**Linguaskill Lesson Plans**

**Reading Lesson 6**

**Description**

The topic of this lesson is films. Practice of vocabulary and structures used to give facts and opinions about films is used to give guidance on completing cross-text matching tasks, one of the task-types in the Linguaskill Reading Test.

**Teacher’s Notes**

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| **Aims of the lesson** | * to present and practise vocabulary and structures for giving facts and opinions * to raise awareness of the requirements of cross-text matching tasks * to develop techniques and strategies for this task-type based on practice of a sample task |
| **Time required** | * 60 minutes |
| **Level** | * Suitable for C1–C2 level |
| **Materials required** | * Student’s Worksheet 1: Film reviews – identifying details * Student’s Worksheet 2: Film reviews – identifying opinions * Student’s Worksheet 3: Sample Linguaskill cross-text matching Reading task |

**Procedure**

1. Explain that the lesson will focus on language on the topic of films and on language and techniques which are useful for the cross-text matching task in the Linguaskill Reading test. This task-type is only available for C1 and C2 levels.
2. Ask learners to think of a film they remember watching. It could be a film they saw at the cinema, on TV or on online. Write three questions side by side on the board: *What was the film? What was the film about? What did you think of the film?* Ask learners to work with a partner to answer these questions. Tell learners that they should take notes on what their partner says, so that they can share this information with the rest of the class.
3. Bring the class back together. Ask learners to report briefly what their partner told them. Write one piece of information from their responses under each of the second two questions (*What was the film about?* and *What did you think about it?*). If you have a large class, you may want to ask learners to share the information in small groups. You can monitor and make a note of the answers they give.
4. Ask learners to look at the two sets of information on the board and say how they are different, i.e. the first question focuses on facts or details, and the second question focuses on opinions or feelings. Explain to learners that the focus of the cross-text matching tasks is on comparing opinions.
5. Give learners **Student’s Worksheet 1**. Explain that these are four reviews of the same film. Ask learners to read through the reviews and identify the elements of the film they mention. Tell them they are looking for facts and details. You can model this task with the first sentence of the first review – it mentions the storyline and one of the characters. There is one more example on the worksheet. Tell learners they only need to identify the details at this stage, i.e. the elements of the film that are mentioned. Learners read through the reviews on their own and then check with a partner. Check answers as a whole group. [**KEY:** The reviews mention the storyline/ending, the characters, the language/script, the actor, the music and the audience.] You can give a copy of the worksheet key if learners need more support in identifying the details. You could also use the worksheet key for learner-centred feedback, i.e. by giving one section to each learner in a group of four and asking them to check their partners’ answers.
6. Tell learners they will now focus on opinions on some of the elements of the film, which is what cross-text matching tasks focus on. Give learners **Student’s Worksheet 2**, which includes some of the elements of the films identified in the previous activity. Ask learners to look again at the reviews on **Student’s Worksheet 1** to find the opinions the reviewers express about these details. They can copy quotes into the table or highlight them on **Student’s Worksheet 1**. Remind learners that not all the elements are mentioned in each review. If time allows, and to make this activity more collaborative, you can ask learners to focus on just one of the details, and they then work in groups of four to share the information they have found.
7. In whole-group feedback, check the opinions learners have highlighted. Note that there is limited opinion on language in Review C. Check understanding by asking learners whether the opinions are positive or negative. Explain or invite peer explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary as needed.
8. Ask learners whether the opinions expressed by the four reviewers are the same or different. Explain that the Linguaskill Reading cross-text matching task focuses on similarities and differences in opinions expressed across the texts. Give learners **Student’s Worksheet 3**, which has the exam task which accompanies the reviews of *The Red Balloon*. Identify that Questions 1 and 3 focus on differences, and Questions 2 and 4 focus on similarities. Learners work alone to answer the questions, then check with a partner. [KEY: 1:B. 2:C. 3:B. 4:D.]
9. In whole-group feedback, ask learners to give evidence to support their answers, i.e. which words in the text confirm the correct answer.

