

Group Activity 1-1: Research a Moving-Image Timeline

ENRICHMENT

Directions: Work in a group of four to eight people. Read The Project summary below, then follow the step-by-step instructions.

The Project: A local theater is planning a film art festival. They plan to show a variety of films from the 20th century. Each film will relate to an important development in moving-image technology. The theater has asked your research team to create a *historical timeline* focusing on this technology, which they will publish in the newspaper on the day of the film festival.

Step 1: Discuss what a timeline is and its necessary parts.

As a group, review the information below:

- A *timeline* is an actual picture of events that happened in history. The timeline *shows* at a glance dates and events and the order in which they happened. These dates and events are placed, or plotted, on the line in chronological order.
- Most timelines are either horizontal, running across the page from left to right, or they may be vertical, running down the page from top to bottom.
- All timelines have two necessary parts — dates and events. *Your* timeline will have three necessary parts — dates, inventions with brief descriptions, and film titles.
- Timelines often use pictures as well as words to summarize dates and events. *Your* timeline will include images.
- Most timelines have a minimum of four events but can have as many as a hundred events! *Your* timeline should have between four and eight events.

Step 2: Decide the period of history your timeline will cover and the inventions you will spotlight.

Will your timeline cover a few decades or all ten decades of the 20th century? What inventions or developments in moving images will you add to your timeline? Consider including some of the inventions mentioned in Film Clip 1-1. Consider the following to research in step 3: the type of cameras filmmakers use; the size of the screen, such as wide screen and Panavision; color techniques, such as Technicolor; the use of sound. Or you may wish to focus your timeline on one type of technology, such as special effects.

Step 3: Assign research roles.

Assign one or two people to research each invention. Use the chart below to help you gather and organize your information.

Invention and Brief Description	Date of Invention	Film That Used This Technology	Person Who Will Do The Research

Example:

Invention and Brief Description	Date of Invention	Film That Used This Technology	Person Who Will Do The Research
Sound	1927	<i>The Jazz Singer</i>	

Step 4: Conduct your research.

Where can you find information about moving-image technology? The library is one place to start; look up books and articles on film history. The Internet also has some interesting film-history Web sites. Two starting points are:

- The American WideScreen Museum Web site — www.widescreenmuseum.com. This site has information not only on the size of movie screens but also on sound and color development.
- The Motion Picture & Television Reading Room — www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/. This is a Web page of the Library of Congress.

What should you research?

- The date of the invention. Find at least two sources to confirm your date.
- A brief explanation or description of the technology
- A brief explanation or description of the film that first used the technology
- Images of the invention, and if possible, of the film. Consider making a copy of the images or downloading them. You can also reduce the size of the images so they fit on the timeline. Many books and Web sites feature movie posters of classic films as well as shots from the film.

Step 5: Compile your information on the timeline.

First, plot your dates on the timeline. Then add the remaining part — the name of the invention with a brief description and the title of the film.

Second, place your image of the invention and/or the film on the timeline.

Step 6: Get Creative!

Look at your timeline. Is it easy to read? Is it fun to read? Now that you have all the necessary *and accurate* information, discuss as a group how to make your timeline visually exciting. Remember, you are creating this timeline for publication in a newspaper. People often read the newspaper by scanning the headlines and images. Bold letters, colors, and the images you select can grab a reader's attention.

○○○ Reading Activity 1-2: The Front of the Bus ○○○

Directions: Read the passage below, based on historical documents, including newspaper accounts and a radio interview with Rosa Parks from April 1956.

On the evening of December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus as she did most nights after work. She was tired, but that, too, was not unusual. This bus ride, however, would be different from any other Rosa Parks had taken. Rosa paid her ten-cent fare and moved down the aisle toward a vacant seat. The seat was directly behind a wooden sign that read “colored.” Rosa noticed that some African Americans were standing in the back of the bus. She did not question why the seat was empty. She was just happy to be able to sit after a long day’s work.

“Did you intend to make trouble that evening?” a radio reporter later asked Rosa Parks during an interview.

No, Rosa answered. She had not planned any kind of rebellion whatsoever. She told the reporter that she always “tried to avoid trouble” and that she was always “as careful as possible to stay out of trouble.”

The trouble began at the next stop on the bus route, the Empire Theater. At this stop, additional people boarded the bus. They were white. The seats in the front of the bus were reserved for white passengers. However, all of these seats were filled. The bus driver looked over his shoulder and indicated, to Rosa Parks and the man sitting beside her near the window, to give up their seats to the white people.

Rosa did not move. The man seated next to her by the window stood and slipped past her into the aisle. Likewise, in the row across the aisle from Rosa, two African American women stood and gave up their seats.

