

# Scene Smoking

CIGARETTES, CINEMA & THE MYTH OF COOL

a documentary film by Terry Moloney

## Smoking in Film and Television

Hollywood Insiders Speak Out About Artists' Rights, Social Responsibility, and the First Amendment



TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL

# Scene Smoking

From fashion styles to music trends, young people often emulate celebrity images that they see on-screen ... including the use of tobacco. In ***Scene Smoking***, a one-hour documentary, professionals from the entertainment and health fields discuss real-life choices they've made and what they think about the depiction of tobacco on-screen. This film brings together some of Hollywood's most powerful voices in a frank discussion of artists' rights, social responsibility, and the First Amendment.

This guide is designed to provide high school teachers with ideas for how to use the film. It includes instructional objectives; education standards; background information about teens, tobacco use, and the media; terminology; pre-viewing, post-viewing, and follow-up activities; and references. The video and accompanying activities can be used in a civics, government, debate, ethics, theater arts, drama, media production, language arts, or health class. They can also be used in an alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use prevention program.

## Fast Facts for Teachers

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, accounting for more than 440,000 deaths each year. Although major strides have been made in reducing tobacco use, rates of tobacco use among teens remain high: in 2001, 28.5% of high school students used some form of tobacco.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco use and addiction usually begin in adolescence.<sup>1,2</sup> Among U.S. adults who ever smoked daily, 82% tried their first cigarette and 53% became daily smokers before 18 years of age.<sup>2,3</sup> The costs associated with tobacco use total more than \$150 billion a year—\$75.5 billion per year in medical expenses and \$81.9 billion in lost productivity.<sup>4</sup>

Although the behaviors and attitudes of family and friends are the main influences on adolescent decisions to use tobacco, the media—films, television, and the Internet—also influence these decisions.<sup>5-8</sup> According to recent studies,

- Current movie heroes are three to four times more likely to smoke than are people in real life.<sup>5,6,9</sup>
- Young people in the United States watch an average of three movies a week, which contain an average of five smoking episodes each, adding up to about 15 exposures to smoking a week. Young people may be exposed to more smoking in movies than in real life.<sup>6</sup>
- A teen whose favorite star smokes is significantly more likely to be a smoker.<sup>8</sup>

- Approximately two-thirds of films seen today show tobacco use, including films that are rated PG or PG-13 and intended for young audiences.<sup>10</sup>
- Films depicting tobacco use are increasing and are reinforcing misleading perceptions that smoking is a widespread, socially desirable, and normal behavior, and they fail to convey the long-term consequences of tobacco use.<sup>7</sup>

*Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down!*, a project of the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails in which teens reviewed the 500 top domestic box office movies between 1991 and 2001, reported the following findings in *Tobacco Use in the Movies, Annual Report Card 2001*:

- Tobacco use was noted in 75% of all movies reviewed. Most tobacco use took place in enclosed areas, usually around nonsmokers.
- 43% of the movies showed scenes in which tobacco use could be interpreted as attractive, with qualities described by teens as sexy, exciting, powerful, cool, sophisticated, rebellious, and celebratory, whereas 27% of the movies included some type of anti-tobacco statement.
- Top-billed actors, as defined by the Internet Movie Database, lit up in 59% of all movies reviewed.

For more information on this study, visit the following Web site: <http://www.saclung.org>.

# Notes for Teachers

## Viewing Objectives

- Identify the rights and freedoms defined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and their influence on the production of film.
- Define terms, including censorship, social responsibility, artistic freedom, media literacy, normalization, glamorization, and product placement.
- Describe different ways that tobacco use is depicted in film.
- Describe how social responsibility relates to the use of tobacco, the media, and artistic freedom.
- Identify alternatives to tobacco use in film.

## Lesson Plan Formats

- *Lesson Plan A* (For classes of 2 hours or more)  
Use the film in one class session with pre-viewing and post-viewing activities.
- *Lesson Plan B* (For shorter classes)  
Session 1: Discuss questions in pre-viewing activities and show the film up to **29:43** minutes. Stop it after Rob Reiner says, “As far as I know ... saying bad words doesn’t kill you.”  
Session 2: Show the rest of the film and have students complete the post-viewing activities.

