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ABSTRACT

The pamphlet reviews uses of films in social studies classrooms, lists sources for obtaining films and filmographies, and gives tips on showing and evaluating the films. Films can be used to illustrate concepts or historical events, communicate the essence of foreign cultures, and enliven dull textbook content. Five types of films are described including educational films (narrated surveys or overviews), dramatic reenactments, and motion picture "mirror" films of the times in which they were made. Films with little or no narration are excellent for inquiry and hypothesis formation. Films on issues promote class discussion. Sources of films range from public libraries to school and university film libraries. Addresses of over 50 sources are listed for free films, feature films, and firms which supply school districts. Teachers are reminded to order films well in advance. Suggestions for pre- and post-film viewing are presented. Projectors should be checked. A lesson plan should be developed to introduce and follow through the film's theme. On any given topic, students might be asked to identify issues given different emphasis in the film and in their textbooks. Rerunning segments of films can help during class summary discussion. Teachers are encouraged to keep a file of their evaluations of individual films. (AV)

Series 2
No. 2

How To Do It Series

SP010 097

Effective Use of Films in Social Studies Classrooms

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Why Use Film?

Youngsters today spend an extraordinary amount of time watching films and television. The statistics are staggering. "Of all American households that are wired for electricity, 99.9 percent have at least a black and white television set—more than have a toaster, washer or coffee pot."[1] "'Sesame Street' reaches 5 million children, almost half the nation's 12 million children under five."[2] "[The] average child, before he enters first grade, spends more time in front of the TV set than he will getting his B.A. degree."[3] By the time the average student graduates from high school, "he has watched more than 15,000 hours of television and seen more than 500 films."[4]

Fortunately, suitable films stimulate learning.[5] One can gather information and learn behavior from films, and they are "vigorously affecting our students—their attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, emotions, tastes, and aware-

[1]"And Now, Pocket TV," *The New York Times*, Sunday, January 16, 1977, Section 4, p.6.

[2]Ralph J. Amelio, *Film in the Classroom* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1971), p. 2.

[3]Frederick Goldman and Linda R. Burnett, *Need Johnny Read?* (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum, 1971), p. 23.

[4]John M. Culkin, *Film Study in the High School* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1965), p. 1.

[5]Leslie P. Greenhill, editor, "Review of Trends in Research on Instructional Television and Film" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 15.

ness—in essence, themselves."[6] In brief, films have helped create a visual generation. Not to exploit visuals in the schools, therefore, is to ignore where the students are. It is fortunate that many teachers *do* use a wide variety of films in exciting ways. Social studies teachers use films for many reasons:

- *Film "can delight, instruct, involve, create and motivate . . . [It] can contribute to the student's understanding of the world of human experience and values."*[7] A motion picture can bring into the classroom a number of situations, events, and ideas that are difficult or impossible for students to see or experience in a normal school setting. Movies bridge time and space. History, for example, can be re-created through film. For a unit on the French occupation of Egypt, a film can show Napoleon's arrival and his encounters with various Egyptians; or the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the events leading up to it can be made alive to students if they "see" the personalities involved. Newsreels and other documentaries offer actual scenes from the past, as well as showing the entire world today.
- *Films can make the past, present, and future of the world accessible to teachers and students in their classrooms.* A history film may present dramatic, live-action scenes to re-create important past events, use animation for the same purpose, or show paintings and still photographs from the past. Dramatic re-enactments can "motivate students to learn historical content and . . . promote inquiry into the resolution of human conflict."[8] Live action and animation can also speculate on the future, and, of course, show the present.
- *Geography, world cultures, and anthropology classes can see the various areas and peoples of the world from film.* A twenty-minute movie on China can convey the "feel" of that country—the texture, atmosphere, and fabric—more effectively than can much reading and writing and lecturing. Government, economics, and civics teachers will find films on anything from town meetings to advertising.
- *Films can bring alive what is often abstract and dull in the textbook.* Short films can raise questions; present controversial opinions on such powerful subjects as capital punishment and conservation; or show disturbing scenes, such as the horrors of war, child labor, or welfare hotels. Films are being made with more and more care and are successfully offering not only information and raising questions, but are pleasing aesthetically. They offer a colorful, exciting, moving, artistic viewing experience. They also provide a welcome change of pace, often "grabbing" the attention of the students.