“I don’t really know why I wouldn’t move,” *Time* magazine quoted Rosa in an article published more than a year later. “There was no plot or plan at all. I was just tired... My feet hurt.” She told another reporter, “I suppose I had been pushed as far as I could stand to be pushed.”

What happened next would make civil rights history. The driver threatened to call the police. Rosa told the driver to go right ahead.

Rosa said she was not frightened as she waited for the police to arrive. In her autobiography, she said she thought of her grandfather. She remembered that he owned a double-barreled shotgun. He kept it near the fireplace in his home. When he went out, he took the gun with him, usually placing it in the back of his wagon. Even as a child, Rosa knew the gun was her grandfather’s way of protecting them, if necessary, from racial violence that might occur.

During her radio interview, however, Rosa did not speak

Word Builder

rebellion - an action intended to oppose authority

civil rights - rights that all citizens of a society are supposed to have, such as the right to vote and receive fair treatment under the law

segregated - kept apart; In a segregated city, for example, blacks and whites used different restrooms, sat in separate sections of a movie theater, and rode in separate sections of public buses

violated - broken, disobeyed

boycott - a type of protest where people refuse to use a service or purchase a product

integrated - put together, as in blacks and whites sharing the same public places

of her grandfather or of guns. Instead, she told the reporter about other times she had ridden the bus. If the front of the bus was crowded and white people were standing, African Americans paid their fare to the driver. Then they stepped off the bus again and entered through the rear door. The radio interviewer had seemed surprised. You would do this even if it were raining? he asked. Yes, Rosa told him. This was the way of life in a segregated city.

That December night when the police arrived, they arrested Rosa Parks. “Were you ashamed of being arrested?” the radio reporter asked her.

Rosa answered no. She had been sitting in the colored section. She had paid her fare. She had not violated any law that she was aware of.

Rosa’s case went to trial. The court found her guilty of breaking an Alabama law that stated all persons must obey a bus driver’s seating instructions. The ten-cent ride and her rebellion had cost her a \$10 fine.

The story was not quite over, however. Within days, news of Rosa Parks’ arrest spread through the city. Fliers appeared in the African American communities asking people to boycott the bus company. African Americans accounted for almost 75 percent of the bus company’s income. The boycott lasted more than a year! In February 1957, *Time* magazine reported that African Americans and white Americans were riding side by side on integrated buses for the first time ever in Montgomery, Alabama.

(Reading Activity 1-2, continued)

Part 1 – Identifying Details

Directions: The questions below are about the story's content. Answer each question.

1. Who is the main character in this story?
2. What conflict does the main character experience?
3. What emotion does the main character experience while waiting for the police to arrive?
4. What happens at the end of the story?

Part 2 – Imagining the Scene for the Screen

Directions: To adapt this true-life narrative for the screen, you must ask, then answer, a different set of questions. Read each question, then discuss your answers as a class.

1. How do I show the setting? What would it look like?
2. How do I suggest that there is a white section and a black section on the bus?
3. How do I show that the main character is not only physically tired but also tired of being pushed around?
4. How do I reproduce the main character's memory of her grandfather?
5. How do I show the audience what the main character remembers about being treated unfairly in the past?
6. How do I suggest to the audience that the main character faces physical danger?

Part 3 – Making Conclusions

Directions: Think about each of these questions, then discuss your answers as a class.

1. How is a film similar to other storytelling formats, such as nonfiction narratives, short stories, and novels?
2. How is a film different from these other storytelling formats?
3. What tools does a filmmaker use that a journalist or novelist does *not* use to show a character's thoughts, memories, or fears?
4. What tools and techniques does a filmmaker use to establish setting and conflict?

○○○ Creative Writing Activity 1-3: Cigar Box Memories ○○○

Directions: Use the opening credits of the film as a springboard for writing a paper about your own childhood memories. Read the quotation, then follow the steps below.

Neighbors bring food with death and flowers with sickness and little things in between. Boo was our neighbor. He gave us two soap dolls, a broken watch and chain, a pair of good-luck pennies, and our lives.

— Voice-over narration from *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Word Builder

voice-over - a voice off-screen that provides background information about characters or the film's setting

storyboard - a shot-by-shot layout drawn before shooting or editing the scene

Prewriting: Think and talk about it.

- How does the quotation above, which comes at the end of the film, mirror the opening credits?
- Were the things Boo gave Scout and Jem, as listed above, important or not important? Tell why you think so.
- What did the items listed above symbolize?
- What does the narrator mean when she says Boo gave them “our lives”?

Writing: Sketch your story.

Use the images and sounds of the opening credits and the quotation above from the end of the film as a model for creating your own cigar box of memories. You may do this with words alone or by combining words and images, or words and sounds, or words, images, and sounds. The choice is yours. Follow the steps below.