## Education Standards Addressed by the Video and Suggested Activities<sup>11</sup>

- *Civics and Government*—Understand the foundations of the American political system.
- *Writing*—Use general writing skills and strategies, stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing, grammatical and mechanical conventions, and information for research purposes.
- *Listening and Speaking*—Use listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.
- *Viewing*—Use viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.
- *Media*—Understand characteristics and components of the media.
- *Media Literacy*—Demonstrate understanding of the complex relationships among audiences and media content, the social and cultural contexts within which media are produced, and the commercial nature of the media.

- *Theater Arts*—Demonstrate competence in writing scripts; use acting skills; understand how theater, film, television, and electronic media productions create and communicate meaning.
- *Health Education*—Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention, and analyze the influence of culture, the media, technology, and other factors on health.
- *Social Science/Behavioral Studies*—Understand that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior and to conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- *Technology Communications Tools*—Use a variety of media and formats to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences.

## Terminology

- **Artistic Freedom:** Artistic expression that is protected by the First Amendment.
- **Censorship:** The removal or suppression by a government or other ruling body of what is considered objectionable in books, films, or other material.
- **First Amendment:** Prohibits the government from passing laws that restrict the freedom of speech, and protects the public’s right to receive a variety of information free from government censorship.
- **Glamorization:** Presentation of tobacco use as glamorous and conveying desirable qualities, such as popularity, success, and attractiveness.
- **Media Literacy:** The ability to use critical thinking skills in accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating media.
- **Normalization:** Presenting tobacco use as a routine, natural, and acceptable part of everyday activities.
- **Product Placement:** An arrangement between tobacco and film-production companies to have a specific brand of tobacco used in a film or by an actor. Tobacco product placement is prohibited by the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between the tobacco industry and 46 states.
- **Social Responsibility:** Going beyond one’s obligations to obey the law; having a desire to do the right thing, and being prepared to give good reasons to justify one’s actions.

# References

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9. Meyer C. Rising up from the ashtrays: cigarettes return to films in a big way. *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 27, 2001.
10. STARS, American Lung Association. *A Dialogue on Artists' Rights, Social Responsibility, and Tobacco Depiction in Movies and TV: Tobacco, a Prop Young People Can Live Without*. Los Angeles: American Lung Association.
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# Pre-Viewing Activities

Explain to students that they are going to watch an uncensored film about how smoking is depicted in films and on television. They will see actors, directors, writers, and producers speak out honestly about tobacco use depiction, artists' rights, social responsibility, and the First Amendment. This is a documentary, so they will hear comments from both sides of the issues.

## Questions to discuss before watching the video

(Italicized words are defined in Terminology on page 3.)

1. Do you think that stars who smoke on-screen influence young people to smoke?
2. Do you think more stars are smoking in film today? Are more teens smoking today than several years ago?
3. Do you think tobacco companies have used films to market their products?
4. Do you think tobacco use in film **normalizes** or **glamorizes** smoking?
5. What is the **First Amendment**? Do you think it protects artists' rights to depict anything they choose?
6. What is **social responsibility**? What role does social responsibility play in depicting tobacco use in films?
7. Would tobacco use on a filming set create any health issues such as secondhand smoke?
8. If you removed smoking from a scene in a movie, would the scene be the same or different?
9. Should an actor be able to turn down a role because smoking is required?
10. What are some characteristics that smoking creates on-screen, and how might those characteristics be shown without smoking?
11. Should all tobacco use be banned from television and film? Why?
12. Does the film industry have a responsibility to depict smoking responsibly and accurately and to show the consequences of use? Why?
13. Does the entertainment industry have a responsibility to help parents monitor what their children see, including tobacco use, in films? Why?
14. What is **media literacy**?

## Answers to Crossword

# Follow-Up Activities

## All Classes

- In small groups, have students discuss questions from the **Pre-Viewing Activities** to determine whether their responses have changed as a result of watching the film.
- Have students work alone or in small groups to complete the **Scene Smoking—Your Opinions** exercise on page 6.
- Have students choose one of the **Scene Smoking—Your Opinions** questions and write an essay supporting their point of view.
- Ask the students to go to a movie or watch a single televised film and review the film for its depiction of tobacco use using the **Smoking Scan—Critique of Smoking on Film and Television** on page 7. During the following class session, have students share their critiques as well as how it changed their way of viewing a film or TV program.

## Civics/Government/Social Studies

- Write a letter to a state government official about the regulation of tobacco use in film and the media.
- Write a letter to the Motion Picture Association of America to learn more about the voluntary movie ratings system or to discuss the First Amendment and the constitutional rights of the actor, producer, director, and screenwriter regarding tobacco use in film.
- Write an essay on the First Amendment and the right to use tobacco in the media.

