

What is... a Door?



What is... a Door? is an eye-opening visual journey through the hidden secrets and familiar sights and sounds of doors. It is part of a series of short, visually provocative videos that look at everyday things – a door, a fence, a garden, a window, a wall and a stream – from surprising perspectives.

By bringing out the extraordinary in the ordinary, the *What is...?* series inspires us to look at the familiar in fresh ways, and to develop creative thinking and interpretive skills. The extreme close-ups allow viewers to guess at the subject matter before it is revealed. The background of natural sounds, without words, enhances the beauty and mystery of each piece.

These dazzling videos are flexible, cross-curricular aids that are well-suited for seminar leaders and teachers of all age levels.

Director: Don White
Producer: George Johnson

4 minutes
Order number: C0199 047

TO ORDER NFB VIDEOS, CALL TODAY!
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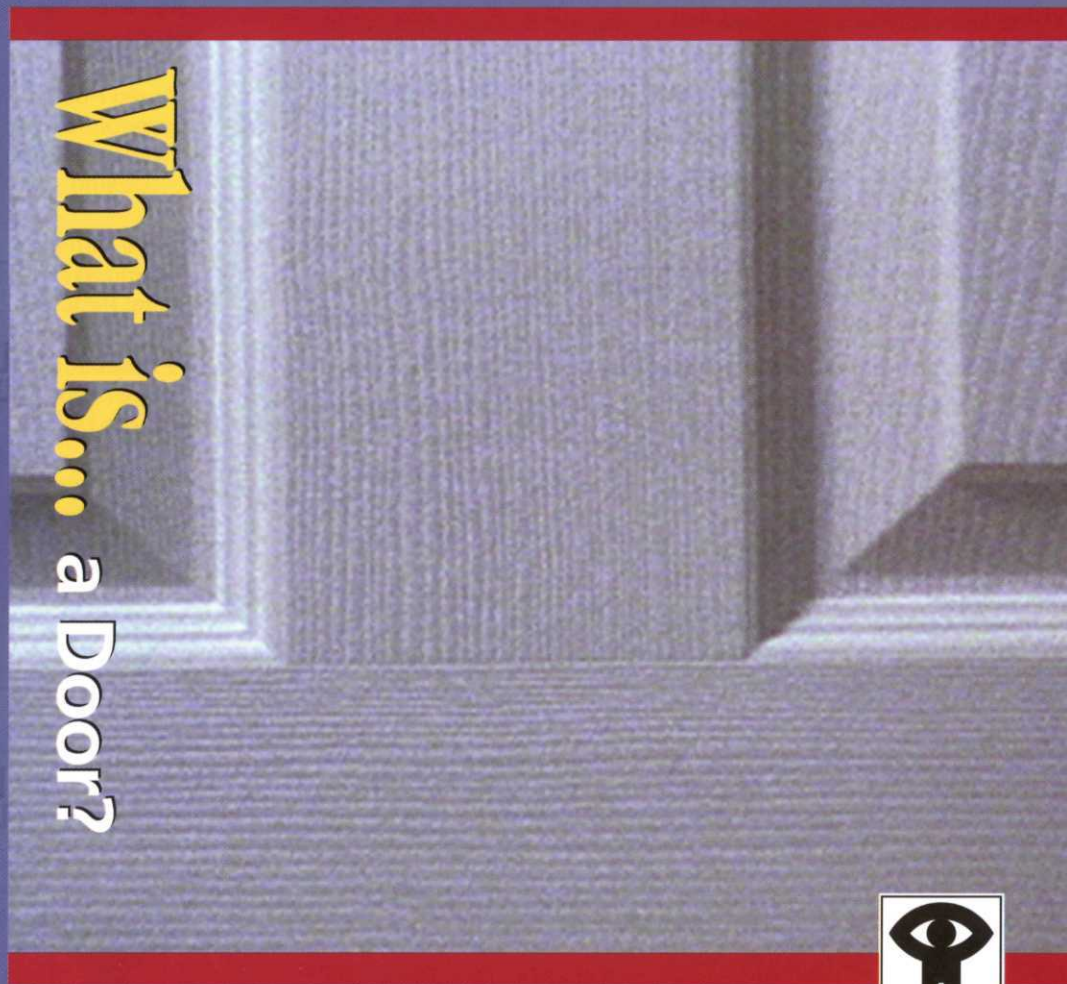
National Film Board of Canada
P.O. Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville
Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5



Printed in Canada



What is... a Door?



