

MVFF EDUCATION



CURRICULUM GUIDE
GRADES: 4-6

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Dear Educators,

Thank you for attending the 48th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's screening of the Family Feature *Hola Frida*. We are excited to return in our 2025 fall season with a combination of both in-person screenings for local schools and online screenings for those of you joining us from afar.

As media educators, we support film as the literature of the twenty-first century. This powerful medium sits in a critical part of human culture, at the intersection of art, industry, technology, and politics. It is a universal language that lets us tell stories about our collective hopes and fears and gives us the opportunity to make sense of the world around us and the people in it. This year, our film selections for school screenings continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe this film will be a powerful and engaging text to use in your classroom. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with the film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text both orally and in writing.

The discussion prompts have been crafted to offer students the opportunity to grapple with questions of ethics and social justice through representations of culture on film. They offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue by addressing the film industry in general and this film in particular. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece, or consider the film review format as an alternative. Additionally, student handouts for a variety of thinking routines are provided for before, during, and after viewing the film with a particular emphasis on social-emotional learning. Extension activities offer further creative opportunities for students to consider the cultural impact of the film as both an art form and a political platform. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your screening experience.

Thank you so much for your tireless work! Enjoy the film!

Sincerely,
The CAFILM Education Team

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Movie Moments that Moved Me

- What was your favorite moment in the movie, and why did it stand out to you?
- How did the moment make you feel? Happy, sad, surprised, excited, scared, confused, inspired?
- Which characters were you thinking about during that moment?
- Did anything in that moment remind you of your own life?
- If you could change what happened in that scene, what would you do differently?

Coming of Age & Growing Up

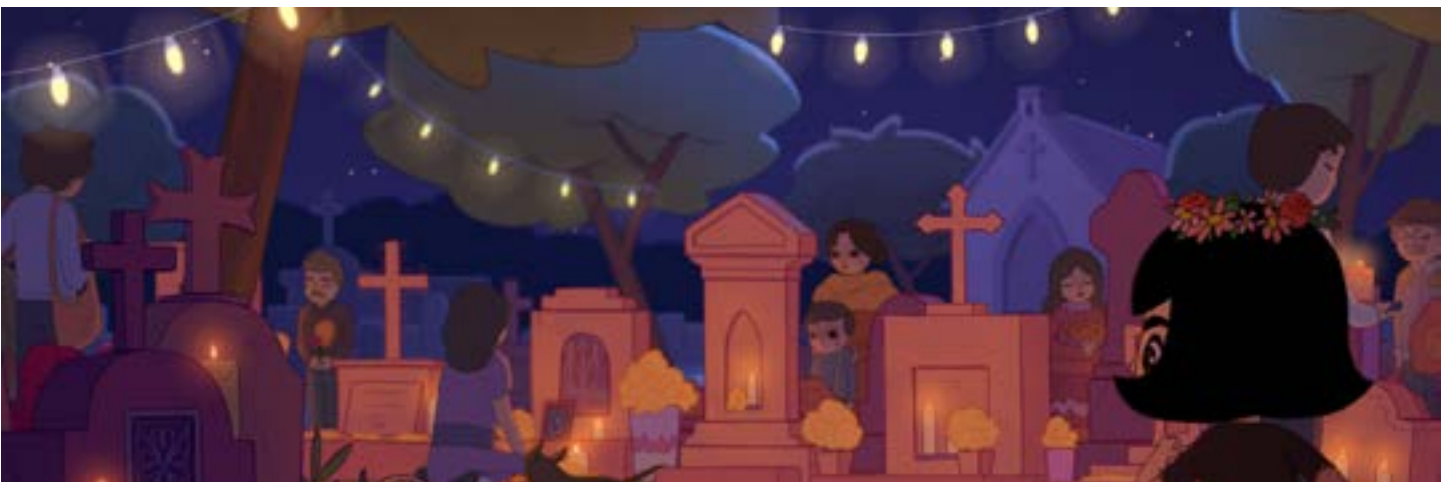
- What challenges does Frida face that help her grow up and what does she learn about herself through these challenges?
- What choices does Frida make that show she is ready to take the next steps in her life?
- If you were giving advice to Frida as she takes on new roles and responsibilities, what would you tell her?