**Student’s Worksheet 1**

**Film reviews – identifying details**

**Read four reviews of the film *The Red Balloon*, a classic French film from 1956.**

**What elements of the film do the reviewers mention?**

**Use the table below to make notes. Look at the two examples, then underline or highlight the details and make a note of what the information is in the second column.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reviewer A**  The timeless tale of Albert Lamorisse’s short film, *The Red Balloon*, tells the story of the balloon as it follows a lonely schoolboy around the city of Paris, making itself his companion. The visual power of the balloon is essential to the film’s effect, and the red balloon becomes a true character, in fact the star of the movie, fondly remembered by many since they first enjoyed it as a child. Filmed in simple language, the story follows the deepening relationship between the two. The final scene, as wondrous a finale as ever has been put to film, suggests promise, although Lamorisse employs subtlety. This is a film for grown-ups too, and perhaps it is nostalgia that allows us to overlook the cliched dialogue and the wires keeping the balloon afloat on screen. | storyline/character  language |
| **Reviewer B**  In defence of both the film and myself, I was only 7 or 8 when I first saw it. I was enchanted by it then as only a kid can be, and on reflection, it really is a film just for that age group. I appreciate that the movie’s brilliance is its simplicity, but my adult sensibilities left me wanting more as the film drew to a close. This is no fault of the film but more in the casting of the director’s son in the starring role. There are a few moments that call for more of a theatrical response, but he is clearly a novice and is never convincing. Perhaps the most innovative element of *The Red Balloon* is its method of telling a story with practically no dialogue. Instead, music ties it all together in place of a narrator, who might more bluntly interpret the layers of meaning for viewers. |  |
| **Reviewer C**  The key to *The Red Balloon*’s lasting endurance is its simplicity – it’s a fantastical story that conveys a timeless message. Lamorisse captures the events through an innocent’s eyes, with his son in the leading role. He uses visual imagery that appeals to younger viewers; even its darkest moments are communicated in a way that young children will comprehend with ease. And he does all of this without ever talking down to the audience, which is why it remains appreciated by fans as they grow old – not out of mere nostalgia, but out of true respect for a marvellous work of art. As the story reaches its unexpected yet satisfying conclusion, the director’s lack of embellishment and his son’s superb delivery create an enduring fable. |  |
| **Reviewer D**  There’s a certain power to the way in which *The Red Balloon* tells the classic tale of the human spirit triumphing over hardship and injustice through the eyes of a child, expertly communicating this valuable, timeless message without resorting to unnecessary detail and lengthy explanations. Making his debut at the tender age of six, Pascal Lamorisse, the exceptional young actor, coincidentally the son of director Albert, shares the starring role with the balloon and manages to deliver the very few scripted lines with true emotion. It’s difficult to imagine anyone else in the role. There’s no denying that the film’s a masterpiece, which for decades has delighted viewers, from youngsters to grandparents, and everyone in between, many of whom return to it time and again. I distinctly recall first watching in awe as the film reached its climax and the boy finally floated away. For the more mature viewer, there’s a slight sense of inevitability regarding what’s about to happen, which somewhat takes the shine off that moment, but the film still remains one of my all-time favourites. |  |

**KEY**

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| **Reviewer A**  The timeless tale of Albert Lamorisse’s short film, *The Red Balloon*, tells the story of the balloon as it follows a lonely schoolboy around the city of Paris, making itself his companion. The visual power of the balloon is essential to the film’s effect, and the red balloon becomes a true character, in fact the star of the movie, fondly remembered by many since they first enjoyed it as a child. Filmed in simple language, the story follows the deepening relationship between the two. The final scene, as wondrous a finale as ever has been put to film, suggests promise, although Lamorisse employs subtlety. This is a film for grown-ups too, and perhaps it is nostalgia that allows us to overlook the cliched dialogue and the wires keeping the balloon afloat on screen. | storyline/character  character  language  storyline/ending  audience  language |
| **Reviewer B**  In defence of both the film and myself, I was only seven or eight when I first saw it. I was enchanted by it then as only a kid can be, and on reflection, it really is a film just for that age group. I appreciate that the movie’s brilliance is its simplicity, but my adult sensibilities left me wanting more as the film drew to a close. This is no fault of the film but more in the casting of the director’s son in the starring role. There are a few moments that call for more of a theatrical response, but he is clearly a novice and is never convincing. Perhaps the most innovative element of *The Red Balloon* is its method of telling a story with practically no dialogue. Instead, music ties it all together in place of a narrator, who might more bluntly interpret the layers of meaning for viewers. | audience  storyline/ending  actor  language/script  music |
| **Reviewer C**  The key to *The Red Balloon*’s lasting endurance is its simplicity – it’s a fantastical story that conveys a timeless message. Lamorisse captures the events through an innocent’s eyes, with his son in the leading role. He uses visual imagery that appeals to younger viewers; even its darkest moments are communicated in a way that young children will comprehend with ease. And he does all of this without ever talking down to the audience, which is why it remains appreciated by fans as they grow old – not out of mere nostalgia, but out of true respect for a marvellous work of art. As the story reaches its unexpected yet satisfying conclusion, the director’s lack of embellishment and his son’s superb delivery create an enduring fable. | storyline  actor  audience  language  storyline/ending  actor/acting |
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**Student’s Worksheet 2**