Well projected, in a darkened room, a film can get the whole class to travel together back to ancient Greece or to an American courtroom today; or it can set up a moral dilemma, giving the students a common shared experience that is unrelated to their reading and other verbal skills. Motion pictures can effectively introduce a unit and motivate students to read and study further. In short, films are an exciting and enjoyable way to learn and teach.

[6]Amelio, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 7.

[8]Anthony N. Penna and Mathias von Brauchitsch: "The Design and Teaching of Dramatic Films: An Approach to Value Education," *Film and History*, Vol. VI, No. 3, September 1976, p. 55.

What Types of Films?

1. Educational Films

The most commonly used film in the schools is the so-called "educational film." Most schools in the 1970s continue to use 16mm films and projectors. Much that is said here, however, will also apply to 8mm, video tapes, and video discs. More than 100 American firms produce and distribute (rent and sell) motion pictures for the school market. (A listing of many of these organizations starts on page 4 of this pamphlet.) Often these films have been made in cooperation with educational consultants, are accompanied by teacher's guides or notes, and are deliberately short enough to fit into the standard forty-five-minute class period. Many of the most popular films are narrated surveys, or overviews, often called "illustrated lectures," and contain a great amount of factual information. Television has made popular several series of this type, including Alistair Cooke's *America*.

2. Dramatic Re-enactments

Another popular format, for history films in particular, is the dramatic re-enactment. Again a television series, *The Adams Chronicles*, is a popular example. A number of producers have used dramatic re-enactments to set up conflict situations, forcing students to make value judgments. For example, in the film *Song of Molasses*, from the Decades of Decisions: The American Revolution Series,[9] the hero is torn between the urgings of his fellow citizens, who want him to join them in a protest against the British tax, and his own desire to pay up and avoid a conflict. Students are asked to decide what action he should take.

3. Films with Little or No Narration

Another kind of film is the one made with little or no narration. "The film communicates primarily visually."[10] This opens up possibilities for the teacher, but it also requires more care in planning the lesson. The unnarrated film allows students to select what they perceive as being important in the film. It is useful for inquiry and hypothesis formation, and, therefore, for generating a discussion. These non-verbal films have been effectively used with all levels of students—including so-called "slow" classes—as they do not rely on vocabulary level or on any verbal information, and they require students to concentrate on what is seen, not said. Often primary source material is presented visually: for example, an on-site visit to a nomadic people in Central Asia, or a study of musical instruments of Colonial Williamsburg.

4. Films on Issues

Some short films simply raise questions or issues without or with narration. These may be a brief visual condensation of history with a jazzy musical score; an in-depth study of art from a particular country and/or period; or the deliberately ironic juxtaposition of, say, the words of John Kennedy's optimistic inaugural address with pictures of riots in the cities and killing in Viet Nam of the later 1960s.

[9]Available from National Geographic Educational Services.

[10]Leonard W. Ingraham, "The Non-Narrative Film: A Social Studies Resource for K-College," *Social Education*, Vol. 40, No. 5, May 1976, p. 265.

5. "Mirror" Films

Some motion pictures can also be used as a mirror of the times in which they were made. Both features and documentaries produced in Germany in the 1930s provide a wealth of social comments about those days. Some history teachers schedule commercially successful films from a certain period and country to give insights into a particular society. Michael Isenberg, for example, uses World War I-period American film comedies to look at American society from 1914–1919.[11] Similarly, some teachers evaluate certain films for their propaganda effectiveness, and discuss the points of view and biases of the filmmaker.

The Hollywood feature film can be a vital teaching tool for the social studies classroom. Some Hollywood features attempt to portray a valid re-creation of important events. In these films facts have been researched, details have been checked, and, in most cases, an effort has been made that can stand the test of scholarly analysis. Even when some dramatic license is taken, features capture the mood, tone, and texture of specific historical events. Students are then afforded the opportunity of delving into the written record and finding their own historical interpretation of the "facts."