Culture & Identity

- Frida learns about where she comes from and who she is. How does knowing her culture help her feel more confident about herself?
- How can our differences actually be strengths to share?
- Which cultural tradition in the movie stood out to you the most and what lesson do you think it teaches about family or community?

Dreams vs. Destiny: What We Want vs. What We're Meant to Do

- How does Frida's journey show that sometimes our true path is different from what we imagine?
- Have you ever discovered that something you thought you didn't want turned out to be meaningful or important to you?
- What do you think the story is saying about the difference between following your own dreams and listening to what your community, family, or heart is telling you to do?



DISCUSSION NOTECATCHER

Directions:

Use this notecatcher to record what you take away from discussing the questions above.

IDEAS I HEARD DURING DISCUSSION

MIND-POP IDEAS

Ideas that came to my mind during discussion.

ONE IMPORTANT THING I LEARNED DURING DISCUSSION

INTERPRETIVE ESSAY PROMPTS

Directions: Select one discussion question from the list of topics we talked about from the film.

- Coming of Age & Growing Up
- Culture & Identity
- Dreams vs. Destiny

Write a paragraph to answer it.

In your paragraph:

- Say what you think the film is teaching or showing about that topic.
- Use one part of the film - a scene or something a character did - as an example.
- Tell why you think this idea is important

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Cartoon Brew | Hola Frida Introduces a New Generation to an Iconic Mexican Artist

<https://www.cartoonbrew.com/feature-film/hola-frida-introduces-a-new-generation-to-an-iconic-mexican-artist-246249.html>

Hola Frida | Impact Campaign

<https://www.holafrida-film.com/en/>

Google Arts & Culture | Faces of Frida

<https://artsandculture.google.com/project/frida-kahlo>

Kiddle | Frida Kahlo Facts for Kids

https://kids.kiddle.co/Frida_Kahlo

National Geographic Kids | Mexico

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/mexico>

Kiddle | Culture of Mexico

https://kids.kiddle.co/Culture_of_Mexico

Day of the Dead | Dia De Los Muertos

<https://dayofthedead.holiday/>

ABOUT CAFILM

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CAFILM Education programs.

Follow the California Film Institute on social media



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STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards ELA-Literacy

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.9

Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.7

Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.4

Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.



ABOUT THE FILM

Frida is a free-spirited girl whose exuberant presence makes the sun shine a bit brighter wherever she goes in her native Coyoacán, Mexico—from the market stalls to the classroom to the streets where she cavorts with her canine companion, a goofy and good-natured street pup named Chiquita. Frida dreams of becoming a doctor. But when a polio diagnosis forces her out of school, she faces a long, lonely recovery at home. With loving guidance from her mother and unconditional support from her father, Frida finds solace in her imagination. Creativity flows from her fingers onto everything she touches. Surrounding herself with fabrics, flowers, and paints, she emerges from illness into her new life as an artist. Produced under the auspices of the Frida Kahlo Museum, this beautifully animated portrait of the artist in her youth is a testament to the powers of imagination and resilience.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Andre Kadi is a filmmaker and founder of a branch of the studio Bordeaux, he opened a 2D animation studio there in 2012 and directed the series MaXi (2017) and L'Agent Jean! (2018) before co-founding Du Coup Animation in 2018 and Du Coup Production. Karine Vezina is a film director, animator, and visual effects artist who has directed several TV series such as Dex and Humanimals (2021-present), Dounia (2020), and MeatCanyon (2020-2021)

