

**Drama, Film and Theatre Studies**  
**Before the Camera Rolls**  
Supporting Materials  
Spring 2026



# Film Language Activity

## Film Wall



Whole group



20 minutes

Stages of Filmmaking Posters

### Description

This short activity encourages participants to discuss and document film language associated with each stage of the filmmaking process.

### Method

- Participants are organised in three groups.
- Each group is assigned to pre-production, one to production and one to post-production.
- Participants work in their groups to document as many words or images as they can on the relevant poster connected to their stage of filmmaking.
- Facilitator instructs participants to swap to the next stage and to add to the poster.
- Complete the activity when each group has added to each stage of the filmmaking process.

### My Notes/My Reflections





# Pre-production

Word or Image	Describe or Draw





# Production

Word or Image	Describe or Draw





# Post-production

Word or Image	Describe or Draw





# Close-Up on Genre: The Long Take



Small Groups



20 minutes



Open space

## Description

This short scene activity allows participants to explore the long take camera work often featured in the genre European Art Cinema.

## Method

- Participants read the short extract from a screenplay and decide on the unusual object.
- Participants prepare the short extract from a screenplay at a natural pace.
- Participants work from the Director's Notes and prepare the scene again.

## Director's Notes

This scene will be shot using a long take. Think about pace, keep style natural and realistic and add the following:

- Slow down every action to half or one third of the original pace (not slow motion)
- Allow long silences where nothing happens: aim to keep audience engaged gently
- Use minimal but very precise movement/gesture e.g. adjust hair, clothes/look at watch/change breathing pattern briefly etc.
- Characters observe each other gently without comment/explanation/judgement
- Allow tiny changes in emotion
- Let the waiting/time/pace/long shot be the focus of what's happening

## Reflect on the experience

- How did this scene differ from a scene from a mainstream Hollywood film?
- How did the "long-take" version change the focus from narrative?
- What feelings/tensions/emotions appeared without being spoken?

## My Notes/My Reflections



# Close-Up on Genre: European Art Cinema

Extract from a screenplay (c. 30 seconds)

Characters: Alex, Robin, Charlie

Setting – a bus stop on a quiet street

Alex is at the bus stop waiting for the bus. Robin joins the scene also waiting for the bus.

Alex: Morning

Robin: Morning

A short pause

Have you been waiting long?

Alex: No, just a few minutes.

Charlie enters the scene, holding a strange/unusual object. Stands aside from the other two characters on stage.

A longer pause. Alex looks at Charlie briefly and then looks across to Robin.

Alex: Speaking quietly to Robin. Do you see that?

Robin: I do.

Silence.

Charlie adjusts the grip on the strange/unusual object.

The three wait.

End.

## My Notes/My Reflections



# Close-Up on: Genre European Art Cinema

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End.

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# Responding: See, Notice, Wonder



What do you see?



What do you notice?



What do you wonder?



Any other thoughts





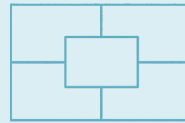
# Close-Up on Style: The Director's Chair



Small groups



20 minutes



The Director's Chair Placemat

## Description

This group-based activity allows participants to consider directorial styles.

