**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.**

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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/characterlanguage |  |
| **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. |  |  |
| **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.  |  |  |

**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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**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?