Step 1: Imagine a box. Select four to six items from your childhood that you could place in this imaginary box. List those items on your paper. You need not still possess the items. They can be real or they can be remembered.

Step 2: Use one or more of your five senses — smell, touch, taste, hearing, and sight — to describe each item. Use vivid words rather than vague or unspecific words. Try as best as you can to capture what each object looked like, what it smelled or tasted like, or how it felt to touch it, hold it, hug it.

Step 3: Explain what the items represented or symbolized in your young life. Remember that what a child of six or seven treasures is often not necessarily what a teenager treasures. Look back at your childhood and those items the way the narrator does in the film. Write a single paragraph about the significance of those items. The significance may be the objects themselves. Or, as in the case of Jem and Scout, in the relationship between the objects and the person who gave the items to them.

Step 4: Write a concluding sentence. Comment on how time has or has not changed the appearance of the items or the value you place on them.

Presenting: Decide how you will present your cigar box memories.

You may write a poem or short essay. You may sketch a storyboard, creating a visual display of the items with voice-over narration to explain the significance of each. Or you could create a collage of photographs. Later in this program, you might use this writing prompt as the subject of your own video, set to music.

○○○ Reading Activity 1-4: "A Tired Old Town" ○○○

Directions: Work in a group. Assign roles and read aloud the following excerpt from the screenplay.

Word Builder

talcum - a fine powder

"*nothing to fear but fear itself*" - a phrase spoken by President Roosevelt in response to the nation's fear over poverty during the Great Depression

NARRATOR (VO)

Maycomb was a tired old town,
even in 1932 when I first knew it.

Somehow it was hotter then.

Men's stiff collars wilted by nine in
the morning. Ladies bathed before noon,
after their three o'clock naps, and
by nightfall were like soft teacakes
with frosting of sweat and sweet talcum.

The day was twenty-four hours long but it
seemed longer. There was no hurry
because there was nowhere to go and
nothing to buy and no money to buy
it with, although Maycomb County had
been recently told that it had
"nothing to fear but fear itself."

That summer I was six years old.

SCOUT

Morning, Mr. Cunningham.

WALTER CUNNINGHAM

Oh, morning, Miss.

SCOUT

My daddy's getting dressed. Would
you like me to call him for you?

WALTER

No, Miss, why, I don't care to bother.

SCOUT

Why, it's no bother Mr. Cunningham.
He'll be happy to see you.

Atticus? Atticus!

Here's Mr. Cunningham.

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

○○○ Prewriting Activity 1-6: Organizing Your Thoughts ○○○

Directions: Use index cards to complete this prewriting activity. Use one card for each of the four areas of criticism indicated below. Answer as many questions in each box as you can. You will use these index cards when writing the first draft of your film critique.

Card 1: Description

Identify key story elements.

- What is the film's title?
- When and where was the work created?
- Who are the main characters?
- What is the setting?
- What conflicts do the main characters experience?
- How are the conflicts resolved?

Card 2: Analysis

Describe the narrative structure.

- How are the main characters introduced?
- What is the inciting incident?
- How does the filmmaker suggest relationships between the characters?
- What visual and sound symbols does the filmmaker use?
- Why does a voice-over open and close the story?

Card 3: Interpretation

Explain what the story means.

- What ideas or messages is the filmmaker expressing about children, racism or civil rights, and relationships with people who are different from others?
- What do the visual and sound symbols mean?
Some examples to consider: The cigar box and its contents, Mr. Radley cementing the hole in the tree trunk, or the porch swing banging in the wind.
- What is the meaning of the title?

Card 4: Evaluation

Explain your personal response.

- To which character did you relate the most, and why?
- What was familiar about the setting and/or the conflict? What was unfamiliar?
- What emotions did you experience while viewing the film, and why?
- What did the film make you think about that you hadn't thought about before?
- How did the work change your view of yourself (if at all) or of the world (if at all)?

Group Activity 1-7: National Film Registry Nominations

Directions: Your group will research, discuss, then select 5 to 10 films that you believe have a place in the National Film Registry. Follow the steps below.

Step 1: Read the description below about the kind of films eligible to be considered for the National Film Registry.

The Librarian/Board will continue to select up to 25 “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant films” each year for the National Film Registry. To be eligible, films must be at least ten years old, though they need not be feature-length or have had a theatrical release in order to be considered. The legislation’s intent is that the broadest possible range of films be eligible for consideration.

Question: What are two qualifications for a film to be listed with the National Film Registry?

Word Builder

registry - a list or calendar of events

cultural - relating to a society’s values and beliefs

historical - relating to a society’s past events

aesthetic - relating to art or art appreciation

significant - important, noteworthy

Step 2: Read the quotation below from Dr. James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, about the films chosen for the registry.