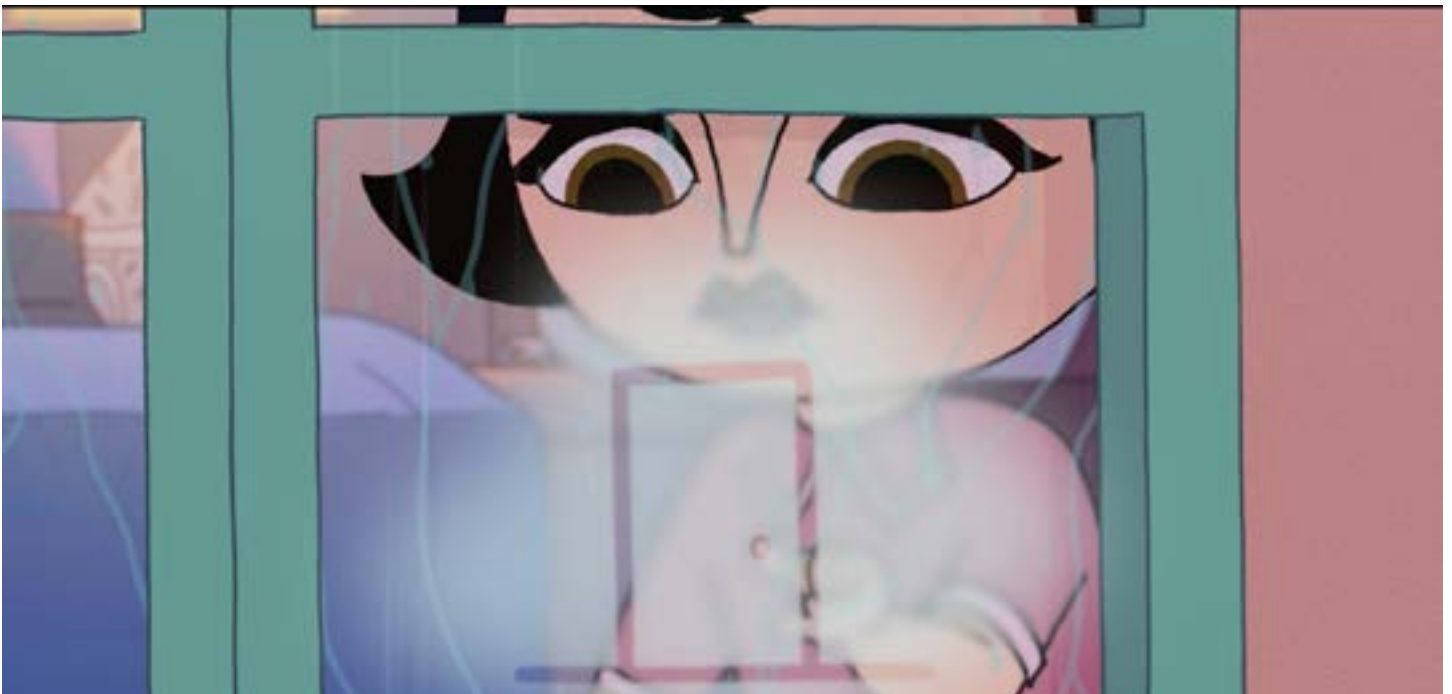
Like the lovingly illustrated book it's based on, Karine Vezina and Andre Kadi's charming Friday Kahlo biopic HOLA FRIDA brings the artist's childhood to life in a colorful, creative, accessible way. It's simple enough for children to understand, yet it has enough layers that it will be appreciated by those who know the story of Kahlo's path to becoming an icon of both feminism and international art.

THE GENESIS OF THE STORY

We have long 'dated', admired and deeply respected the artist Frida Kahlo. While she has become an icon and even a brand image over the years, the fact that she is a woman artist, a feminist, a pioneer and an extraordinary role model is of the utmost interest to us.

The idea of making an animated film freely inspired by her life, and more specifically from the angle of her youth, by adapting the book Frida, c'est moi by Sophie Faucher (text) and Cara Carmina (illustrations), seemed to us an exceptional opportunity to tackle the themes of difference and resilience.

