

Rosa Rosa

Lesson plan

Objective

To help the students acquire knowledge and skills while applying their understanding of a film.

Target audience

Students aged 15-17

Connections

English, either as language of instruction or as second language—literature (particularly in terms of writing a screenplay)—arts and culture

Summary of lesson plan

This lesson plan will enable students to practise their comprehension of a language, a culture or an art by looking at script development, narration and animation.

Process

Each block of activities provides an exercise that targets linguistic, cultural and artistic elements related to the film's context. In some cases, the exercises focus on comprehension and interpretation of the narrative while in others they are aimed at oral and written expression.

It could be useful to watch the film before carrying out the activities, depending on the groups and their language levels.

The exercises are suitable for either individual work or teamwork.



ACTIVITY 1 — PREPARATION

Getting acquainted with the work

1st Period

Approximate duration of activity: 30 minutes

Connections: English as language of instruction and as a second language, literature and art (in general and in cinema).

Viewing the film and discussing the themes and the artistic process

Students should watch the film *Rosa Rosa* once just to become familiar with it. Afterwards, the teacher and students can look at the film again, pausing on certain images to point out particular aspects that might stimulate discussion: the transparency of the images (Why?); the context of war (How is it illustrated? What is its role in the story being told?); the presence of two overlapping worlds, i.e. a love story (microcosm) that blooms while war is erupting (macrocosm), etc.

Film summary

Rosa Rosa

Félix Dufour-Laperrière

2008, 8 min 40 s

While war is thundering at the gates of the city, Rosa and her lover live serenely together, trying to preserve a fragile normality. *Rosa Rosa* is the interweaving of individual and collective fates via a love story simply told by the couple themselves. In this animation using reworked photos, Félix Dufour-Laperrière offers an unusual graphic world where public and private spaces overlap.



ACTIVITY 2

Comprehension and interpretation

2nd period

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

Connections: English as language of instruction and as a second language, literature and art (in general and in cinema).

2 a) Comprehension exercise

Approximate duration of exercise: 25 minutes

The film **Rosa Rosa** has no dialogue as such. The story is told through a narration. The narrators of the story are the man and the woman, Rosa: they give us the facts, their feelings and the context. The students can answer the following comprehension questions by paying particular attention to the narration.

QUESTIONS	EXPECTED ANSWERS
In what month does the story begin?	In April, before the fighting breaks out.
How much time does the couple spend together each week?	An hour or two, a couple of times a week.
At what time of day do they see each other?	At lunchtime.
Where do they meet?	At the man's place.
How long does this affair last?	A few months.
At what time of the year does Rosa announce that she is pregnant?	She tells him the news in late summer.
Is Rosa happy to tell him this news?	Yes, she says that it's good news.
In what context does their relationship take place?	In a city when a war breaks out.
Who believes that we eventually get used to fighting and lineups?	Rosa's ex-husband.
Do the couple have a boy or a girl?	A girl.
How long has it been since the man stopped working?	About two years.
Why did he stop working?	After an accident.
In what area (rural or urban) does the war take place?	Urban.
Was the city spared by the fighting? Why do you say that?	Rosa says that the downtown was spared: the shops are still open, services are being offered and the mail is still being delivered.
Is the man optimistic? Explain why.	Yes, in spite of the schools being closed, he says he believes things will get better.
Is the end optimistic? Explain why.	The schools have reopened, people are going back to work again. The war seems over. Life goes on.

2 b) Interpretation exercise

Approximate duration of exercise: 25 minutes

In between the lines of the narrative and beyond the images of the animation—what is left unsaid? Although the film tells a story, that of a budding love between the man and Rosa, there are still some gaps in the narrative. Certain facts and feelings are only implied. In this exercise, students interpret the various contexts as well as the thoughts of the characters.