The films we choose are not necessarily either the “best” American films ever made or the most famous. But they are films that continue to have cultural, historical, or aesthetic significance — and in many cases represent countless other films also deserving of recognition. The selection of a film, I stress, is not an endorsement of its ideology or content, but rather a recognition of the film’s importance to American film and cultural history and to history in general.

Question: Of the films selected, what is most important — the quality of the film, the content of the film, or the film’s importance as a historical and cultural document?

Step 3: Delegate one or two members of your group to each research a different decade. Be sure that every member of the group has a “decade” assignment. For each film you wish your group to consider, complete an index card with this information on it:

- Title of film
- Year made
- Director
- Synopsis of story
- Reasons why this film is culturally, historically, or aesthetically (artistically) significant

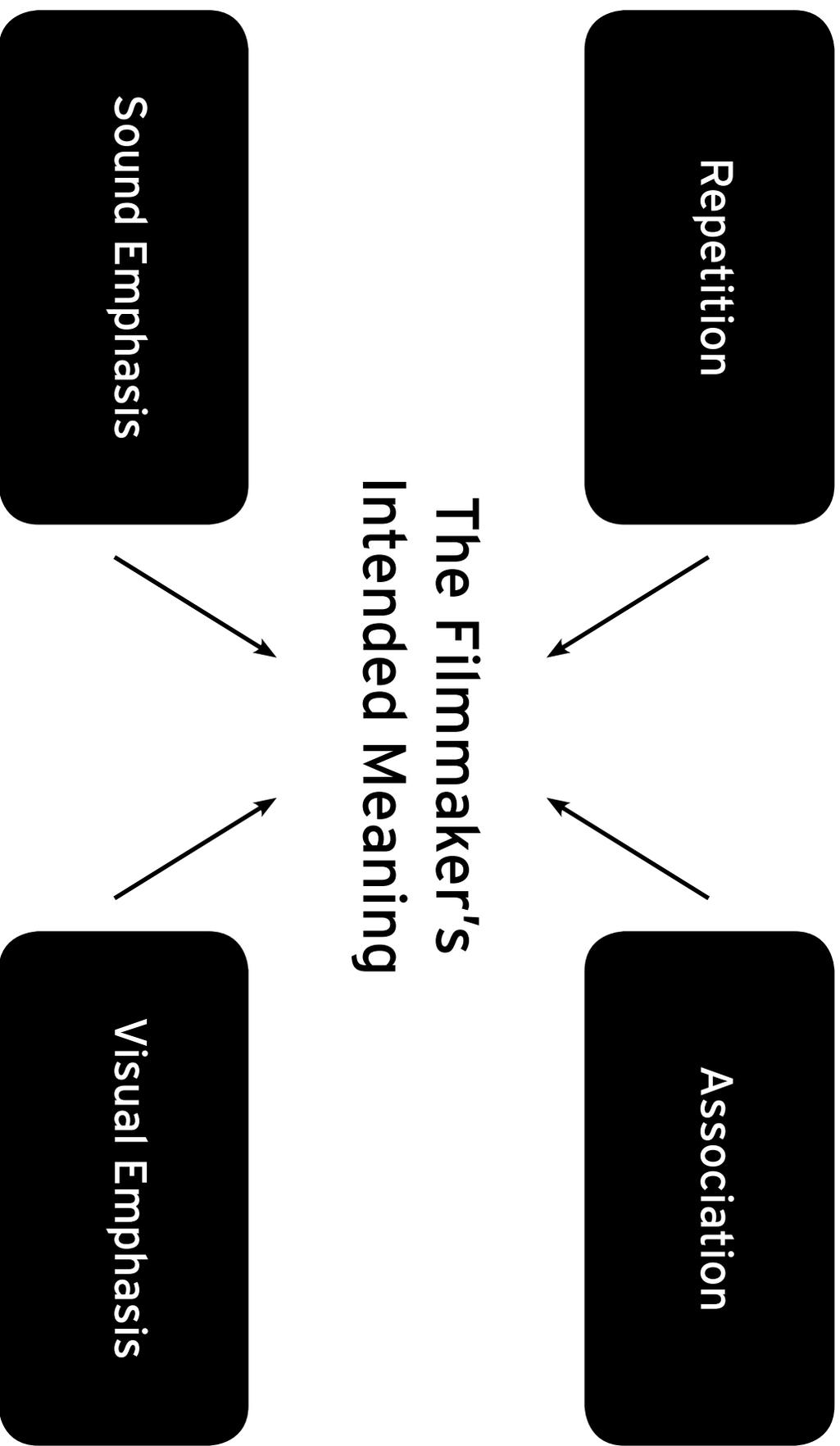
Step 4: The group members will begin their research, then report back to the group. Movie listings are available through numerous library references. In addition, the Web sites below will provide some good starting points for learning about films that are “culturally, historically or aesthetically significant.” Log on to the National Film Registry Web site to see if a film you are researching has already been named to the registry.

