



This film clip and worksheet form an integral part of *Literature for Life's* mini-syllabus for film and can be used accordingly, regardless of whether the literary text it is based on has been studied or not.

Film Worksheet 2.10

► EXTRA FILM

A Passage to India

Knowledge base

1. Find out about or review your knowledge of the novel by completing the tasks.
 - a. Read the brief summary of the storyline.
 - b. Say what happens at the Marabar Caves and why the novel ends on a pessimistic note.

Summary

Two English women take a passage to India and travel to the town of Chandrapore. Both are on their way to visit Ronny Heaslop, who works for the British Government in India as a Magistrate. Mrs Moore is his mother while Adele Quested is his fiancée.

One evening, Mrs Moore is exploring a local mosque and happens to meet Aziz, a young Muslim doctor, there. They become friends.

It becomes clear to Adela that she does not like Ronny's behaviour towards Indians and she wavers between continuing and ending their relationship. Aziz, eager to please his new friends, organises an expedition to the nearby Marabar Caves. Inside the caves, Mrs Moore seems affected by claustrophobia and confused by the echoes. She decides to stay outside. Adela goes into the caves with Aziz but then suddenly rushes out and away from the hillside. Aziz is worried she is lost and goes back to Chandrapore in search of her. However, when he arrives back, he is arrested and charged with attempting to rape Adela.

During Aziz's trial Adela admits she was not attacked by Aziz but it is too late to save the friendships and relationships which had begun to flourish.

Ronny and Adela break off their engagement, Mrs Moore returns to England but dies on the passage home and Aziz has lost faith completely in the possibility of equal and satisfying relations between the two races.

2. The clip you will watch concerns the moment when Mrs Moore and Aziz meet for the first time.

- a. Where will the scene be set?
- b. Will they be friendly from the start?

3. Consider the characters Aziz and Mrs Moore, bearing in mind their ages and the setting (a mosque in India in the 1910s).

- a. What do you expect Mrs Moore to look like?
- b. How do you expect her to behave and speak?

4. Watch the clip for the first time.

Did the film match your expectations in terms of the characterisation of Mrs Moore?



A Passage to India

(see film clip on the Class Video DVD)

In more detail

Script and lighting

5. Watch the clip again.
 - a. Does Aziz behave and speak as you expected?
 - b. How is lighting used to create atmosphere and to underline feelings?

Shots and composition

6. Focus on shots and composition.
 - a. When do Mrs Moore and Aziz first appear in a frame together? Why, do you think?
 - b. Both medium and close up shots are mainly used. To what effect?

Conclusions

7. Read the information about the film adapted from *Wikipedia* and answer the questions.
 - a. Who was the film's famous director?
 - b. Why couldn't he make the film in the 1960s?
 - c. Where was it filmed?
 - d. Was the film successful?



A Passage to India is a 1984 British/American drama film written and directed by David Lean. The screenplay is based on the 1924 novel of the same title by E. M. Forster. It stars Peggy Ashcroft as Mrs Moore, Judy Davis as Adela Quested and Victor Banerjee as Aziz.

David Lean attempted to secure the film rights to E. M. Forster's novel from the author himself as early as 1960, but Forster did not consider motion pictures a serious art form and refused to sell them. Filming took place on location in the hills near Bangalore and in Ramanagaram, India, and in the Shepperton Studios in Surrey, England.

The "New York Times" called Lean's film "his best work since *The Bridge on the River Kwai*". The film critic of the "Chicago Sun-Times" observed, "Forster's novel is one of the literary landmarks of this century, and now David Lean has made it into one of the greatest screen adaptations I have ever seen [... He] is a meticulous craftsman, famous for going to any lengths to make every shot look just the way he thinks it should. His actors here are encouraged to give sound, thoughtful, unflashy performances and his screenplay is a model of clarity." "Variety" magazine called the film "impeccably faithful, beautifully played and occasionally languorous" and added, "Lean has succeeded to a great degree in the tricky task of capturing Forster's finely edged tone of rational bemusement and irony."

The film was showered with award nominations and won two Academy Awards, three Golden Globes and a BAFTA Award.