

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival
for Young Audiences

.....



Teachers' Resource Pack:

Shorts for Middle Ones – Lola and the Sound Piano (Lola et le piano à bruits)

First and Second Levels | Created by Virginie Bradbury and Lucie Maupetit

Discovery Film Festival: Sun 25 October – Sun 2 November 2025

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

DUNDEE
ONE CITY, MANY DISCOVERIES

**CREATIVE
LAND**
SCOT
ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

.....
dca.org.uk/discovery-film-festival

© Dundee Contemporary Arts 2025
With support from the DCA Cinema and Learning teams



Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery.

They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals.

Each resource aims to:

- support and extend working with film in the classroom
- help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit for delivery of CfE
- develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21st Century Literacy/moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from:

<https://www.dca.org.uk/discovery-film-festival-resources/>

Lola and the Sound Piano (Lola et le piano a bruits)

Dir: Augusto Zanollo

France, Poland, 2024 / 26m

French with English subtitles

11 year old Lola is the sister of Simon, 5, who lives in a world of his own. By observing him, she notices how sensitive he is to small, hidden sounds. With her friend Rolih, they decide to build a noise machine to communicate with him.

This film is centred around the theme of autism and how different people react when faced with a person who is on the autism spectrum. However, it is done in a beautiful way and is a perfect opportunity for discussions around that topic.

This pack is aimed at First and Second Levels. The following Experiences and Outcomes can be covered:

HWB 1-09a / HWB 2-09a

This is an endearing film about the relationship between Lola and her brother, Simon, who is autistic. It allows us to educate our learners about autism and how they can support their autistic peers. It highlights the fact that autism is not an illness and doesn't need to be cured but rather understood. This film is equally engaging for learners working within the first and second levels, as it facilitates discussions on how to become more tolerant and accepting of differences and how everyone can contribute to living harmoniously together.

Before watching the film:

Activity 1: Discussion – Focus on Simon (Literacy – Health and Wellbeing)

For this activity, frame the discussion around the idea that everyone is different and that's okay.

Emphasise that autistic individuals have unique strengths and may experience the world differently. Use age-appropriate language to explain that autism is a different way of thinking and experiencing the world, rather than a deficit.

Display the collage of pictures in **Appendix 1** below so all learners can see them. Encourage them to look at each still carefully and discuss what makes Simon unique. What do they notice from the pictures? What does Simon do?

Picture 1: Simon draws the same thing repeatedly.

Picture 2: He blocks/taps his ears.

Picture 3: He sits on his own on the floor with his back to the other 2 characters.

Picture 4: He kicks his feet and punches the air.

If the learners struggle to see the character's uniqueness, please read the quote from the director below and discuss the pictures once again.

In our world, people are bombarded with information, they all speak at once, and move quickly. These multiple stimuli are perceived in a confused and aggressive manner by people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It's no wonder, then, that they retreat into an imaginary world to which only they hold the keys.

Children growing up with an autistic sibling face a unique and particular situation. They must learn to live with a mode of communication different from their own. Lola perceives her brother's uniqueness and does everything she can to fight against his exclusion. **Augusto Zanollo, director**

Simon displays signs of autism. Ask your learners:

- What is autism?

Activity 1 (Continuation):

1. Explain Autism Simply:

Focus on the positive: Explain that autism is a different way of thinking and experiencing the world, not a bad thing.

Use relatable examples: Discuss how everyone has different interests and strengths. For example, one child might be great at drawing while another excels at sports.

Highlight sensory differences: Explain that some autistic individuals might be more sensitive to sounds, lights, or textures.

Emphasise communication differences: Explain that autistic people might communicate in different ways, like using visual aids or needing more time to process information.

2. Promote Acceptance and Inclusion:

Use inclusive language: Refer to autistic individuals as “people with autism” or “autistic people”, rather than using stigmatising language.

- **Celebrate diversity:** Explain that having autism doesn't make someone less worthy or capable.
- **Encourage empathy:** Ask the learners how they would feel in certain situations, like being overwhelmed by noise or needing extra time to understand instructions.
- **Focus on similarities:** If relevant, help your learners identify common interests and activities they share with their autistic peers.

