

# JUST ADD POPCORN

THREE FILMS THAT COULD HELP  
BOOST LITERACY...

Whether it's a screening of Polanski's *Romeo and Juliet* to convince a group of teenagers the Bard's not boring, a critical analysis of a movie's themes, style and structure, or a reviewing session following which pupils get to see their work published on a national website, film is a powerful tool to boost literacy.

Watching adaptations of popular novels and plays and comparing them with the originals can stimulate students' interest in reading and support the study of specific texts. Encouraging youngsters of all abilities to express their opinions by writing reviews, with guidance on how these should be structured, is an effective way to engage even reluctant writers. Other film related activities too, such as creating storyboards, voiceovers (for scenes which have no dialogue) and screenplays, or writing a persuasive letter to British Board of Film Classification arguing against the certificates given to certain films, can all help support literacy. The new education charity Into Film, which FILMCLUB is now part of, has hundreds of films and related education resources to facilitate this, including several linked to the curriculum, dedicated guides to review writing and a 'From Watching to Writing' resource created to boost boys' literacy.

"Boys often engage more effectively with visual learning and film is the perfect medium for this," comments one film club leader. "Writing about what they have seen seems to stimulate them more than writing about what they have heard or read."

## INTO FILM recommends...



### ANNA KARENINA (12) 11+

Set almost entirely in a run-down theatre, this ambitious, visually sumptuous adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's classic tale of forbidden love and betrayal unfolds as if we were watching a stage play. Keira Knightley plays the 19th-century Russian aristocrat whose passionless marriage to an older statesman is turned upside down after she falls for handsome bachelor, Count Vronsky. A torrid affair follows, causing the rest of Anna's world to tragically unravel.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. What do you think was the filmmaker's intention with the theatrical, highly choreographed scenes? Think of the ballroom dance and horseracing sequences in particular.
2. How are Anna's costumes used to reflect her state of mind and place in society?
3. The early death of a railway worker only features in the film very briefly. What is its significance?



### THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER (12) 11+

This captivating 1990s coming-of-age story follows teen outsider Charlie as he attempts to survive his first year of high school. When free-spirited seniors Sam and Patrick take him under their wing, Charlie's soon having fun, partying hard and, naturally, falling in love – while in the classroom, his favourite teacher feeds his dreams of becoming a writer.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Charlie develops a crush on Sam. How important do you think this is to the film?
2. If Charlie is very shy and quiet, Patrick is much louder and more confident. Do you think he is really? Why? Does this change throughout the film?
3. How do you think Charlie will cope at school now that his friends have left for college?



### PERCY JACKSON AND THE LIGHTNING THIEF (PG) 9+

Percy Jackson is a modern American with plenty of things wrong with his life. He is also the son of Poseidon, and his uncle Zeus wrongly thinks that Percy has nicked his lightning bolt. Big trouble. This is a fast, fun adventure with gods, serpents, and centaurs – and plenty of big stars!

#### DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. What difficulties does Percy face at the start of the film and how has he developed by the end? Why?
2. How does the film bring the elements of the Greek myths into the modern world? What changes do they make?
3. Percy Jackson has been called 'The American Harry Potter' by some readers. What similarities and differences are there between the two characters?



## TAKE IT FURTHER

Into Film's mission is to put film at the heart of young people's learning and cultural experiences. Its film clubs provide access to thousands of FREE films and resources for learning through film and about film, incorporating film watching, making and understanding. To set up a free film club visit [www.filmclub.org](http://www.filmclub.org), email [support@filmclub.org](mailto:support@filmclub.org) or call 0207 288 4520.