

Film Worksheet 1.1

Setting and Content

Knowledge base

1. Think about the people and equipment needed to make a film.
- a. Look at this photograph of a film set. Find and label the following in the picture.



► A film set.

director's chair camera lighting film crew

- b. Here are the names of just some of the people who help to make a film. Match them with their definitions.

boom operator	director of photography	producer
camera operator	film crew	production designer
cast	film editor	special effects
costume designer	grip	
director	hair and make-up	

- a. _____ A group of people hired by a production company to make a film.
- b. _____ The actors who appear in the film.
- c. _____ The person who initiates, coordinates, supervises, and controls fund raising, personnel, and distribution.
- d. _____ The person who is responsible for the creative aspects of a film (plot, performances, locations, positioning of cameras, lighting, and the film's soundtrack).
- e. _____ The person who is responsible for creating the physical and visual appearance of the film (settings, costumes, make up).
- f. _____ The department which manages and creates optical illusions during live-action shooting.
- g. _____ The team which works with make up, hair and special effects to create the characters' look (younger, larger, older, like a monster, etc.).



First impressions

- h. _____ The person who is responsible for all the clothing, etc. worn by all the actors.
- i. _____ This person is in charge of the camera and lighting crew of the film.
- j. _____ S/He captures the scenes on film.
- k. _____ This person is responsible for placing the microphone above or below the actors using a 'boom pole' (a long pole made of aluminum or carbon fiber).
- l. _____ S/He is a trained lighting and rigging technician. S/He puts in the lighting set-ups required for a shot.
- m. _____ S/He is the person who assembles the various shots into a film, working with the director.

2. The film you are going to watch a clip from is *Dead Poets Society*. It was released in 1989 and it stars Robin Williams.

- a. Find out if anyone in the class has seen the film. If so, tell the story.
- b. Do you know the actor Robin Williams? Which other films has he starred in? Do you like him as an actor? Why/Why not?

3. Read the summary of the film's storyline.

- a. Does it have a happy ending?
- b. If you have never seen the film, would you now like to see it?

Summary

The story takes place at Welton Academy prep school whose motto is "tradition, honour, discipline and excellence".

A new English teacher takes over the senior class. His methods are unusual and unorthodox. He encourages the boys to fulfil their potential to the full, to carpe diem in the short lives they have on earth. Many of the boys in the class are under pressure from their parents to follow certain careers (top professional posts such as doctors, lawyers, and so on) and to conform to their expectations while the teacher, John Keating, encourages them to know themselves, to think intelligently and to decide for themselves. He feels they should not fulfil other people's expectations but should understand what it is that would satisfy their dreams and follow that. He invites them to look at things in a way that is different from the usual or expected one — for example, one day he tells them to stand on his desk and look at the classroom from up there to see how different it looks.

Inspired by Keating, the boys re-found a secret society, 'The Dead Poet's Society', which Keating had been a member of when he was a pupil at the school. They meet in a cave in the school grounds. Gradually the boys begin to express themselves more openly.

One of them, Neil, wants to be an actor but he is well aware of the fact that such a career choice would anger his father. He auditions for a role in a production of A Midsummer Night's Dream without telling his family. When his father finds out, he orders him to withdraw his name. Neil does not have the courage to talk to his father and plays in the production without his permission. At the end of the performance, his father takes him home and says he is going to enrol him in a military school and prepare him for Harvard and a career as a doctor. Neil commits suicide.

Keating is blamed for the events and is given the sack from the school. He goes to the classroom to collect his belongings and to say a quick goodbye to his students. In the shocked silence that follows, all the boys one after the other stand on their desks, and as they do so each one greets Keating with the words "O Captain! My captain", the first line of a poem by Walt Whitman. Keating leaves the school with tears in his eyes.



Dead Poets Society

(see film clip
on the Class Video DVD)

4. Watch the clip for the first time.

Keating has asked one of the boys to read from Herrick's poem *To the Virgins to Make Much of Time*. The poem begins:

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

He explains to the boys what the poet wants to say. What is the poem's main message according to Keating?

In more detail

Setting

5. The place and time of a film is referred to as its setting. The setting can also refer to the social milieu.

a. Watch the clip again and make notes on ...

- ... the period (distant past? 1800s? early 20th century? more or less contemporary to the release date? etc.)
- ... the place (which country? place? specific place seen in the clip?)
- ... the social setting (lower/middle/upper class?)

b. Which aspects of the clip helped you to answer?

Content

6. The content of the film is constituted by its main events — just like you found in the summary.

a. Focus on the content detail of the clip. Put the events in the order in which they occur.

- ☐ a. The boys move even closer and listen.
- ☐ b. The boys look at the pictures.
- ☐ c. The boys look at the pictures more closely.
- ☐ d. The boys are moved and enthralled.
- ☐ e. Keating wonders which of them managed to seize the day.
- ☐ f. Keating tells the boys to listen to the old boys.
- ☐ g. Keating says the boys of the past are just like them — full of hope and promise.
- ☐ h. Keating invites the boys to look at the pictures of the old school boys.
- ☐ i. Keating explains it is because we are all "food for worms".
- ☐ j. Keating asks why the poet might have written about *carpe diem*.
- ☐ k. He whispers in a ghost-like tone, "Carpe diem!"

b. Write up the sentences in order to create a coherent paragraph. Avoid repetition.

Conclusions

7. What links can you find between the texts you have read in Section 1 (*Paddy Clarke ha ha ha*, *The Catcher in the Rye*) and this film?