

HELPFUL HINTS: FRENCH

French films for use in the classroom: Janis Hennessey

Films: What are some good French films and how do teachers use them in teaching French?

Marcel Pagnol's novels made into films:

La gloire de mon père - 110 minutes Autobiography based on novel by Marcel Pagnol. The story takes place near Marseille in 1900. It follows Marcel and his family from birth to about age 12.

Le château de ma mère - 98 minutes This is the second part of Pagnol's autobiography. It focuses on Marcel coming of age with his first love and getting to know his father as a real person. It ends when Marcel is a man and tells what happens to the other characters.

Jean de Florette - 122 minutes Story based on two novels by Marcel Pagnol. Jean, who does everything through books, inherits his uncle's farm. His neighbor also wants the farm because of its source of water and using various schemes to ruin Jean. Jean dies and his wife sells the farm, but keeps the house. She and her daughter leave.

Manon des Sources – 113 minutes Jean de Florette's daughter returns to live in the house. She keeps to herself. Ugolin, the neighbor who helped ruin her father, becomes obsessed with her. Manon seeks revenge against the entire town because no one helped her father. In the end she marries the young teacher, Ugolin kills himself, and Uncle Papet dies but leaves everything to Manon and tells her that he is her grandfather.

Teaching the films: All 4 Pagnol films are excellent studies of family life. Level 1 & 2 students can even understand some of the French. They can use their new family vocab to talk or write about the family and what happens to them. This is a good film for –er verbs – le present et le passé composé. Each story will engage the students.

Le ballon rouge - film classic– **34 minutes**- The award-winning film tells the simple story of a lonely French boy and the amazingly loyal balloon that follows him everywhere. Filmed without dialogue, the fantasy captivates even the youngest viewers with gorgeous color photography and music. This stunning masterpiece celebrates the magic powers of friendship as no other film has.

Teaching the film: Good to use for adjectives. Level 1 students can write simple sentences about the boy and the balloon. Level 2 students can write about role of friendship. Level 3-4 students can compare this story to “Le Petit Prince” and the chapter with the Fox telling the Prince how friendship is developed.

Le retour de Martin Guerre- 123 min.- Tells us the suspenseful *true story* of a 16th century peasant who disappears shortly after his marriage. When he returns from the war nine years later a much changed man, his identity is questioned by everyone- including his own wife. It is only at the end of an intense trial that the truth becomes established.

Teaching the film: This is an excellent story for levels 3, 4 or 5. It leads to discussion about the importance of marriage in the past, the rolls of men and women compared to today and various activities, clothing and music or general life in 16th century France. It has many twists and turns that will keep the interest of every student.