

JUST ADD POPCORN

Three films that could get young people thinking differently about war

In the twentieth century alone over 160 million people, and in the past ten years two million children, were killed in wars and conflicts, with millions more orphaned, seriously injured or left with psychological trauma. Many young people – and adults – are unaware of these shocking statistics and of the devastating effects war has on the environment, food and water supplies, inhabitants and economy of a nation involved in conflict, even after the conflict has ended.

Films about war are a powerful way of highlighting its impact. On the FILMCLUB website there are many to choose from, ranging from classics like *Bridge on the River Kwai* and *The General* to acclaimed World War II dramas including *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line*; films about Vietnam (*Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now*) and those such as *5 Broken Cameras*, *Lebanon* and *The Hurt Locker* which deal with more recent conflicts. As well as a topic devoted to films about war there are whole sections on the website dedicated to The Holocaust and The American Civil War, and others focusing on related subjects including Colonialism, Fascism and Dictators, Terrorism, and Refugees. Films can be used to get pupils thinking about different aspects of war, from the political decisions behind it (*Dr Strangelove*, *Lincoln*), to media representation and exploitation of conflict (*Wag The Dog*) to individual stories of human bravery and suffering (*Life is Beautiful*, *Regeneration*). "Personal stories move more than statistics, and this account of two young lives tells us more about the First World War than any numbers game," comments a FILMCLUB leader about the film *Gallipoli*.

All films are available free to FILMCLUB members and many are accompanied by teaching resources to encourage discussion and review writing.

FILMCLUB Recommends...



DR. STRANGELOVE (11+)

When America accidentally launches a nuclear attack on Russia, it's up to a bemused British airman (Peter Sellers) to save the day. Meanwhile, the US president (Sellers) is getting some very strange advice from an ex-Nazi scientist (yes, Sellers again) with a doomsday fixation. The result is demented, nightmarish – and arguably the funniest war movie ever made.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. What do you think the purpose is in making fun of such a serious subject?
2. How is leadership portrayed in the film?
3. The War Room is one of the most famous film sets in cinema history. Why do you think this is and does it remind you of anything??

REVIEW STARTER

Made at the height of the Cold War, *Dr. Strangelove* is a unique war film...



GALLIPOLI (11+)

In 1915, a combined British, Australian and New Zealand force attacked Turkey in the Battle of Gallipoli. It was a disaster; the story is here told through the experiences of two young Australian athletes who volunteer for the army in time for the ill-fated campaign.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Frank is initially reluctant to sign up to the army. Why does he think this and why does he change his mind?
2. What is the mood like at the start of the film? How does this evolve and change?
3. The climax of the film is a recreation of an historical event. How do the filmmakers try to ensure that the viewer does not forget these scenes?

REVIEW STARTER

Gallipoli is a film about two friends brought closer together at a time of war...



5 BROKEN CAMERAS (14+)

Caught up in the continual chaos of the Middle East conflict, Palestinian farmer Emad uses video camera to record the violence and injustice he witnesses on a daily basis. One by one his cameras become victims of the destructive forces operating in the region. On top of this, Emad becomes increasingly fearful that his incriminating footage could make him a target for security forces.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Why is it important to see more personal "home movie" footage of conflict zones, as well as the kind of images we see on the news?
2. What does Emad use his camera for, and what do they symbolise?
3. To what extent do you think this is a political film?

REVIEW STARTER

This is a film about one family's attempts to live their lives in the middle of human conflict...



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