QUESTIONS	EXPECTED ANSWERS
Assuming that certain images refer to the man, what could the man's job be?	He might be a telecommunications technician or an electrical lineman, since at the beginning of the film we see a man climbing a utility pole.
Why do these lovers see so little of one another and why always at lunchtime?	They are lovers, while Rosa is already married.
What does the man mean by: "We weren't always that careful"?	Perhaps they did not always use contraceptives. Perhaps they were not discreet enough.
Rosa is happy to be pregnant. So why doesn't she know how to announce the news to her boyfriend?	Rosa might be afraid of his reaction. She may not be sure of his feelings for her. The situation is delicate, because she is already married.
Is the man happy to learn that Rosa is pregnant?	*** There is material here for discussion. One thing, however, is significant: although Rosa is already married to another man at the very beginning of the film, she and her boyfriend will have their relationship in full view of everyone. They will form a family and raise their child together.
Why doesn't the couple leave this city threatened by war?	They have made their lives there. They had their child there.
In which country is this war taking place? Do the city's buildings tell us anything about the place? Do the cars enable us to identify this place?	It could be in Europe or America: at least everything seems to indicate it is a western country (architecture). However, the film does not specify the names of either the city or the country. *** The students can discuss their own interpretation, comment on the images and practise speaking.
At the end of the film, schools have reopened and the people have gone back to work. Why is this possible?	The war is coming to an end. Life slowly goes back to normal. There is hope.
QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT (This part of the exercise could be continued as homework)	
Why are the characters drawn in transparency on top of the images of the city and the war, which are darker?	The history of the relationship (microcosm) is part of History with a capital H (macrocosm). The transparency shows that, beyond the context (the war), life goes on. It is as if they were passing through History. Accentuating the city and the images of war underscores the importance of the context in the couple's story.
Why is the city not named?	The film is not about a particular war, but the story of a couple living through a war. Not naming the city or country allows the viewer to identify with the couple. By not locating the action in a specific place, the audience can participate in the story by providing features that resemble their own world.



ACTIVITY 3*

Verb tenses in the narration

Third period

Approximate duration: 30 minutes

Connections: English as language of instruction and as second language, literature and art (in general and in cinema)

Ask the students to pay close attention to how the narrators tell their stories. This exercise deals mainly with verb tenses used in the narration and introduces a few principles of narration. Which verb tenses are used to tell the story? And what do these tenses reveal to us about how to tell stories—the timeline, facts, context, speakers or narrators? The students can work from the transcript of the narration in the appendix.

(*Enriched level)

QUESTIONS	EXPECTED ANSWERS
Determine the verb tense.	Mainly the simple past, sometimes the present perfect and the imperfect.
What is the difference between the simple past (downtown was spared) and the present perfect (downtown has been spared)?	<p>They are classic tenses of story narrative, setting out the facts that have taken place in time.</p> <p>However, the first is further removed in the past. The second is closer to the present, hence more immediate and emotional.</p>
Find the relevant passages that tell us that when the narrative time (the storyline) coincides with the characters' present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “But it’s still a bit strange.” (A comment inserted within the story that links us with the characters’ present while all the facts of the story have yet to be disclosed.) – “We go on ...” (This brings us to the characters’ present.) – “Our life is here.” (Brings us back to the characters’ present.) – “People are on their guard.” (General comment). – “They know... (General comment). – “Life goes on.” (Brings us back to the characters’ present.)
<p>*Right in the middle of the story, at a point when we still don’t know all the facts, there is a sudden change in verb tense: it moves from the past to the present, then on to the future. Within the narrative thread, from a temporal perspective, what effect does this block of three sentences have? Discuss this passage:</p> <p>Woman: But it’s [<i>it is</i>] still a bit strange.</p> <p>Woman: All these people leaving the city.</p> <p>Woman: They’ll [i.e., they will] probably never come back.</p>	<p>These three sentences literally emerge from the narrative as if they were not part of the story being told. The present tense of the commentary brings us to the present tense of the characters and we are no longer in the timeframe of the historical narrative.</p>



RECAP

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

Connections: French as language of instruction and as second language, art and literature (in general or in cinema)

What is the main idea behind the film *Rosa Rosa*?

