

# JUST ADD POPCORN

Get students talking about the tricky topic of immigration, with the help of three thought-provoking movies

Research by the education charity FILMCLUB, which was launched in 2008 and now works with over 7000 schools across the UK, shows that watching, discussing and reviewing films with their peers, under the guidance of a teacher, helps pupils to better understand complex subjects and is an effective way of engaging young people and reinforcing the curriculum – also that it broadens students’ cultural horizons and increases empathy and tolerance. Naturally, this is the kind of thing of which we at TS thoroughly approve, which is why we’ve invited the experts at FILMCLUB to delve into their curated catalogue of DVDs over the next few issues of Teach Secondary, and share a series of particularly relevant and inspiring pieces of cinema – complete with talking points and review starters – to help teachers and pupils explore emotive topics and stimulate dialogue and debate.

First up: immigration. It’s an issue teenagers are increasingly likely to hear discussed, both on the news and at home; figures show there are over 200 million migrants around the world today. Classrooms nowadays often include pupils whose families have come to live in the UK from elsewhere – and many others who have little or no understanding of the economic, political and personal reasons that compel people to move to another country, or of what it really means to start a new life in a foreign land. These films can help students gain valuable, and even transformative, insight.

## FILMCLUB Recommends...



### SOMERS TOWN, 2008 (12)

Uplifting comedy-drama about a teenage runaway making his way in London, directed by Shane Meadows.

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. Marek and his father have only recently moved to London from Poland. What are some of the things that make life difficult for them there?
2. We only get hints of Tommo’s life back in the Midlands. What might have caused him to run away to London?
3. How does the film portray London? Why do so many people choose this city when they want to relocate?

**REVIEW STARTER**

The film shows through the characters of Tommo and Marek how difficult it can be to move to a new city...



### A BETTER LIFE, 2011 (12)

In this film we meet Carlos, a Mexican gardener, who is struggling to raise his 14 year-old son, Luis, in a tough Los Angeles neighbourhood.

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. What are some of the problems Luis and his father face as illegal immigrants?
2. How does Luis feel about Mexican music and traditions? Why do you think this is?
3. Why does Carlos want Luis to remain in the US?

**REVIEW STARTER**

The challenges of adapting to a new life are powerfully depicted in this painfully poignant American drama...



### BEFORE NIGHT FALLS, 2000 (15)

The moving and finely-crafted tale of the Cuban Poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas, who suffered severe persecution because of his sexuality.

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. Why does Arenas want to leave Cuba?
2. What is political asylum, and what are some of the reasons refugees find it unsafe to stay in their homelands?
3. When Arenas arrives in the US, he is declared “stateless”. What does this mean? How might this feel?

**REVIEW STARTER**

This acclaimed drama shows some of the strongest reasons migrants may want to leave their homelands in search of a better life...



## TAKE IT FURTHER

For free access to these and thousands of other fantastic films for students to watch, discuss and review why not start a FREE film club in your school or college now? To register – and find out what other benefits membership entails – visit [filmclub.org](http://filmclub.org), email [schools@filmclub.org](mailto:schools@filmclub.org) or call 0207 288 4520.