

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival
for Young Audiences



Teachers' Resource Pack: **Le Ballon Rouge (The Red Balloon)**

First Level Learners | Created by Ian Cameron, Germain Julien

Discovery Film Festival | Mon 2 – Wed 18 November 2026

DCA

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dca.org.uk/discovery-film-festival

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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/>

Le Ballon Rouge (The Red Balloon)

Dir: Albert Lamorisse

France, 1956 / 36m

Le Ballon Rouge

Synopsis:

A young boy, Pascal, finds and befriends a red balloon in on the back streets of post-war Paris. Freeing it from a streetlight on his way to school, the balloon then follows him. The bright red colour of the balloon stands out against the drab and dreary streets, creating a sense of hope against the dull greys and off-whites of the surrounding buildings. When a jealous gang of boys take an interest in the balloon the boy does everything he can to keep it out of their hands. However, the balloon is eventually captured and destroyed by the boys. An upset Pascal is rescued from his grief by the other balloons in the neighbourhood who come together to whisk him into the air across the Parisian skyline.

Advisory note:

The boy walks through a flea market where there is a nude painting briefly visible in the background. The boy gets into mild perilous situations. The boy appears quite lonely and is subject to the cruelty of other boys. The balloon bursts in the end, but the ending is resolved happily.

Teacher's notes:

Age and stage recommendations, including CfE objectives:

This film is suitable for ages 5 and above. While this pack is aimed for First Level, the film is accessible for all ages. The following CfE Experiences and Outcomes are covered in this pack:

Film and Screen: **EXA 1-24a, EXA 1-26a, EXA 1-22a, EXA 1-20a**

Literacy and English: **LIT 1-25a, LIT 1-26a, ENG 1-31a**

Modern Languages: Listening and Talking: **MLAN 1-02a, MLAN 1-06, MLAN 10-a&b**

Reading: **MLAN 1-08a&b, MLAN 1-11a, MLAN 1-13**



Teacher quote:

This film was groundbreaking in its day, winning Palme D'Or for short films (1956), Prix Louis Delluc (1956), Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay (1957) and BAFTA Special Award (1957). Its use of limited dialogue also increases its accessibility for younger audiences and audience members who have English as a second language.

Its use of practical effects (live effects whilst filming, as opposed to CGI or effects applied in the editing suite, see: <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-are-practical-effects-movies/> allows pupils to see that the audience can be manipulated, without the use of AI or CGI. With many filmmakers currently choosing practical effects (see: *Project Hail Mary*, *Substance*, the sets of *Wicked*, and Grogu from the *Mandalorian* film/TV) it is useful for pupils to understand the different choices that filmmakers make to engage an audience.

It gives an interesting view of the French capital and what life in the city looked like in the aftermath of the 2nd World War.



Before watching the film:

Activity 1A: Watching the Trailer (Film and Screen)

Resources:

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KorAPe9TV7E>

Whiteboards/paper, pens/pencils.

Before watching the trailer (linked above), ask pupils to consider what they might expect from a film called *Le Ballon Rouge* (*The Red Balloon*). Who or what might be the main characters? Where might it be set? What would the story entail? Ask the pupils to draw, or write about, what they might see.

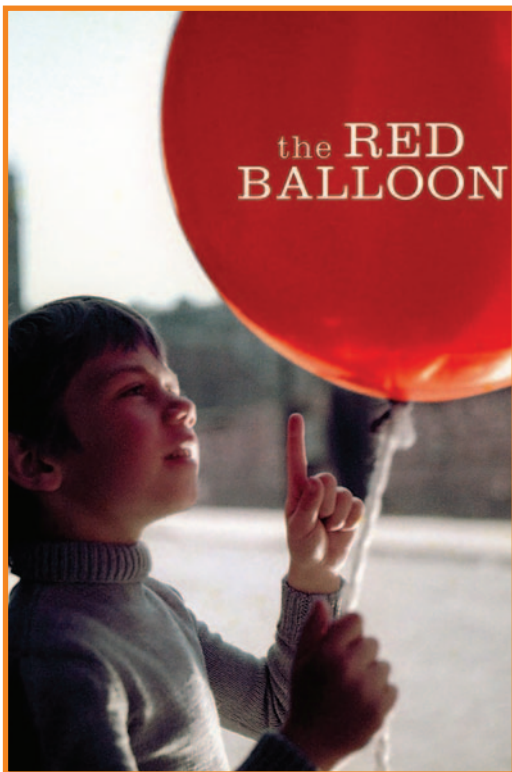
Watch the trailer.