Feature films are often available in two formats. All are accessible on a lease/rental basis in their original full-length versions. In addition, some companies have produced extracts of important Hollywood films for classroom use. For example, some schools annually rent the feature film *A Man for All Seasons*. English and social studies classes are then combined to provide a longer viewing period and to share rental costs between the two departments. On the other hand, other schools prefer to purchase or rent *A Matter of Conscience: Henry VIII and Thomas More*, a thirty-minute extract of the feature film. In either case, a teacher has the opportunity of bringing actors Paul Scofield and Robert Shaw into the classrooms to stimulate students by their climactic scene in the halls of Parliament when More confronts his accusers.

6. Other Kinds of Films

Many other kinds of films are available; and any motion picture, with intelligent use by a good teacher, can make for a stimulating class. There are government, business, commercial, industrial and other sponsored films, travelogues, and theatrical feature films, (A listing of sources for some of these films appears under "Free Films," page 4 and under "Feature Films," page 4.)

How To Select a Film

Ideally, a teacher should look over a unit, choose the concepts best presented by film, and then search thoroughly for a movie that could add constructively to the course of study and could become an effective lesson in itself. Realistically, many teachers look over film catalogs and listings and try to choose a useful film from the catalog descriptions. However, asking the social studies chairperson or supervisor, or the individual in charge of media, or a teaching colleague for suggestions for a useful movie may lead to the best available films. Many of them keep annotated lists or file cards, thus saving time in the "search" for films.

A number of organizations attempt to list and/or review films, and they publish the results in such publications as *National Information Center for Educational Media (N.I.C.E.M.) Index to 16mm Educational Films* (Los Angeles); *Learning Directory* (New York: Westinghouse Learning Corporation); and the *Media Review Digest* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Pierian Press). Also the Educational Film Library Association (EFLA) and Landers Film Reviews systematically review 16mm films and publish the reviews separately. Magazines such as *Booklist, Previews, Media and Methods, Film and History, The History Teacher, The Journal of Geography* and *Social Education* all publish reviews or lists of new releases.

Also, from time to time, various organizations publish listings or reviews of films that are of a specialized nature. Here are a few recent listings:

Loy, Jane M. *Latin America: Sights and Sounds: A Guide to Motion Pictures and Music for College Courses.* Clasp. 1973. $2.50.

Ohrn, Steven and Riley, Rebecca. *Africa from Real to Reel: An African Filmography.* ASA, 1976.

The University of Michigan Audio-Visual Education Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan. *Film Resources on Japan.* U.S. Dept. of HEW, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1975. $1.20.

Where To Get Films

There are many sources of 16mm films. While some schools may own a print of a popular, well-used film or two, most 16mm films are too expensive to be kept in a single school building for only occasional use. The following paragraphs list the most likely sources of films available to the teacher.

1. School Film Libraries

Large, cooperative film libraries—district, county, regional, state and/or city media centers (sometimes called Instructional Materials Centers, or Learning Resource Centers)—are common throughout the United States. These large, centralized libraries purchase 16mm films and circulate them without charge to member schools. Some such centers include every school within their boundaries; others allow schools the choice of joining. A few welcome parochial schools. In the individual school buildings, one person usually coordinates requests to this regional center; and films arrive and are shipped back on a regular schedule. Therefore, the first step in determining availability of films for your school is to find out if there is a media coordinator, and to obtain a catalog of films available to your school.

2. Public Libraries

Many public libraries have extensive film collections. A number have screenings in their own auditoriums, in addition to lending films to individual borrowers. "Individual borrowers" often means anyone with a library card; but it may or may not include school teachers, because some public libraries have found it necessary to restrict film borrowing to non-school use. Furthermore, since these film collections are for the public, they are very general, with films appealing to the Girl Scouts, church

[11] Michael Isenberg, "World War I Film Comedies and American Society: The Concern with Authoritarianism," *Film and History*, Vol. V, No. 3, September 1975, pp. 7–15, 21.

groups, senior citizens, and children's birthday parties. It is worth checking your local library's collection and policies, however.

3. University Film Libraries

Many universities purchase 16mm films which they make available for campus use and then rent for a minimal fee (usually lower than that of the commercial distributors) to schools in their state or region of the country. The following brief list represents the largest universities which rent nationwide. For others, check the policies of your state's major universities.