National Film Preservation Board
 National Film Registry
 American Museum of the Moving Image
 Internet Movie Database

www.locweb.loc.gov/film/
www.loc.gov/film/filmnfr.html
www.ammi.org/site/
www.imdb.com

Step 5: As a group, discuss the films you have researched. Based on the criteria established by the Library of Congress, select 5 to 10 films. For each film you nominate, write a single paragraph describing the film, using the information on your index card. Once you have completed your project, consider sending your nominations to the Library of Congress for review.

How Do Filmmakers Create Symbols?



Two Ways to Read a Film

All film stories have two basic elements:

Content

What is the story about?

Watch the film to learn *what* happens to whom and *why*.

Narrative Structure

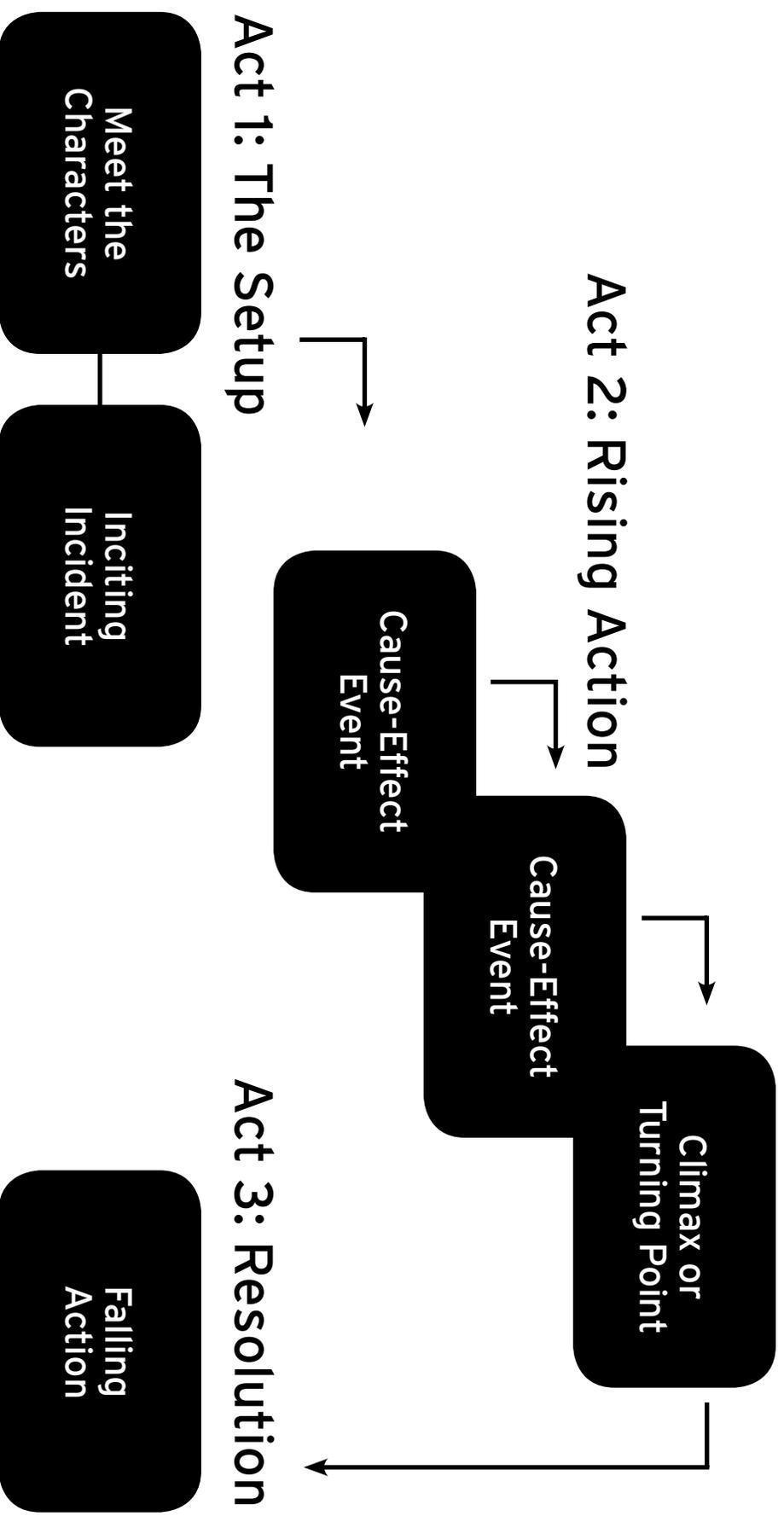
How does the director tell the story?