What did they predict? What was different? Can they now answer the previous questions? Has their idea of what the story might be changed?

Pupils should think about stories that feature things that are not normally alive coming to life. E.G. *Toy Story*, *Frozen* (Olaf), the Duracell Bunny advert, *Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium*, *Night at the Museum*, *The Snowman* etc. Pupils can then draw a new version of how they think the film will look. They should include the characters and the setting.

Activity 1B: La bande annonce et les affiches du film (French)

Les affiches du film:



Activity 1B: **La bande annonce et les affiches du film (French)**

Regarde les deux affiches du film, une en français et une en anglais.

What differences can you spot? Do you have a preference for one or the other? Why?

Now try to write a few sentences to describe each poster in French.

Useful Vocabulary:

***l'affiche en français/anglais* = the French/English poster ;**

***le garçon* = the boy ; *il est* = he is ; *il a* = he has ; *il porte* = he wears**

***il a l'air* = he seems ; *à l'arrière-plan* = in the background ; *il y a* = there is/are ;**

***on peut voir* = you can see ; *un bâtiment* = a building**

La bande annonce:

Regarde la bande annonce du film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KorAPe9TV7E>

A. A ton avis, *Le Ballon Rouge*, c'est quel type de film ?

(Tick the correct boxes describing the genre)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ une comédie | ☐ un film d'aventure | ☐ un film de science-fiction |
| ☐ un film de guerre | ☐ un film d'amour | ☐ un film d'horreur |
| ☐ un dessin-animé | ☐ un film d'action | ☐ un drame |

B. A ton avis, quels sont les thèmes du film ?

(Tick the appropriate boxes in regard to the themes which you think you might come across in this film).

- | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ la famille | ☐ l'école | ☐ le sport | ☐ la guerre | ☐ l'amour |
| ☐ la vieillesse | ☐ l'adolescence | ☐ la santé | ☐ l'amitié | ☐ la drogue |
| ☐ la musique | ☐ les vacances | ☐ la nature | ☐ autre:..... | |

Activity 2: Thinking About Colour (Film and Screen)

Resources:

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KorAPe9TV7E> , paper, coloured pens/pencils.

Hello Stranger Short: <https://screeningshorts.org.uk/films/hello-stranger/>

or *Tom Sweep* Short: <https://screeningshorts.org.uk/films/tom-sweep/> (Glow login required for both), **Activity Sheet 1**

Colour is a useful way to look at any film. It is one of the 3 Cs and 3 Ss of Film and Screen (Colour, Camera, Character, Story, Setting, Sound).

Ask pupils to think about the film they saw. What colours stood out? Why did they stand out? What was the background like? Why do you think the director chose to have certain colours stand out? What would happen if the balloon was a different colour? Remind the pupils that, like a written story, the filmmaking team will make careful decisions about what the audience reads/sees. You can play the trailer again before asking questions to help refresh their memories and/or use the images in **Activity Sheet 1**.

Pupils could compare the use of colour to another film. A suggested film would be Julia Ocker's *Hello Stranger* or Michaël Dudok de Wit's *Tom Sweep* (see links above). These films also have limited language and therefore use for pupils and various stages. What similarities can they spot? What differences are there between the two films? How is colour used in the new film? How does the director/ animator help the characters to stand out?

Pupils should fold a piece of paper into quarters (in half, in half again). Pupils should use this to do a basic storyboard of *Le Ballon Rouge*. The first quarter should be used to draw a scene from the start of the film. The last quarter should be used to draw the final scene of the film. The two remaining should be used by the pupils to draw their two moments they can remember from the middle. Remind pupils to think about background as well as foreground. Ask them to think carefully about the colours they are choosing.