Arizona State University, Central Arizona Film Cooperative, Tempe, AZ 85281.
University of Arizona, Film Rental Library, Bureau of A.V. Services, Tucson, AZ 85721.
University of California, Extension Media Center, 2223 Fulton Street, Berkeley, CA 94720.
University of Southern California, Film Distribution Section, Division of Cinema, University Park, Los Angeles, CA 90007.
University of Colorado, Bureau of A.V. Instruction, 3rd Floor, Stadium Building, Boulder, CO 80302.
Southern Illinois University, Film Rental Library, Learning Resources Services, Carbondale, IL 62901.
University of Illinois, Visual Aid Services, 1325 South Oak Street, Champaign, IL 61820.
Indiana University, A.V. Center, Bloomington, IN 47401.
University of Iowa, Audio-Visual Center, Iowa City, IA 52240.
Boston University, Krasker Memorial Film Library, 765 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.
University of Michigan, Audio-Visual Education Center, 416 Fourth Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.
University of Minnesota, Department of Audio-Visual Extension, 2037 University Avenue, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.
Syracuse University, Film Rental Center, 1455 East Colvin Street, Syracuse, NY 13210.
Pennsylvania State University, Audio-Visual Services, 6 Willard Building, University Park, PA 16802.
University of Utah, Educational Media Center, Bennion Hall 207, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.
University of Wisconsin-Extension, Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction, Box 2093, 1327 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53701.

4. Free Films

Films made by the United States government and its agencies, by state governments, and by foreign governments are available on free loan. You pay return postage only. Furthermore, many businesses and other organizations produce films for advertising and other public relations purposes. For example, some airlines—both foreign and domestic—offer travel films about the lands to which they fly. However, a unit on Russia solely using films from the Soviet Embassy, or one on Germany using films only from Lufthansa, or one on Florida with films only by Greyhound might be criticized as slightly unbalanced. The following is a very select list of sources for sponsored, free, and government films:

Association Sterling Films, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.
Modern Talking Picture Service, 2323 New Hyde Park Road, New Hyde Park, NY 11040.
RHR Filmedia, Inc., 48 W. 48 St., New York, NY 10036.

Many foreign embassies in Washington, D.C. and a number of United States and State Government agencies loan films. See Serina Press, Alexandria, Virginia for: *Guide to Government-Loan Films* and *Guide to Foreign Government-Loan Films*. Also: Educators Progress Service, Randolph, WI 53956, for *Educators Guide to Free Films*.

5. Feature Films

Many theatrical or feature films are now available in 16mm on a rental or lease basis. *Sightlines* (43 W. 61st St., NY, NY 10023) publishes listings as soon as they are released, and Bowker prints their titles annually. Since many feature films are distributed in 16mm by more than one firm, it is a good idea to shop around. The following are a few of the many organizations which carry feature films. Write or call for catalogs and listings.

Cinema 5, 595 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022.
Films, Inc., 1150 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091.
Image Motion Picture, 2 Purdy Ave., Rye, NY 10580.
Janus Films, 745 5th Ave., New York, NY 10022.
Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53d Street, New York, NY 10036.
United Artists 16, 729 7th Ave., New York, NY 10019.

6. Sources for School Districts

Most teachers have to rely on their district, city, or county film library, which, in turn, will purchase from the many organizations which produce and distribute films for the classroom. Most will send a free catalog on request, and many will rent their films. The classroom teacher should consult with the social studies supervisor and media specialist, for they usually do the selection and purchasing for the district. They are often happy to receive suggestions of new titles for purchase consideration, and social studies teachers should be welcomed as part of the selection process. It is difficult to keep an accurate, up-to-date list of the organizations which sell (and often rent), but here is one that lists those firms which have a large number of social studies films:

Aims Instructional Media, 626 Justin Ave., Glendale, CA 91201.
Altana Films, 340 E. 34th St., New York, NY 10016.
American Universities Field Service, 3 Lebanon St., Hanover, NH 03755.
Atlantis Prod., Inc., 1252 La Granada Dr., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360.
Barr Films, 3490 East Foot Hill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91104.
Benchmark Films, 145 Scarborough Rd., Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510.
BFA Educational Media, 2211 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404.
Carousel Films, 1501 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.
Center for Southern Folklore, 1216 Peabody Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.
Centron Educational Films, 1621 West Ninth St., Lawrence, KS 66044.
Churchill Films, 662 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Colonial Williamsburg, Film Distribution Section, Box C, Williamsburg, VA 23185.
Coronet Instructional Media, 65 E. South Water St., Chicago, IL 60601.
Counselor Films, Inc., 2100 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA 19103.
The Eccentric Circle, P.O. Box 4085, Greenwich, CT 06830.
Walt Disney Films, 500 South Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521.
Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160.
Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corp., 425 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.
Film Images/Radlin Films, 1034 Lake St., Oak Park, IL 60301.
Films for the Humanities, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08540.
Films Incorporated, 1144 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091.
Indiana University Audiovisual Center, Bloomington, IN 47401.
International Film Bureau, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60604.
International Film Foundation, 475 Fifth Ave., Rm. 916, New York, NY 10017.
Learning Corporation of America, 1350 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.
Macmillan Films, 34 MacQuesten Parkway So., Mount Vernon, NY 10550.
McGraw-Hill Films, 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.
Arthur Mokin Productions, 17 W. 60th St., New York, NY 10023.
National Film Board of Canada, 1251 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.
National Geographic Society, Educational Films Div., 17th & M Sts., NW, Washington, DC 20036.
New Yorker Films, 43 W. 61st St., New York, NY 10023.
Paramount Oxford Films, 5451 Marathon St., Hollywood, CA 90038.
Perennial Education, 1825 Willow Rd., Northfield, IL 60093.
Phoenix Films, Inc., 470 Park Ave. So., New York, NY 10016.
Pictura Films, 111 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10011.
Pyramid Films, P.O. Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406.
rbc Films, 933 N. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038.
Soho Cinema Ltd., 508 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.
Texture Films, 1600 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.
Time-Life Multimedia, Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020.
Tricontinental Film Center, 333 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10014.
Weston Woods Studios, Inc., Weston, CT 06880.
William Greaves Productions, 1776 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.
Wombat Productions, Inc., Little Lake, Glendale Road, P.O. Box 70, Ossining, NY 10562.
Xerox Films, 245 Long Hill Rd., Middletown, CT 06457.
Zipporah Films, 54 Lewis Wharf, Boston, MA 02110.

Procedures vary for selecting, ordering, renting, borrowing, and buying films; but all require advance planning by the teacher. Some school districts even ask teachers to draw up their requests each spring for films to be used in the following school year. The most popular films are always in great demand, and often are reserved weeks and even months in advance. So, decide what films you want, and order early. Also, return films promptly, so that the next user can obtain them on time; and be prepared to pay the modest (library rate) return postage charges for rental and free loan films.

What To Do Before the Showing

After you know where films are, how to obtain them, and how to reserve and run the school's movie projector, you are faced with the task of deciding what to do before, during, and after you show a film. This means that after the film has been selected, ordered, and received, the real work begins. The first thing to do is to preview the film carefully to determine if it meets the objectives for that particular lesson. This screening of the film before the class meets insures that the film has no offensive, or biased, or very dated material in it; that it is geared for the appropriate grade level; and that it will do, in fact, what you assumed it would do when you read the catalog description. There can be exceptions, of course. Dated or biased movies can be used to teach about the filmmaker's frame of reference, and to have students deal with biases.

You must know the film. Teachers should make every effort to see each film in its entirety before showing it to their students. No good teacher would assign a reading without having first read it; yet some teachers do have their classes view a film when they themselves really do not know what it contains. This previewing will have to be done in a free period, or after school. It can be done with a group of students, too. The lesson should be worked out then; and a lesson plan for a film lesson should be just as thorough as for any other. What are the objectives? What attitudes, skills, values, and knowledge goals are you trying for when you use the film? What procedures and questions will you use? To what assignments will the film logically lead?

In addition to working out a lesson plan to go with the film, the question to ask during the preview is, "Will this film contribute to the learning of my students?" Only if the answer is affirmative should you continue planning to use the film.