Watch the film to analyze *how* the story is constructed



Often *what* the film is about will determine *how* the director plans and arranges the shots and scenes.

Narrative Structure



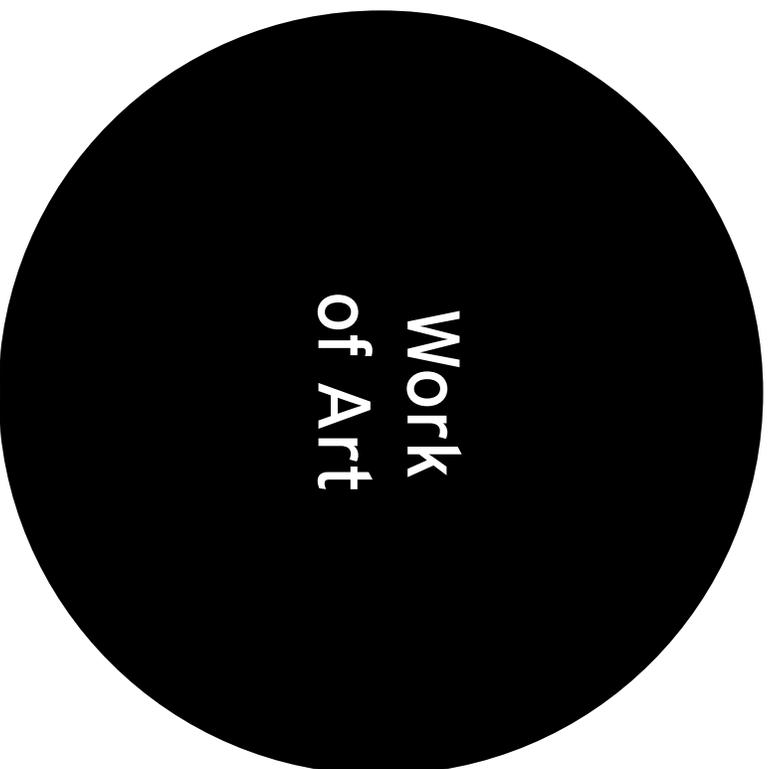
Mirror Images

Viewer's Interpretation

The person you are determines, in part, *how you interpret* a work of art. Often you may see yourself reflected in the work of art, as when you relate to a character, an event, or a setting. Your understanding of your world is what you *bring* to the work of art.