Ask the students to write a text based on the main idea, following the overall introduction-development-conclusion structure. The teacher can impose an appropriate verb tense depending on the students' level: past, present perfect, present, future.



REFLECTIVE SHARING

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

Connections: English as language of instruction and as second language, literature and art (in general and in cinema)

Do you work in film?

Ask the students to rewrite the script for *Rosa Rosa*. The script must use the narrative form. To help students practise the different verb tenses, the story created should be rooted in the past, extend to the characters' present and open up towards the hope that the future brings. In addition, the story should also include key elements from the film: a microcosm (the love story) and a macrocosm (a context of their choice); the two contexts should overlap. The macrocosm could be described and interspersed throughout the narrative. Students could present their scenario orally, and a PowerPoint presentation could make it more dynamic.

- The narrator
- The characters
- The place
- The love story (microcosm) / unfolding of events
- The context (macrocosm) / unfolding of events
- The conclusion

IN THE NFB COLLECTION

To expand on this lesson plan, here are a few films that all have a clear narrative structure.

Here and There

2006, Obom, 9 min

Synopsis

Childhood can be a chaotic time, especially if you're bouncing back and forth between two continents. With engaging candour and gentle humour, the director offers up images from her family album. In drawing on the bewildering events of her rootless early years, she fleshes out an uncertain identity and takes control of her life.

Using drawings on paper and digitized snippets of fabric, Obom creates a whimsical world of simple lines and pastel tones. Carried along by a playful, jazzy score, her film soothes old wounds and celebrates a life filled with magic and mayhem.

Through My Thick Glasses

2004, Pjotr Sapegin, 12 min 32 s

An old man tells his granddaughter his personal story of the Second World War. Brimming with strange characters, his tale conjures up a world beyond the little girl's comprehension. Director Pjotr Sapegin has taken a true story and transformed it into a tongue-in-cheek epic peopled with clay puppets. The animated short is dedicated to Sapegin's mother.

Tragic Story with Happy Ending

2005, Regina Pessoa, 7 min 40 s

Synopsis

A little girl finds acceptance in embracing her own difference. This whimsically lyrical film has the timeless charm of an old fable - one whose subject is difference and self-affirmation. Through images evoking the rich texture of a woodblock print, the filmmaker has created a world of contrasts complemented by a lively soundtrack with a rhythmic beat.

APPENDIX

ROSA ROSA – TRANSCRIPTION OF NARRATION

- Man:** It was April, before the fighting broke out.
- Man:** We'd spend an hour or two together a couple of times a week, mainly at my place.
- Man:** I lived close to where she worked.
- Woman:** We'd get together over lunch hour, because the rest of the time I was busy at work...
- Woman:** ...and with my husband.
- Woman:** We went on like that for a couple of months, almost in secret
- Man:** Though we weren't always that careful
- Man:** Summer was almost over. Rosa came up to me and told me she was pregnant.
- Woman:** It was good news.
- Woman:** But I didn't know how to tell anybody.
- Woman:** My ex-husband said we'd get used to the lineups, all the traffic jams.
- Woman:** But it's still a bit strange.
- Woman:** All these people leaving town.
- Woman:** They'll probably never come back.
- Man:** The baby was born.
- Man:** We moved in together, in a quieter neighbourhood.
- Man:** I haven't worked in two years. I had an accident. It's frustrating.
- Woman:** The front reached the outskirts of the city. But we decided to stay.
- Woman:** We go on. Almost as if nothing has changed.
- Woman:** Our life is here.
- Woman:** People are on their guard.
- Woman:** They know something could happen any time.
- Woman:** Downtown has been spared. So far. The stores are still open, there are services and there is still mail.
- Man:** Schools were closed yesterday. People are worried. My sense is that eventually, things will get better.
- Man:** Life goes on