## Method

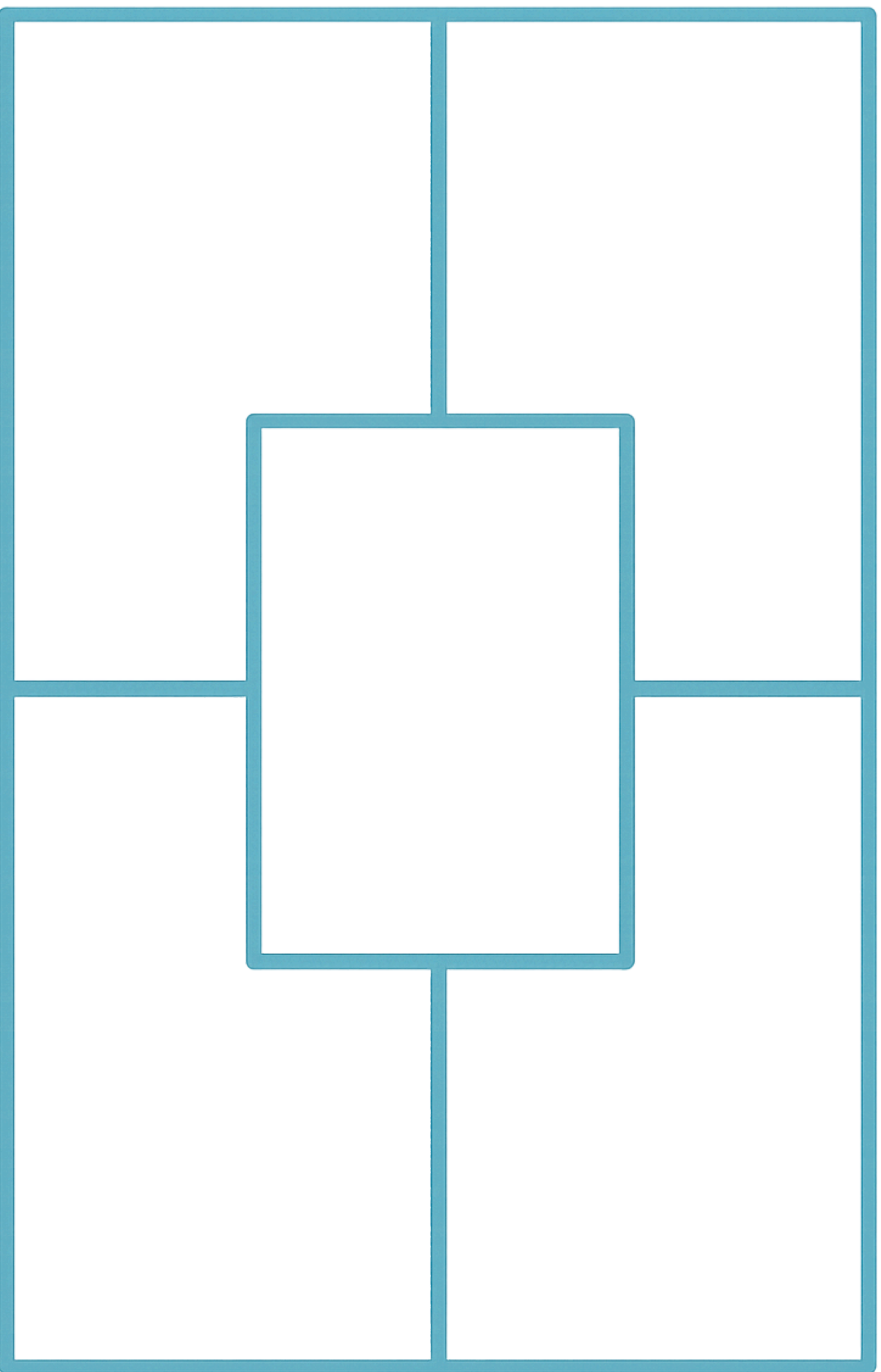
- In your group, choose one director to discuss.
- Place the name of the director in the centre of the placemat.
- Individually each participant takes one segment of the placemat and uses it to describe the style of the chosen director.
- Participants compare the similarities and differences between their respective responses.

## Reflection

- What similarities and differences emerged in your conversations about your chosen director?
- What did you learn about directorial style from this activity?

## My Notes/My Reflections







# Responding: See, Hear, Notice



What do you see?



What do you hear?



What do you notice?



Any other thoughts



# View to Critique: Response

<p>Impact of Directing</p>	<p>Impact of Cinematography</p>
<p>Impact of Sound/Music</p>	<p>Impact of Editing</p>



# Close-Up on Genre: Be the Filmmaker



Small groups



10 - 15 minutes

## Description

This group task engages participants with the role of filmmaker in producing film in the genre of Romance.

## Method

- Participants work in groups and choose one card from each category to build romance
- Using cards the participants add one or two short notes to briefly tell story of their film
- Participants use Filmmaking Question Mat to consider filmmaking choices to show Romance on screen



## Reflect on the experience

- How did your choices support the effective communication of the romance genre on screen?
- How did thinking like a filmmaker change your understanding of the romance genre?