Next, you should consider how to set up your room. Many classrooms today cannot be adequately used for presenting visuals. Fortunately, some schools provide rooms for viewing films properly. If your school has no such room, you may be able to switch rooms on some days with another teacher whose room is more suitable for showing films. In any event, make the room as dark as possible. Hang maps over windows with translucent or non-existent shades; or blackout windows with heavy wrapping paper. Many audio-visual texts (see bibliography) go to great lengths to demonstrate the perfect classroom setup. The important thing to remember when setting up the room is that every student must be able to see and hear as well as possible; so do not have students sitting along the walls, or behind the projector. It takes just a few moments to have chairs rearranged and to make a mini-theatre. It should be done carefully. Also, once the shades are drawn, make sure there is some ventilation to prevent drowsiness. It is often not a film which puts kids to sleep, but a hot, stuffy room.

Finally, try to make sure—before the class arrives—that the projector is completely ready, clean, and warmed-up;

and that the film is properly threaded and focused on the screen. While this ideal situation may not always be possible, there is no excuse for turning on a projector, with a class settled, to find that a bulb has blown out or that the film was never rewound by the previous user. Many teachers successfully organize a "Projectionist Team" which checks out the projector, and which sets it up, pulls the shades, and rearranges the chairs—in short, does much of the work.

To indicate that the film lesson is to be taken as seriously as other lessons are, procedures similar to other class sessions should be followed. The teacher must have a clear lesson-plan with objectives and strategies carefully worked out. The class must be given some reasons as to why it is about to view a film, and some specific things to look for while viewing it.

There can be exceptions. Sometimes the element of surprise is important; and getting the class to guess the subject, title, or point of a film before and during viewing can be justified. In fact, films are ready-made "discovery exercises" when the main title is not shown. Many classes enjoy the "game" of trying to figure out the film and to give it an appropriate title while it is being shown.

Before showing the film, some of these types of questions—or points to look for—can be listed on the board, on a handout sheet, or asked orally by the teacher and/or the students who previewed:

a. According to the film, what were the key decisions Churchill made?
b. The film is built around a difficult problem faced by one character, Corporal Arnold. When the film stops, answer this question: "What should the Corporal do?" Then write one reason for your answer.
c. Which causes of World War I does the film emphasize? Which of those reasons does our text mention? Or omit?

Then there are vocabulary questions. The film uses the following terms: "Tundra," "serf," "impeachment." See if your students can find a definition of each in the film. Or simply have the class think about why you are showing this film to it. But keep the questions brief and simple. Too many "things to look for," or a long form to be filled out while viewing a film, will only distract students.

What To Do During the Showing

While the class is viewing the film, the teacher should stay in the room, keep an eye and ear on the projector, and observe students' reactions to the film. What may have fascinated the second-period class could bring howls of laughter to the fifth-period group. The teacher, therefore, not only learns from additional exposure to the same film, but also from watching different audiences react to it. This can be done while circulating around the room, which also allows the teacher to determine how well each student can see and hear.

Some teachers stop a film every few minutes to ask a question or to point out something. A number of educators object violently to this practice; they say that it needlessly annoys students, rather than enlightening them, and that it disrupts the film's flow. Perhaps stopping a film once in a while can be useful in redefining the day's objectives.

Some teachers generally show only the section, or sections, of a film that they decide is appropriate. They feel that this saves time and eliminates "unessential" parts of a film. Rather than have a class watch the entire 30-minute documentary on the 1976 election, the teacher could concentrate on a section that shows Jimmy Carter preparing for one of the televised debates. This might take only 10 minutes, thereby giving much more time for discussion. However, this sort of excerpting can be frustrating to students who want to see the complete film in order to understand the context of the segment. Perhaps only occasional showing of sections is a workable compromise; or, to excerpt if the film is logically divided (e.g., one part on the history of a country, and the remaining section on the present).

A film can be shown without the narration by simply turning the sound off. Some teachers do this on a second showing for review; others run the films without sound when the commentary is inappropriate to their particular class, or is dated or biased, or if they would rather narrate the film themselves. Students, too, can be encouraged to provide their own narration for films that have none, or for those that can effectively be shown without it. Committees of students can do the research necessary for the narration, actually tape-record it, add music and sound effects, and then play it back to the entire class with the film running.

What To Do After Showing the Film

After seeing a film, students should be given an opportunity to react to it. Some may want to be critics and "review" the film. Others may have questions about it, and they should have the opportunity to raise them and to clear up misunderstandings.