**Film reviews – identifying opinions**

**Read the four reviews on Worksheet 1 again.**

**What opinions do each of the reviewers give on these details of the film?**

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| **Actors and acting** |  |
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|  |
| **The film ending** |  |
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| **The film audience** |  |
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|  |
|  |
| **The language in the film** |  |
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**KEY**

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| --- | --- |
| **Actors and acting** | No comment made by Reviewer A |
| This is no fault of the film but more in the casting of the director’s son in the starring role. There are a few moments that call for more of a theatrical response, but he is clearly a novice and is never convincing. |
| his son’s superb delivery |
| Making his debut at the tender age of six, Pascal Lamorisse, the exceptional young actor, coincidentally the son of director Albert, shares the starring role with the balloon and manages to deliver the very few scripted lines with true emotion. It’s difficult to imagine anyone else in the role. |
| **The film ending** | The final scene, as wondrous a finale as ever has been put to film |
| I appreciate that the movie’s brilliance is its simplicity, but my adult sensibilities left me wanting more as the film drew to a close |
| As the story reaches its unexpected yet satisfying conclusion |
| I distinctly recall first watching in awe as the film reached its climax and the boy finally floated away. For the more mature viewer, there’s a slight sense of inevitability regarding what’s about to happen, which somewhat takes the shine off that moment, but the film still remains one of my all-time favourites. |
| **The film audience** | fondly remembered by many since they first enjoyed it as a child  This is a film for grown-ups too, and perhaps it is nostalgia that allows us to overlook the cliched dialogue and the wires keeping the balloon afloat on screen. |
| I was enchanted by it then as only a kid can be, and on reflection, it really is a film just for that age group.  my adult sensibilities left me wanting more |
| He uses visual imagery that appeals to younger viewers; even its darkest moments are communicated in a way that young children will comprehend with ease.  it remains appreciated by fans as they grow old – not out of mere nostalgia, but out of true respect for a marvellous work of art |
| There’s no denying that the film’s a masterpiece, which for decades has delighted viewers, from youngsters to grandparents, and everyone in between, many of whom return to it time and again. |
| **The language in the film** | cliched dialogue |
| Perhaps the most innovative element of *The Red Balloon* is its method of telling a story with practically no dialogue. |
| he does all of this without ever talking down to the audience |
| expertly communicating this valuable, timeless message without resorting to unnecessary detail and lengthy explanations. |

**Student’s Worksheet 3**

**Sample Linguaskill cross-text matching Reading task**

**The reviews of *The Red Balloon* film on Worksheet 1 come from a Linguaskill Reading cross-text matching task.**

**Here are the questions that go with that task.**

**Use your notes on Worksheets 1 and 2 to help you answer the questions.**

1. Which reviewer has a different opinion from Reviewer C on the quality of acting in the movie?
2. Which reviewer shares an opinion with Reviewer A regarding the success of the movie’s ending?
3. Which reviewer expresses a different view from the other three reviewers on who the movie is suitable for?
4. Which reviewer shares an opinion with Reviewer B on how effective the use of language is in the movie?