In this film, Lola has to find another way than speech to communicate with her brother, Simon. This animation shows that there are other ways we can connect with others that do not involve words.

- Ask your learners to think of ways the characters could communicate. (e.g. signs or BSL, drawings, noises, looks...)

At this stage of the discussion, you could show **the trailer** of the film to your class. Your learners should then begin to realise that drawings, sounds and music will allow Simon to get closer to his sister, Lola and to communicate with her and the rest of the community during a concert on the landing of their staircase. Discuss with your class how drawings, laughter, gestures, music and looks can also create emotions and empathy; therefore, are ways of communicating. They are just as important as words in communication.

This is also a good opportunity to discuss the *Rights of the Child, Article 2: No Discrimination*.



Activity 2: **Listening for sounds (Film literacy)**

When making a film, there are 4 different types of sounds that can be combined to help convey the story: dialogues, music, sound effects, and silence.

Take a piece of paper and fold it into 4. Unfold it and title each section with one of the following words: dialogues, sound effects, music and silence (see **Appendix 2** for a template)

Listen to **the trailer** without looking at the visuals so you can focus on the sounds and take notes of what you hear under each category.

Dialogues:

- How many people can you hear speak?
- In what language?
- Can you tell what their age might be from the voice?

Music:

- Can you identify specific instruments?
- Is the music fast or slow? Loud or quiet? Happy or sad? What emotions does it make you feel?

Sound effects:

- What sound effects (sounds coming from day to day objects) can you identify?
- Are they pleasant sounds or not?

Silence:

- Do you hear any moments of silence or is it a constant succession of sounds?
- If you hear silence, how does it make you feel?

Depending on how the learners get on, you can give them a chance to then add more to their notes by listening a second time while watching the trailer.

Having watched the film, do you think the sounds from the trailer are a good representation of the film and the story being portrayed? Why? Why not?

Some of the answers could be:

- The moments of silence at the start show a more difficult/broken communication.
- The sound effects at the start are in isolation and are just sounds, as opposed to the beautiful melody of the clarinet. This can represent the two separate worlds Lola and Simon live in.
- As the trailer goes on, sound effects and music merge as one, becoming something new and beautiful and bringing the two main characters into the same world.

Activity 3: **Create your own tune from day-to-day sounds (Music)**



Lola and her friend develop a sound piano from many day-to-day objects. Make a list of as many sounds as possible that can be created from everyday items. Think of objects you use regularly and look around you for ideas; for example, the clicking of a pen, the noise of an empty packet of crisps being crunched up...

In order to maximise ideas and engagement, you could do this as a cooperative learning activity called “give one, get one”. In groups of 4, pupils are given time to write their own list, then they share with their shoulder partner, taking turns and adding any new ideas from their partner to their own list. Finally, they share with the person in front of them, once again completing the list as they go. By the end of it, all 4 people in the group should have the exact same list.

In your group, select a number of day-to-day sounds from your list and combine them to create a tune and/or express an emotion. Once you have something, try and write a ‘music score’ using pictures, words and any other means you wish to make it possible for others to play your creation.

Activity 4: **Art in the style of Kandinsky (Expressive Arts)**

Simon expresses himself by drawing many concentric circles of various colours. He is very sensitive to sound; this repetitive activity probably reassures him. Little by little, the abstract shapes he draws evolve and become music sheets.

Simon's geometric and colourful designs remind us of the artist Vassily Kandinsky's work who was himself inspired by music whilst creating his art. Kandinsky's mind would create shapes and colours to match each sound he would hear. For a long time, he tried to transcribe music to painting, hence his abstract work. He wanted to share visual effects and emotions.

With your class, complete the artwork described step-by-step in **Appendix 3**.

Activity 5: **Match the instruments to the pictures (Modern Languages – French and Music)**

Many instruments in French are cognates to their English equivalent. Encourage your learners to read the words for each instrument and match them to the picture on the worksheet, **Appendix 4**.

