with an early scene from *Babe*, but were reluctant to film it since some objected to playing ducks and puppies and the piglet hero refused to have his nose licked as the script demanded! They did consent to a walkthrough, however, and discussed and designed setting and lighting (**Effects**) before viewing the original scene.

Students should also be aware that this project will take some time

and that it depends on everyone in the group being both available and reliable.

BOX 7 Make your own movie

Instructions for students

1 Choose the book scene you want to film. Find a scene with a fairly ordinary setting (e.g. house, garden, office), no special effects and nothing in it that your actors will refuse to do or say.

2 Organize groups and assign jobs: you will need a director, actors, a scriptwriter and a cameraperson.

3 Do a read-through of the scene (**Reading aloud**) and organize the set (**Set the scene**). Identify any necessary costumes (keep it simple) or props (= 'properties', objects you need).

4 Get the scriptwriter to produce the script in collaboration with the director (**Scriptwriter**). Aim to cut the book's written dialogue to about half and think about what else the camera will show *apart from people talking*. The script should contain stage directions and also a sketch of the setting. Get feedback on the language of your script from your teacher.

5 Organize the setting and try out the scene (**Walkthrough**). The director should decide on pauses, timing and pace, indicate where the main emphasis of the scene is and how to highlight it (stress, action, gesture, timing, pausing, etc.), and suggest how the lines should be spoken.

6 Actors learn their parts.

7 The director discusses with the cameraperson how the camera will be used: long shots, zooms, panning shots, medium shots, close-ups and where to break the action to get a change of shot. With only one camera and no editing facilities, you will have to shoot the scene in one continuous sequence, although you can stop filming to change things around or to have a break. Write your provisional decisions on the script (you can change them later). Also decide on sound or lighting effects (**Effects**).

8 Trial run. The most important thing is good sound. Try to get a boom mike and make sure the actors are near it when they speak. Film in a quiet place with no outside noise and preferably plenty of soft furnishings to absorb echoes (classrooms are NOT good places). Try out the scene once without the camera, then with the camera. View the result and get some feedback on the language from your teacher.

9 Do your final shoot.

10 Introduce the scene to your class. Say what book it's from, who the characters are, what point it represents in the action and why you chose it. Then play your video scene.

11 Finally, view the scene in the original film and discuss your different interpretations.