The film highlights the saving power of imagination, creation and art. Art that heals, art that liberates, art that uplifts. 'I never painted dreams', said Frida. 'What I represented was my reality.' Frida Kahlo has left her mark across generations and still has much to pass on today.



ECHOES OF AN EPIGRAPH

"That's the beauty of stories. You can change them to whatever you want them to."

FIRST ECHO | BEFORE VIEWING

- Read or listen to a line from the movie.
- What do you think it means?
- What pictures pop into your mind?

SECOND ECHO | DURING VIEWING

- Keep your ears open for when this line shows up.
- Who says it?
- What is happening when it's said?

THIRD ECHO | AFTER VIEWING

- Think back to the line.
- Does it mean something new now?
- Why is it important to the story?

RIPPLES | STRETCH THE IDEA

- Let the line ripple out into your world.
- How does this line connect to you, your life, or other stories?

BEFORE VIEWING

SEE | THINK | WONDER

Introduction:

This film celebrates the magic of imagination and admiration for the wild world humans and animals inhabit alongside each other. With the playful antics of talking animals, the viewer is invited into a world that at first seems familiar, yet upon closer inspection reveals a parallel universe where many animals live hidden very close to us.

How to use this Thinking Routine:

Before watching this family feature film, take a look at some images from the film. Make some observations and thoughtful interpretations about what you see, what you think, and what you are wondering about before viewing.



SEE	THINK	WONDER
What observations can you make about friendship by looking at these images?	When you look at these images, what do you think are the most important qualities in a friend?	What are you curious about? What new friendships might be explored, challenged, or celebrated in this film?

BEFORE VIEWING

PERSONAL CONNECTION | IMAGINARY FRIEND

Introduction:

The act of writing helps us think about a topic. The film you are about to watch tells the story of a young girl who recalls living intensely with the imaginary friendship of another girl about the same age as her.

How to use this Thinking Routine:

Respond to the prompt using a journal entry style of writing. Feel free to add doodle notes or images to support your words.

- Have you ever made up a character or creature only you could see or talk to? If you have ever had an imaginary friend, describe them. Do they have a name and a special power? Why might someone imagine a friend?

Journal Entry

Doodle Notes

BEFORE VIEWING | CHECK IN

BULLYING AWARENESS

Introduction:

Before watching the movie, it's helpful to warm up our thinking. There is a short list of statements about an important issue in the movie. For each one, you'll decide if you agree or disagree. There are no right or wrong answers - it's about noticing what you think right now. After the movie, we'll look back and see if your thinking has changed.

How to use this Thinking Routine:

Read each statement. Show your thinking by checking the box with a thumbs up (agree), thumbs down (disagree), or sideways (not sure). Be ready to explain why you chose that answer if you want to share.

Statement			
1. Bullying only happens at school.			
2. It's okay to laugh along when someone is being teased if you don't want to be the next target.			
3. Standing up to a bully can be hard, but it can make a difference.			
4. Kids can make a difference in helping the planet.			
5. Friends should stand up for each other if one of them is being picked on.			

Debrief

Look at the choices you made - thumbs up, down, or sideways. Why do you think people might answer differently? What did this activity help you consider about bullying before we watch the movie?

DURING VIEWING

STORY MAP

Introduction:

When watching a film, the purpose of a story map is to provide a visual framework for understanding, analyzing, and remembering the key narrative elements. Rather than just passively watching, using a story map encourages critical thinking and will help you dig a little deeper to analyze how the plot, characters, conflicts, and themes connect to bigger picture ideas.

How to use this Thinking Routine:

Use the story map to identify the elements of narrative film. Identify the film's characters, plot, setting, problem, and solution as well as important symbols and themes.

PROBLEM

What is the main conflict of the film?

OUTCOME

How is the conflict resolved in the film?

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters in the film and what is their relationship to each other?

ACTION

What actions do the characters take during the film?
How do these actions develop the story?

SETTING

What is the significance of where the story takes place?