## My Notes/My Reflections



# Filmmaking Question Mat

Who are the characters?	How did they first meet?	What obstacle stops the romance?	How does the romance end?

How would you use film to show who these characters are? (Think camera, colour, costume, set/props etc.?)	
Where does first meeting happen? (think setting and action in scene – keep simple e.g. bump into each other physically on busy street etc.)	
What techniques in filmmaking would you use to show the problem? (think camera angles, camera movement, shot types, pace, colour, sound etc.)	
How do you want the audience to feel at the end and how will you achieve this? (think camera angles, camera movement, pace, colour, sound etc.)	





# Freeze Frame Film



Small groups



10 minutes

## Description

This fast-paced warm up activity allows participants to think quickly to create freeze frames.

## Method

Divide participants into groups of 4

- Each participant in the group chooses one of the following: count; alphabet; stop, number.
- The facilitator instructs the participant with “alphabet” to recite the alphabet in their head repeatedly and the participant with “count” to count out loud between one and four repeatedly.
- The participant with “stop” calls ‘stop’ to the when they wish.
- The participant with “number” must recall the last number that was counted out loud.
- The participant with “alphabet” names the letter they were on when stopped.
- Participants now come up with words starting with the letter of the alphabet chosen. The number of words must match the number counted out loud.
- The facilitator instructs each group to form a film freeze frame to represent each word they have chosen.
- In turn, each group shares their freeze frame with the whole group, and the remaining participants must guess the letter, the words and the correct number of words.


## My Notes/My Reflections





# Cue Cards



 Small groups



20 minutes



Greeting Cards

## Description

This group activity supports participants to use stimulus to inspire and devise a range of creative possibilities.

## Method

- Facilitator holds up a greeting card to the group and facilitates responses to the following questions: Who is this card for? Who has sent the card? Why did they send the card? What story might this card tell us?
- Participants work in groups to choose one greeting card as a stimulus.
- Each member of the group responds individually to the greeting card using the same questions.
- Participants share their initial response with each other.
- Participants explore creative possibilities (including genre/period/style/form and influence of other work) offered by card and responses in the group.
- The group decide which story to follow up in their creative work.
- Each group creatively presents their idea (including influences) to the whole group.

## Possible extensions

Swap the greeting cards for a different range of stimuli.

Vary questions for initial responses e.g. What do I see? What do I notice? What do I wonder?

Use reflection prompt cards to support participants to reflect on their experiences (a) as a group or (b) individually.

### My Notes/My Reflections





# T.A.G Feedback Frame



Whole group



8-10 minutes



Seated in circle

## Description

This activity supports participants to give feedback and to help individuals or groups to move the learning forward.

## Method

- When presenting work or creative ideas, participants can use this frame to gather feedback on their work or ideas.
- Participants take turns to tell each other something they liked, ask a question or give a positive suggestion.



Tell something you liked



Ask a question



Give a positive suggestion

**My Notes/My Reflections**



# Feedback Frame: Close-Up, Pan, Action!



Whole group



8-10 minutes



Seated in circle

## Description

This feedback frame supports participants to listen to and receive feedback. It guides participants into developing ideas and to move learning forward during the creative process.

## Method

- Participants use the following prompts to offer feedback to their peers during the creative process.
- Participants document this feedback and subsequent reflection in the DFTS Portfolio.

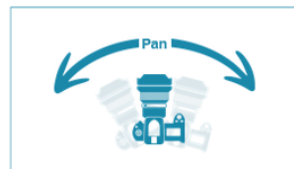
### Close – Up

Describe one aspect of the work that stands out



### Pan

One suggestion of something to follow or explore



### Action



Steps we now need to take to move the work along to the next stage

### Feedback Prompts

Having presented to the whole group:

What feedback do I wish to add to our work?

What feedback will we enact?

What roles are needed for the next stage of the work?



# F.I.L.M.

F = Focus

What is the focus of the learning?

I = Intentions

What is the intended learning for my students?

L = Learning

What learning experiences will students engage with?

M = Monitor

How will my students and I know the learning has been achieved?