## Language Arts/Drama/Theater Arts

- Write an editorial or a letter to the local newspaper on social responsibility and artistic freedom as it relates to tobacco depiction in films and on television.
- Write a script that excludes tobacco use as a prop or depicts tobacco use in a socially responsible manner.
- Act a scene portraying qualities often associated with tobacco use (e.g., nervousness, anxiety, fear, glamour, sex appeal) without using tobacco.
- Direct a scene written with tobacco use and eliminate the tobacco use.

## Debate/Speech

- Debate the roles of censorship and social responsibility in depicting tobacco use in films and television.
- Write a speech for the president of a local service organization about tobacco use depiction in movies and television.

## Behavioral Studies/Health

- Research the relationship between behaviors depicted by role models and those adopted by young people.
- Write a courteous letter to a producer, director, writer, or actor of the film or TV program reviewed for the **Smoking Scan—Critique of Smoking on Film and Television** homework assignment. In the letter, express appreciation of their work, and describe the positive findings and needs for improvement (if necessary) from the critique.

Two of the people in this documentary should be especially noted for their contributions:

**DR. JEFFREY WIGAND** is the highest-ranking executive in the tobacco industry to come forward with important public health information that was withheld by the tobacco industry. His story is told in the movie *The Insider*. Find out more about him on <http://www.jeffreywigand.com>.

**JACK KLUGMAN**, an actor well known for his television roles as a medical examiner in the television drama *Quincy, M.E.* and as a slovenly sportswriter in the comedy series *The Odd Couple*, now has difficulty speaking. Part of his larynx has been removed because he has had throat cancer caused by years of smoking.

The video accompanying this curriculum was produced by the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails under a grant provided by the California Department of Health Services Tobacco Control Section. All rights to the video are wholly owned by the California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section.

**SUSAN GIARRATANO RUSSELL**, EdD, MSPH, CHES, is the major contributor to these guides.

# Scene Smoking Your Opinions

Directions: Circle the best answer and be prepared to defend your choice.

1. What is your perception of tobacco use in film?
  - A. The amount of smoking realistically reflects smoking in society.
  - B. Smoking is minimal in films and is only used for necessary dramatic effect.
  - C. Depiction of smoking in films happens more frequently than smoking use in the general public.
  - D. No opinion.
2. Product placement of cigarettes, which is the process of arranging for an actor to use a particular brand of cigarettes in a film, was banned in 1998. Since that time, do you think that smoking in films has
  - A. Increased.
  - B. Decreased.
  - C. Stayed the same.
3. The film industry's depiction of tobacco in the last decade has been
  - A. Responsible.
  - B. Irresponsible.
  - C. No opinion.
4. Do you believe that what people see in film affects their knowledge?
  - A. Yes.
  - B. No.
5. Do you believe that what people see in film affects their attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and values?
  - A. Yes.
  - B. No.
6. Do you believe that what people see in film affects their behavior?
  - A. Yes.
  - B. No.
7. Do actors who smoke in films influence young people's smoking behavior?
  - A. Yes.
  - B. No.
  - C. It depends on the situation.
8. When an actor smokes on-screen, it is most often because
  - A. The director thinks it's a good idea.
  - B. The writer put it in the script.
  - C. The actor thinks it fits the character and situation.
  - D. The actor smokes in real life.

# Smoking Scan\* Critique of Smoking on Film and Television

Directions: Fill in your answers to the following questions after viewing a film or television program.

1. Name of film or television program:

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2. Date, place (home or name of theater), time of viewing, and rating of film:

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3. Who is the producer? \_\_\_\_\_

Director? \_\_\_\_\_

Writer? \_\_\_\_\_

Lead actors/actresses? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Was tobacco use depicted in the film/program? YES NO

A. If yes, by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Lead actor or actress? Which one(s): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Supporting actors or other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

3. What were the approximate ages of the smokers? \_\_\_\_\_

B. What was the approximate number of times tobacco use was shown?

1-5 times          6-10          11-15          16-20          21 or more

C. Were the depictions of tobacco use accurate and responsible? YES NO

D. Was the tobacco use essential to the scenes? YES NO

E. Could another behavior or prop other than tobacco have been used by the actor to depict the same emotion? YES NO

If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Were other depictions of tobacco used in the film or program, such as:

A. Background advertising or signage? YES NO

B. Tobacco company logos on clothing (e.g., t-shirts, hats)? YES NO

C. Other? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your **overall** assessment of tobacco use depiction in the film or program?