Activity 3: **Developing the Story. (Literacy and English, Film and Screen)**

Resources:

Pens/pencils, paper

Discuss with the pupils the short meeting that happened with the girl with the blue balloon. Pupils should be given time to discuss possible story lines involving the blue balloon. This could be how the girl found the balloon (i.e. the run up to meeting the boy) or what happened next to the girl and the blue balloon. An approach to this could be using the Helicopter Story structure. Example here: <https://youtu.be/UkJl8dyzRQQ?si=MJPsjCnbsq8aVe-l&t=75> or an appropriate method for your class. Another possible narrative idea might be the story of how the red balloon got stuck on the lamppost in the first place.

As in the previous task, the pupils should storyboard their idea. This can be done individually or in pairs. For older classes, differentiation can be added by folding the paper into 8ths or 16ths instead of quarters, therefore, allowing for more detail in the planning. This task could also be used to then write a story around the blue balloon.



Activity 4: **The Job of the SFX Effects Artists (Film and Screen)**

Resources:

Balloons (+balloon pump), string, fishing line, sticks, sticky tape (various), straws, cardboard boxes, scrap materials etc, iPad/tablet/digital camera

Ask the pupils how they think the film crew managed to make the balloon feel alive. At this stage there are no right or wrong answers. Pupils should be encouraged to think outside the box. They might want to use paper and pencil to sketch out their ideas.

When they have generated ideas, let the pupils know that there are no special effects done in post-production i.e. after the filming in the editing or with CGI, animation or AI. The balloon and its movement were all completed live during the filming of the shots. These are called “practical effects”, where the effects are physically created at the time of filming. These are the responsibility of the Special Effects Artists (SFX Artist).

Interestingly, in order to create the balloon, the film crew used a yellow balloon inside the red balloon to make it shinier and less see-through.

Split the pupils into teams of 3–4. Set them the challenge of creating shots of a balloon moving on its own, by being the SFX team. The pupils must show the balloon:

- On its own, no hands in shot
- In a shot where it moves left to right
- In a shot where it moves up and down
- Sitting in mid-air and “hover”
- Moving randomly

The teams can use anything that is supplied in resources to do this, or anything around the classroom.



Activity 5: **Making a Film (Film and Screen, Drama)**

Resources:

iPad/Tablet/digital camera. Also, see the previous task resources.

Pupils should shoot a short film about a balloon. At this point it would be useful to have done **Activity 4** and **Activity 3** to support this activity. Pupils should work in teams of no more than 4 to do this task. The roles they can take on could be:

- Director (Film and Screen) – in charge of the project
- Camera Operator (Film and Screen) – charge of making sure the camera is pointing in the right direction
- Actor(s) (Drama)
- SFX Artist(s) (Film and Screen) – Moving the balloon when needed but shouldn't ever be in shot.

The total time for the film should be no more than a minute and, if they haven't completed the previous activities, teams should be given some time to plan their idea



Activity 6: **Les couleurs (French)**

Resources:

A. In pairs/small groups, pupils brainstorm as many French words for colours as they can.

B. Ask pupils how the French words for colours change depending on what they describe (remind them about the grammatical rule for adjective agreement).

Then ask them to fill in the sentences below to describe the colours of things in the film (remembering to apply the rule):

- le ballon de Pascal est (red) _____
 - le ballon de la fille est (blue) _____
 - les vêtements du garçons sont (grey-masculine plural) _____
 - la robe de la fille est (white) _____
 - le costume du principal de l'école est (black) _____
 - les bâtiments sont (grey-masculine plural) _____
 - le bus est (green) _____
 - la porte de l'école est (brown) _____
- C.** As a challenge, in pairs/small groups pupils should write sentences to tell about the number of balloons of each colour in the picture below, taken from the end scene of the film.
(eg: il y a dix ballons blancs,...)