Richard Lacey conducts an "image-sound skim" after showing a film. "[The] teacher asks each student to mention some images or sounds from the film which spring immediately to mind."[12] Lacey feels that this technique opens up discussion to everyone, and he suggests making it the basis for an entire discussion.

After a free response period, the teacher can turn to the questions outlined earlier to get to the day's objectives. The reasons a teacher has chosen a film, guided discussion, and assigned and suggested post-viewing projects should, of course, be directly related to the objectives of the day, of the unit, and of the course. The way a teacher uses a film should relate to objectives on the lesson plan.

Some teachers, after film viewing, always give a post-test, in order to indicate how seriously films are to be taken. Others argue that this "kills" the film experience.

Many films lend themselves to visual projects. Some classes have made murals of scenes they have seen in a film; others have acted out some of the story themselves. Some students have made collages or even models of scenes they have seen in films. Others have written poems, have prepared diaries of a character in the film, or have continued the story. One teacher annually shows a film on ancient Egypt; both before and after taking his classes to the Egyptian collection in the art museum. He feels that the first showing is excellent background and

[12] Richard A. Lacey, *Seeing with Feeling: Film in the Classroom* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1972), p. 24.

motivation for the field trip, and that the field trip motivates the students to see the film again.

An advantage of a short film (5–12 minutes) is that it can easily be shown a second time in its entirety during a single class period. Often, an unnarrated film will raise more questions than it answers. This is the intent. If it is short enough, it can immediately be shown again, and some of the questions will be answered. After seeing and discussing a film, it is extremely effective to show the film a second time. The students now have the benefit of the discussion to add to the information gathered from the first screening. Of course, a section of any film can be shown again; and, if time permits, a sequence from a film might be a perfect class summary.

How To Evaluate Films

If a film worked well, or failed badly, it is worth the time to record an evaluation. Some teachers keep an index file card for every film they use. Besides making notes on a film's content, they also record on the cards some technical information—running time, availability, cost, production date, and other details—as well as students' comments and reactions to the movie. Records such as these are invaluable reminders when next the teacher is considering a film for the same topic; and they can be shared with colleagues when they are searching for a film. These evaluations have another use. They can be forwarded to the film's distributors and/or producers, so that they can learn better what teachers and students find most helpful in the classroom. Here are some of the questions asked on typical film evaluation forms.

How do you rate the film:

- Technically (photography, sound)
- Structurally (organization, concept, writing, imagination)
- Content (original, clear, up-to-date, accurate)
- Instructive value (Does the film achieve its purpose? Was it useful?)

Keeping in Touch

Many educational meetings and conventions have included film showings—generally of new releases—as parts of their annual programs. At its annual meeting, NCSS has experimented doing this in a room adjacent to the exhibit hall during the day, and in another location where screenings are held during the evening. Many local and state meetings have such showings, and several other groups sponsor annual festivals of films. For example:

American Film Festival. Every May or June, at the New York (City) Hilton. Sponsored by the Educational Film Library Association (43 W. 61st St., New York, NY 10023).

Birmingham International Educational Film Festival. March. Sponsored by Alabama Power Co. (P.O. Box 2641, Birmingham, AL 35291).

CINE. Every November in Washington, DC. Sponsored by Council for International Nontheatrical Events (1201 16th St., NW., Washington, DC 20036).

Columbus International Film Festival. Every October. Sponsored by Film Council of Greater Columbus (8 Broad St., Columbus, OH 43215).

Midwest Film Conference. Every February in Chicago (Box 1665, Evanston, IL 60204).

National Educational Film Festival. Every April (5555 Ascot Drive, Oakland, CA 94611).

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NOTE: This *How To Do It* Notebook Series 2, designed for a loose-leaf binder, provides a practical and useful source of classroom methods and techniques for elementary and secondary social studies teachers. The titles now available in Series 2 are: *Improving Reading Skills in Social Studies*, *Effective Use of Films in Social Studies Classrooms*, and *Reach for a Picture*. Price per copy, $1.00. Quantity discounts: 10–49 copies, 10%; 50–99 copies, 15%; 100 or more copies, 20%. Payment must accompany all orders except those on official institutional purchase order forms. Order from the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES, 1515 Wilson Boulevard, Suite #1, Arlington, Virginia 22209.