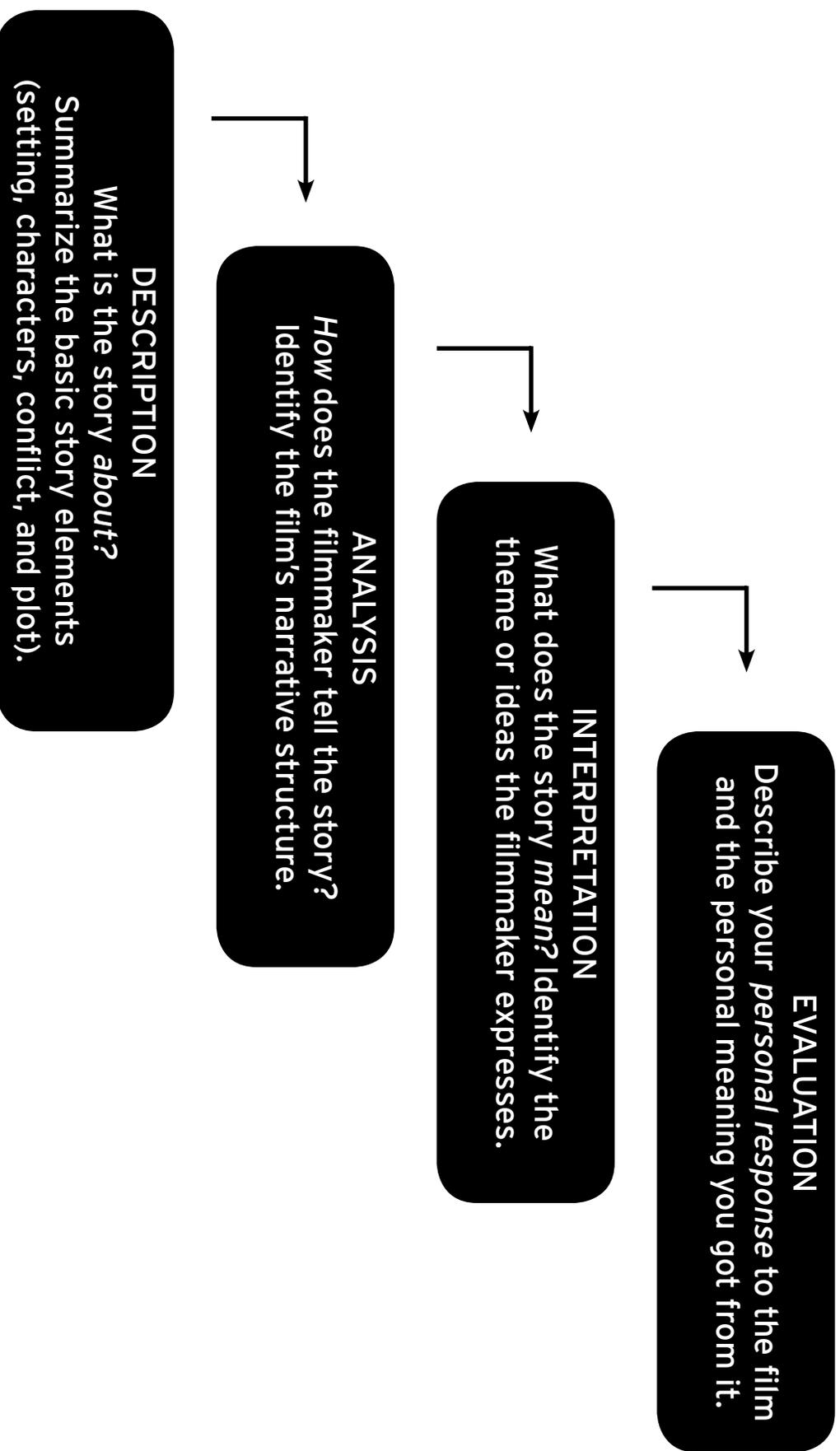
Viewer's Response

The work of art, in turn, may alter or influence your view of yourself, other people, or the world. Your *reflections* are what you see in the work of art and *take away* with you. This includes ideas as well as emotions.



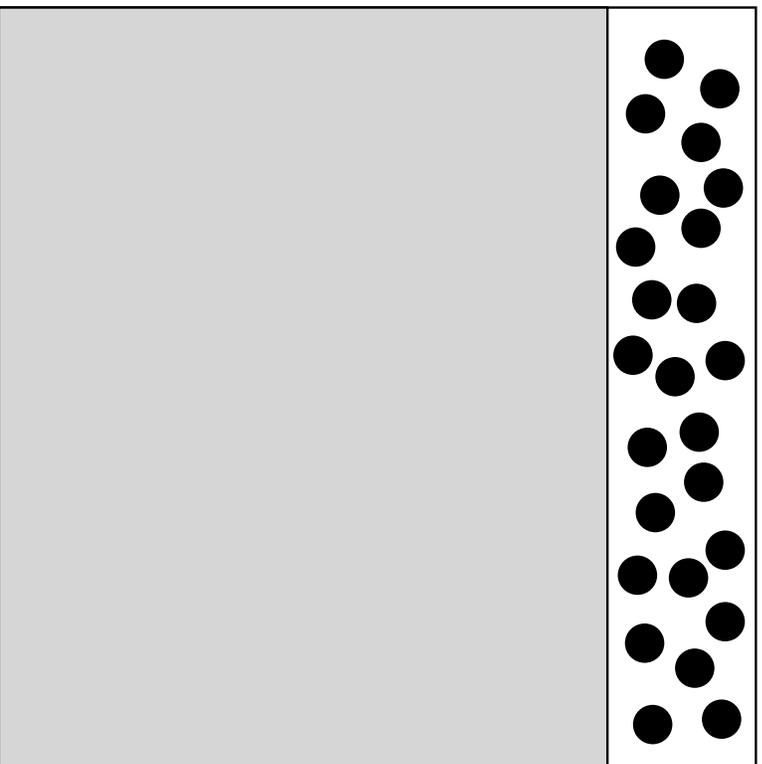
Film-Criticism Ladder

The process of critiquing a work of art involves four steps. You must complete the steps in order, starting at the bottom and working your way to the top.



Film Layers

All motion-picture film has the same basic structure.



→ **Top Layer**

The image material, composed of two parts:
the emulsion (white area) and silver
particles (represented as black dots)

→ **Bottom Layer**

The base, composed of cellulose nitrate
(which is made from either cotton or
wood fibers), acetate, or a plastic
substance called polyester

How a Film Slowly Ages and Dies

It's all about *nature* (chemical reactions) and *nurture* (environmental conditions).