SYMBOLS

Are there any important symbolic props used in the film? If so, what are they and how are they significant to the story?

SETTING

What are the main themes of the film? These are broader points about society at large.

DURING VIEWING

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK

Introduction:

An artist's notebook is a place to capture your thoughts, questions, sketches, and inspirations as you experience a film. Just like filmmakers use storyboards, notes, and journals to shape their ideas, your notebook will help you notice details, reflect on choices, and connect what you see on screen to your own personal and creative response. Think of it as both a record of what you notice and a place to express new ideas.

How to use this Thinking Routine:

As you watch, use this thinking routine to guide your notes and responses. This routine is designed to slow down your viewing, help you notice more than just the story, and connect what you see to big picture ideas about art, storytelling, and meaning. Don't worry about making your notebook perfect. The purpose is to capture your thinking in whatever form works best for you: words, doodles, quick sketches, or reflections.

MY ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK

WARM-UP

Drawing Memory

Think of a time in your own life when drawing helped express something words couldn't.

Drawing as Power

What does drawing have the power to do?

What's the Point

Do you think drawing is more about showing reality or imagining new worlds? Why?

DURING VIEWING CONT.

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK

NOTEBOOK PROMPTS

Notice & Sketch

The first powerful moment of drawing in the film.

Drawing as Window

When a character draws, what do they see or reveal that others don't? Sketch or describe that hidden view.

How does drawing vvvchange their understanding of the world?

Drawing as Mirror

How does drawing reflect something inside the character (a feeling, memory, dream, or fear)?

If you were that character, what would your drawing reveal?

Drawing as Bridge

When does drawing connect people, or bridge two worlds (past/present, real/imagined, human/nonhuman)

How does the act of drawing transform relationships or possibilities?

WRAP-UP

Your Turn

If you stepped inside this story, what would you draw to change the situation?

What would be your imaginative intervention?

AFTER VIEWING

BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS

1. What part of the film did you like the most and why?

2. Which character did you care most about? What made you feel that way?

3. What lesson or idea do you think the film wanted to teach?

4. Did the film remind you of something in your own life or another story? How?

5. If you told a friend about this film, what would you say in two or three sentences?

AFTER VIEWING

EXIT TICKET | DRAWING AND THE IMAGINATION

Instructions:

As a check for understanding and feedback on the film, respond to the following question and write your response (2-3 sentences) in the space provided.

- What did this film teach you about the power of drawing as self-expression and cultural identity?

