

Bouts en Train Lesson Ideas

Questions

- Where is the train travelling from and to?
- What does 'Bouts en train' mean?
- What is the response of the controller when he is asked what is happening?
- Why did the young girl call herself stupid (Je suis bête)?
- Why do the people in the compartment go into frenzy when someone mentions the word grève?
- How many rhymes can you identify in the song, e.g. c'est occupé and papier?

Activities

Please note: these activities are intended as suggestions for the type of activities that might be used with this film for a variety of different age groups; the activities can of course be adapted by the teacher to the age and experience of their specific class.

It is suggested that this film is suitable for students of all ages, though teachers should always view films in advance to ensure that they think that they are suitable for their class.

Pre-Watching Activities

- Working in groups, research the SNCF and the public transport system in France. Prepare a presentation or write an article on the system.
- Working in groups or individually, plan a train journey from London to a dream destination in France. Use maps, research train times, then write out an itinerary of the journey and use as many words or phrases in French that the students can.
- Look at acronyms in English and French.
- As a class prepare a vocabulary relating to train travel that you think may prove useful when watching the film. What would you expect to hear at a station and just before the train starts the journey? List any French words or phrases students are already familiar with or can work out from words with a French or Latin derivation commonly used in English, e.g. arrive, embark and disembark.
- Ask the class what they think the title means. Ask what they think will happen.
- Tell them it is an animation and ask again. Does this change their perception of the content and style?

Watching and Listening

- After watching the film several times, identify any sounds other than the singing.
- There are many words and phrases related to train travel. Listen several times to the soundtrack and identify from a list of vocabulary. Listen several more times to increase the number of words identified. How many words were specific to travelling by rail? Make a list of these and practice using them in a short sketch of a train journey. Later, use these in a follow-up activity related to planning a journey and buying tickets in French. Take it in turns to buy and to sell tickets and ask for information about times, dates etc.
- Watch the film until the solar system dance. Stop the film and ask what they predict will happen next.
- Depending on the level of experience, you may also want to consider watching the whole film with subtitles.

Analysing

- Working as a class carry out a full grid analysis on the film (Similarities, Surprises, Patterns and Puzzles to try and determine the different themes and meanings of the film.
- Discuss how successful the animator was in portraying a train. How might it have been improved?
- Can you work out which words rhyme e.g. c'est occupé and papier.
- List the various characters that you see in the film and discuss their characterisation and the 'types' and classes that they represent. Would these be the same on a Scottish train?
- Write a synopsis of the film or prose story based on the events depicted.
- Write a character outline for one of the characters outlining their backstory and reason for their journey. Alternatively, ask them to explain the trip from one of the character's perspectives to the friends or family who greet them when they arrive.
- Choose one of the characters and create a back story or follow-up story for them.
- Look at words and phrases which can be made into sentences to describe the atmosphere and setting.
- Discuss how successful the animators were in portraying a train and the excitement and anxiety of travel. How might it have been improved?

Follow-up and cross-curricular activities

- Use your vocabulary lists in an exercise of planning a journey and buying tickets in French. Take it in turns to buy and to sell tickets and ask for information about times, dates etc.
- Discuss unions and the right to withdraw labour. Compare government legislation between UK and France in relation to the right to strike. Look at the

European Union and any reference to working conditions and safeguards. Discuss whether it is fair for transport unions to hold travellers hostage in the pursuit of higher wages and better working conditions.

- Music: The film suddenly turns into a musical – research the advent and development of musical films and musicals in theatres. What is the difference between musicals and operas? Discuss how much a music video is a small version of a musical? Make a short music video in French and edit it in conjunction with ICT lessons.
- Working in groups plan a class trip to France. The class has to decide how to organise themselves and delegate tasks. If this is not appropriate, then the teacher will organise this. Alternatively, each group has a different tour group or destination to cater for. They should be given a budget to work with and deadline to finish by. The aim will be to produce an itinerary with all the information on and will be a finished product in the form of a pdf brochure. Each group will be encouraged to use as much French as possible during the project and as part of the presentation. The whole group will then vote on various categories which they have chosen, for example:
 - The closest to budget
 - Clear and precise itinerary
 - Use of vocabulary specific to travel
 - Any historical references
 - The 'greenest'
- Finish the project with a presentation to the school and invite a Travel Agent/Education Director in to cast an overall vote of excellence.