DIAGNOSIS	CAUSE	EFFECT	SOLUTION
<p>Nitrate Decay</p>	<p>Nature: Nitrate plastic decays over time.</p> <p>Nurture: Water, high humidity, and heat can destroy the plastic base.</p>	<p>First, the image browns and fades. Next, the emulsion becomes sticky, then softens and blisters. Gases escape and cause rusting and a strong odor. Eventually, the film crumbles into powder.</p>	<p>Nature: Copy film onto safer film stock. But once the emulsion bubbles and blisters, the film cannot be copied.</p> <p>Nurture: Slow the effects of time by storing film in a cool dry vault.</p>
<p>Acetate Decay (Also called "vinegar syndrome")</p>	<p>Nature: Acetate plastic decays over time.</p> <p>Nurture: Water, humidity, and heat can destroy the plastic base.</p>	<p>First, the film begins to smell like vinegar. Next, the plastic begins to shrink. Film curls and warps. Gelatin emulsion becomes brittle and flakes. White powder appears on the surface of the film.</p>	<p>Nature: Copy film onto safer film stock. But once emulsion becomes brittle, the film can no longer be copied.</p> <p>Nurture: Slow the effects of time by storing film in a cool dry vault.</p>

○○○ Screening Sheet 1-1: What Is a Movie? ○○○

What You Will See: This film clip shows a number of important inventions in the development of moving-image technology. You will see shots, or images, from different movies, such as silent films like *Ben Hur*, other classic films like *The Wizard of Oz*, and contemporary films like *Spider-Man*.

Directions: After viewing the film clip, answer the questions below.

1. The first movies, or moving images, made in the 19th century were not silent films. What were they?

Word Builder

collaboration – partnership, a group effort

technology – a branch of science that includes the study or invention of tools and machines

Zoetrope – a revolving device of the 19th century

sequential – one after another

Kinetoscope – a type of moving-picture machine that flips images rapidly

2. Why do you think moviegoers in 1903 were shocked when the bandit in *The Great Train Robbery* pointed his gun at the audience and fired?
3. The narrator says “The silent film created a visual language for telling stories that could be understood by anyone, anywhere.” What does the narrator mean by “visual language?”
4. List five inventions in moving-image technology identified in this film.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

○○○ Screening Sheet 1-2: The Front of the Bus ○○○

What You Will See: This film clip shows a scene from the made-for-television film *The Rosa Parks Story*. Rosa Parks is seated on a bus. She refuses to give up her seat to a white passenger.

Directions: Work with a screening partner. As you view the film clip, jot your observations in the right column on the chart below. After viewing, discuss your observations with your partner.

How does the filmmaker show...	Describe the visual images and/or sounds in the film that suggest the elements at left.
...the setting?	
...the main character's conflict?	
...the main character's memory of her grandfather?	
...that the main character may be in danger?	

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

○○○ Screening Sheet 1-3: *To Kill a Mockingbird* Opening Credits ○○○

Part 1 – Watching

What You Will See: This film clip is the opening credits of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Directions: List as many images and sounds as you notice in the sequence of shots during the opening credits. You may record your observations during and after viewing the segment.

Images	Sounds

Think More About It

What happens in this sequence?

Part 2 – Seeing

What You Will See: You will watch the film clip of the opening credits again. This time, pay attention not to what is shown but to *how* it is shown.

Directions: The first column asks a number of questions. Read them carefully before you watch the film clip. Then write your answers in the second column. You may jot your observations on the chart both during and after viewing the segment. Your teacher may show the film clip a third time if you need to see it again.

Ways a Filmmaker Can Create Symbolism	Observations
Repetition <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What images are repeated?• How do some of these images suggest the past?	
Association <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the filmmaker suggest a child has opened the box?	
Sound Emphasis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do the sound effects make you feel? What might they symbolize?• When does the music begin?• Describe the music and how it changes by the end of the sequence.	
Visual Emphasis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What objects are seen very close up? What might those symbolize?	

○○○ Screening Sheet 1-4: Reading Together at Night ○○○

What You Will See: This film clip is a scene from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Scout is reading to Atticus before she goes to sleep.

Directions: First, read each description in column 1 on the chart below. As you view this scene, jot your observations about Scout and Atticus in the second column.

Visual and Sound Details	What does this tell you about Scout or Atticus and their relationship?
The audience first sees the characters through the bedroom window. Scout is in bed. Atticus is sitting on the bed next to her.	
When Scout talks about Boo Radley, Atticus scolds her, telling her to “stay away from those poor people.”	
Scout asks to see Atticus’s pocket watch, then reads the inscription.	
Scout asks Atticus what he will give her someday.	
Scout sleeps with a stuffed animal.	
Scout calls to Jem, who is also in bed, “Was Mama pretty?”	
The final shot shows Atticus sitting alone on the porch swing.	