ADMIT ONE

ADMIT ONE



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

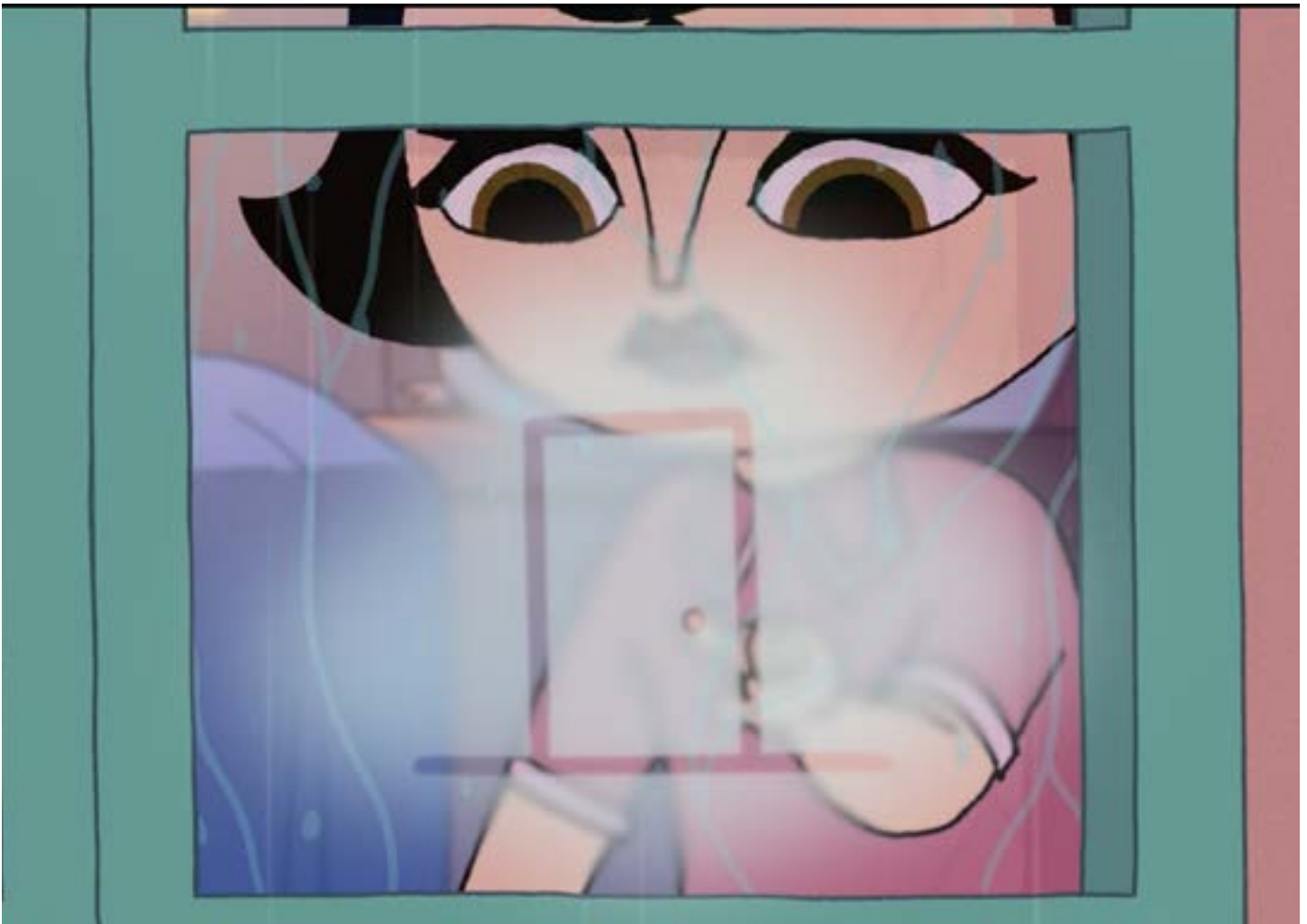
A DAY OF THE DEAD | SELF BURIAL

Instructions:

Frida grew up learning about *El Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), a holiday in Mexico that celebrates and remembers loved ones who have passed away. It's not scary - it's about memory, love, and honoring change. You can use this idea in a symbolic way. Just like Frida grows and changes, you will too. Sometimes we need to say goodbye to our old self so our new self can grow.

Directions:

1. Reflect on one thing about yourself you are ready to "let go of" (for example: being shy in class, afraid to try new things, not sharing ideas).
2. On a slip of paper, write or draw that "old self" habit.
3. Decorate small paper marigolds, butterflies, or skulls (symbols of Day of the Dead).
4. As a class, create a mini "ritual." Students place their slips into a decorated "memory box" or paper coffin. They can say "goodbye" silently or aloud. Then they place their decorated marigolds and butterflies around the box as a symbol of transformation.
5. The box is "buried" (or set aside) and the marigolds and butterflies stay visible on a classroom "altar of growth," celebrating their new selves.



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

FILM REVIEW

Instructions: Arc A film review is a report that provides information about a film, expresses an opinion, and summarizes the main parts of the story.

Directions: Use the template below to review, rate, and recommend the film.

Title:	Director:
Main Characters:	
Setting:	
Summary of the Story:	
Central Theme or Lesson Learned:	
What I liked:	
What I disliked:	
My Favorite Part:	
Movie Rating: Color in the Appropriate Number of Stars 	
Who would you recommend this movie to and why?	

ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films.. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway (www.filmfreeway.com) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.