VHS

C0199 047



A National Film Board of Canada Production

The *What is...?* series

Often the most remarkable things lie right under our noses, invisible only because we neglect to see them. By dismissing the obvious, we sometimes miss remarkable discoveries... whether it's the changing textures of a garden or a simple but perfect solution to a problem. The videos in the *What is...?* series visit commonplace things that we all take for granted, revealing the splendour found all around us... if we know how to look for it.

By seeking out the exotic beauty in ordinary things, these videos encourage viewers to look beyond the commonplace, behind such labels as "a fence," or "a window," to find wonder in the world. They provoke open-ended thinking, presenting a limitless range of possibilities for exploring creative thought in the sciences and the arts. Because they are non-verbal, these videos can be applied to many different curriculum areas, with students of all languages.

Each video sets a mood, with images that invite individual interpretation. They inspire viewers to make judgements, pay attention to context, play with ambiguity, imagine, explore possibilities and use flexible thinking.

The *What is...?* series can be used in many areas:

- **The Arts** – exploration of light, texture, colour, movement, sound association.
- **Language** – poetry, storytelling, creative writing, ESL or second-language vocabulary expansion.
- **Philosophy, Math, Science** – meditative thinking, examining natural and mechanical processes, observing elements to reach a conclusion.
- **Workplace seminars** – an introduction to creative thinking as a business tool, for problem-solving, or as exercises in group dynamics and teamwork.
- **Entertainment, relaxation** – short escapes from the everyday world.

All of the videos in the *What is...?* series are available from the National Film Board of Canada. Titles include: **What is... a Fence? ... a Door? ... a Window? ... a Garden? ... a Wall? and ... a Stream?**

SCREENING THE VIDEOS

Before

The purpose of the videos is to foster creative thinking. Encourage viewers to let their minds free-associate with the sounds and images they will hear and see.

During

You may want to show a video twice. During the first screening, viewers can shout out their responses (take notes!). If you wish, stop the video part-way through, to allow viewers to guess at what the mystery object is. They can express their thoughts, questions and feelings live and on paper to serve as discussion-starters.

The second screening gives everyone a chance to listen and reflect. How did knowing the video's outcome change what they saw?

After

Allow viewers to discuss their interpretations and reactions. What else did the video make them think about?

*Director/
Cinematographer*
Don White

Editor
Jeanne Slater

Sound Design
Gael MacLean

Re-recording
Hennie Britton

*Audio Post-
production*
Airwaves Sound
Design

On-line Services
Rainmaker
Digital Pictures

*Production
Supervisor*
Kathryn Lynch

Producer
George Johnson

*Executive
Producer*
Svend-Erik
Eriksen

Order number:
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4 minutes



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Suggested questions and activities

Note: The curriculum areas appropriate for each activity are noted in square brackets.

- Brainstorm ideas that tell a story beyond the video. Who was opening and closing the doors? What is going on behind them? Where do the doors lead to? [language, creative writing]
- Discuss the use of music to create mood. Have students write a poem or short story in a similar mood, using doors as the theme (metaphors of opening/closing, transitions, etc.). Students can also use found objects to create "music," and discuss how the materials affect mood. [language, music]
- Have students create a video or storyboard (a series of drawings that tell the story) on a door or other mechanical object. [art, storytelling, physics]
- Challenge the class to draw or take a photo of a door from an unexpected perspective. [art, photography]
- Consider a "normal" door. How does the class define a door? How many other types of doors can they think of? How are they different (eg, revolving doors, elevator doors)? Can they be classified into types? [conceptual thinking, classification]
- Have students investigate the mechanics of doors (hinges, knobs, locks). They can sketch diagrams that show how these parts work. [science, physics]
- Have students collect magazine pictures of doors and create collages on a selected theme. [art]
- Ask students for some familiar song lyrics about doors. Discuss how doors are used in movies, TV, theatre, etc. (to create suspense, as barriers, as a vehicle to introduce characters into a scene, etc.). [art, music, creative writing]
- Divide the class into small groups to write and perform short scenes that begin and end with a character using a door. [role play, teamwork]