Activity 7: La description des personnages (French)

Resources:

- A.** Discuss with the class the characters in the film. How are they portrayed? Despite having barely any dialogue, are you able to work out the personality of the characters in the film? Would you consider the balloon as a character?
- B.** Below is a list of French adjectives. Pupils could do some dictionary work to find out the meaning of the ones they don't know or cannot work out by looking at the word (if no paper dictionary available <https://www.wordreference.com/> is a good online dictionary):

Useful Vocabulary:

amusant

méchant

solitaire

dynamique

triste

strict

heureux

joueur

fidèle

ennuyeux

étonné

rapide

sérieux

effronté

élégant

sournois

cruel

curieux

- C.** Pupils should then sort out the adjectives by attributing them to one (ore more) of the characters from the film, in the table below (remembering to apply the adjective agreement rule).

Pascal	Le Ballon Rouge	La bande garçons	La fille	Le principal de l'école

Activity 8: **Une ballade dans Paris (French)**

A. Discussion with pupils: What did they think Paris looked like in the film? Is that the image they had of the French capital city prior to watching the film? What do they know about Paris?

B. Look at the pictures of the places in town which you saw in the film, and write each French word beside their equivalent in English:

Look at the pictures of the places in town which you saw in the film, and write each French word beside their equivalent in English:

a) the boulevard = _____ **j)** the restaurant = _____

b) the alley/lane = _____ **k)** the café = _____

c) the street = _____ **l)** the bar = _____

d) the river = _____ **m)** the bakery = _____

e) the stairs = _____ **n)** the sweet shop = _____

f) the flat = _____ **o)** the butcher's = _____

g) the vacant lot = _____ **p)** the chemist = _____

h) the school = _____ **q)** the greengrocer's = _____

i) the church = _____

C. Draw your own Parisian street and label each place/shop in French.

See picture in **Appendix 2**

Activity 9: **Les pâtisseries (French)**

A. In the film you see Pascal looking through the window of his local bakery.

What do you know about French bakeries, bread and cakes?

B. Do a research about French pâtisseries and find out at least 10 different variety of French pastries, choose one in particular and present it to the class (name, ingredients and one interesting fact about it).

You could also show this video to the class: https://www.youtube.com/shorts/_XklSn7yEQg

(and for more bakery vocab: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2cfJZTaRxg>)

C. Watch this transactional video set in a French bakery:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvqKs6r-954>

(you might need to change the language back to French as it is sometimes auto-dubbed, click on settings-bottom right of video- then audio track and select French (FR) original)

In pairs, pupils then recreate the dialogue in a role play, one being Pascal going into the bakery, the other one being the waiter (below is the transcript for help, but they should feel free to adapt the order, price,...):

- *Bonjour, Monsieur !*
- *Bonjour !*
- *Que désirez-vous ?*
- *Une baguette et un pain au chocolat, s'il vous plaît !*
- *Et avec ceci ?*
- *Je vais prendre deux croissants au beurre.*
- *D'accord. Voilà, Monsieur, c'est tout ?*
- *C'est tout, je vous dois combien ?*
- *Au total, ça fait six euros. Carte ou espèces ?*
- *Carte.*
- *Votre code, s'il vous plaît !*
- *Oui.*
- *Merci et bonne journée !*
- *À vous aussi ! Au revoir !*

See picture in **Appendix 3**

A horizontal row of 30 small orange dots.



Appendix 2: Activity 8



1. Le magasin de bonbons



2. Le restaurant



3. La pharmacie



4. Le bar



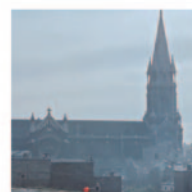
5. Le café



6. La boulangerie



7. La boucherie



8. L'église



9. Le primeur (marchand de fruits et légumes)



10. L'appartement



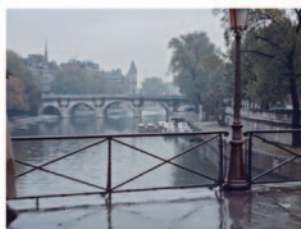
11. Le boulevard



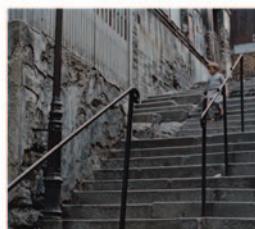
12. La rue



13. L'école



15. La rivière



16. Les escaliers



17. Le terrain vague



14. La ruelle

Appendix 3: Activity 9





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 olivia.knight@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 olivia.knight@dca.org.uk