Once the worksheet has been completed, use the following **PowerPoint “Instruments in French”** to listen to the pronunciation of each word. There are also a few activities suggested to practise that vocabulary. These activities can be adapted to build fluency on any set of vocabulary.



Activity 6: **Discussion after the film (Literacy)**

During the film, Lola's best friend asks her if she would not like Simon to be 'normal'. If appropriate, ask your learners what is normal. What do you think Lola and her mum are going to think about that? Should we change the way people are to fit our needs or way of living, or communicating?

Change, however, can have a very positive impact. Ask your learners if they can think of a character who changes their attitude at the end of the film. How was Mr Ducalquon, the owner of the building, at the beginning of the movie? How has he changed at the end?

Thinking of the scene where Simon plays the piano on the landing, how do we know that Lola and Rolih's creation is successful? Ask your learners to look at Simon's reactions, but also at the artistic effects around different parts of the piano. Swirls and circles appear. Where could we see some of these circles and twirls at the start of the film? What does that mean?



What message is the director trying to share in the final scene where all the characters dressed in white are dancing to Simon's dance? Why isn't Simon dressed in white? Support your learners to come to the conclusion that the characters have managed to enter a part of Simon's world, but Simon remains his own individual which is highlighted by the fact that he is still dressed in his own clothes and not in white like the rest.

Appendix 1





Appendix 2

Listening to sounds

Dialogues	Sound effects
Music	Silence



Appendix 3

Paint in the style of Kandinsky

Resources needed:

1 sheet of paper with a 15x15 cm square per child, 1 blank sheet of paper per child, oil pastels, pots of wash (diluted paint of different colours), inks, paintbrushes (1 per pot to avoid mixing colours)

Part 1: Practice

1) Let your learners observe Kandinsky's work:



Colour Study: Squares with Concentric Circles, 1913

2) Discussion:

Ask your learners:

- What do you see? What shapes, what colours?
- What is this painting made of?

Please note: As the title suggests, the painter experiments with various colour effects by repeating different circles within a series of identical squares, like swatches.

Wassily Kandinsky tested different mixtures of colours and materials (inks, chalks, paint) to observe the effects produced: transparency or opacity, light or dark, broad or thin lines, etc.

3) Painting:



Ask each learner to select 4 different colours (divided between oil pastels, washes and/or inks).



On a sheet with a 15x15 cm square, draw several circles with oil pastels inside the square, starting from the centre. Encourage your learners to change the thickness of the circles and the width of the spaces between each circle.



Ask your learners to paint the blank spaces inside the square with different washes or inks.

Gather the swashes and display them one next to the other in the style of Kandinsky.

Compare the different circles and visual effects created: contrast of the colours, what happens when the wash goes on the oil pastel?

Appendix 3

Part 2: Paint in music

Simon's colourful circles change little by little with curved and angular lines as he hears a variety of sounds. Vassily Kandinsky transcribed geometrical paintings of complete music pieces.

Now is your learners' turn to express themselves with shapes and colours while listening to music. They will use the effects practised in Part 1.

- 1) Ask your learners to observe and describe a second piece of work from Kandinsky, still made of colourful circles, this time with a more relaxed approach than the first:



Several Circles, 1926

- 2) Let your class listen to a classical or contemporary musical piece (no lyrics, please) with a variety of rhythms and instruments.
- 3) Ask your learners to paint circles whilst listening to the rhythm of the music, linking colours and media to different parts of the music piece.

They could draw circles over other circles. Encourage them to create different lines and shapes. Praise spontaneity. The results will vary from one child to another, as different emotions will be felt.

Appendix 4

Les instruments de musique

Match the French word to the correct picture.

Un trombone



Une clarinette



Un saxophone



Un banjo



Une trompette



Un soubassophone



Des maracas



Une batterie





Evaluating this resource

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate.

Please do send us any film reviews, letters from your pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback by e-mailing amaya.marco@dca.org.uk

Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels.

Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival websites. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included.

If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please e-mail amaya.marco@dca.org.uk