*(Circle the letter of the one answer that best applies and then write your comments to support your answer.)*

A. The film/program depicted tobacco use in a socially responsible and accurate manner.

B. The film/program depicted tobacco use in an irresponsible and inaccurate manner.

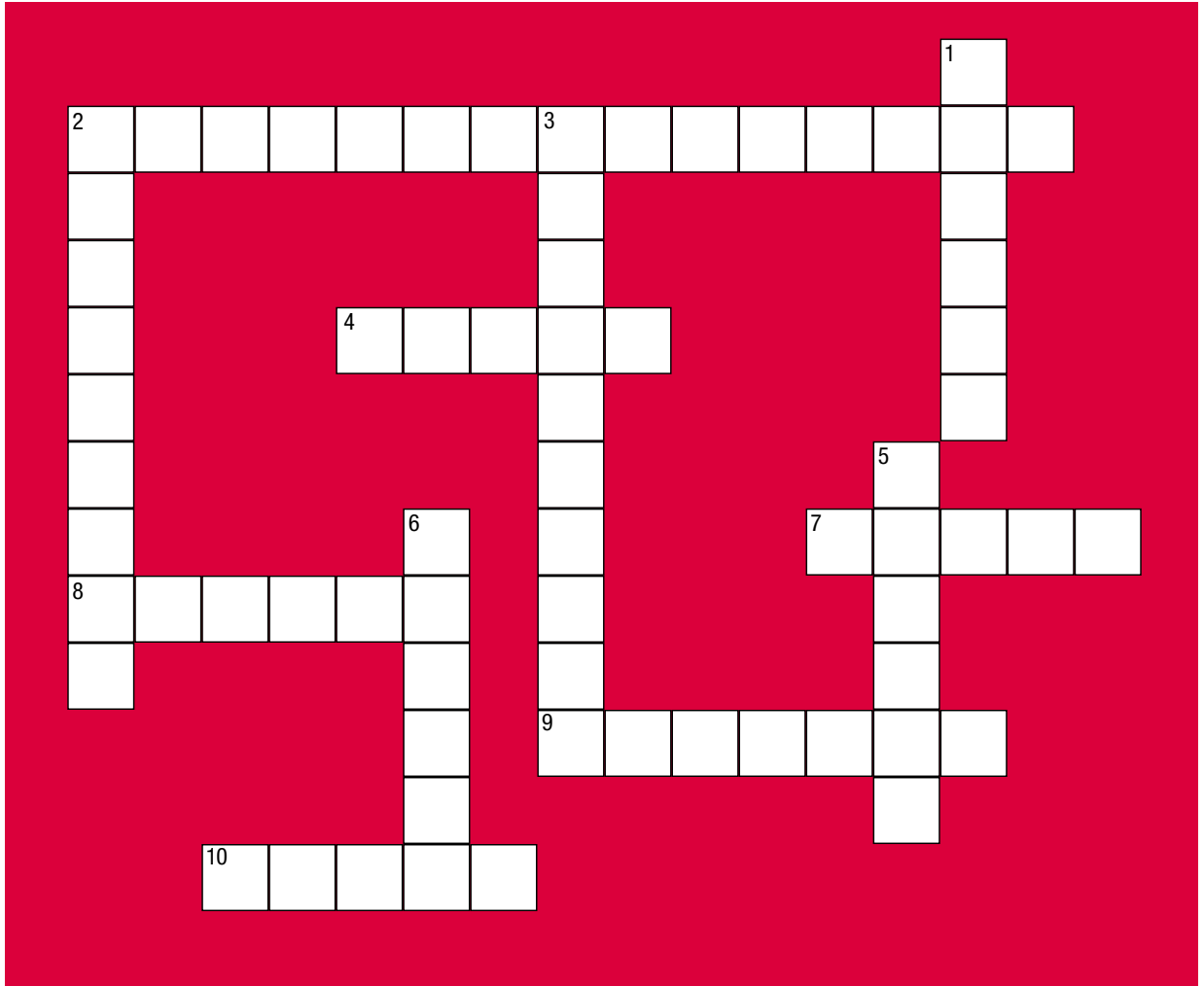
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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\* Only films rated G, PG, or PG-13 should be used for this assignment.

# Scene Smoking Crossword Puzzle

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Across

2. Expression that is protected by the First Amendment (2 words).
4. The right to freedom of religion, speech, and press is protected by the \_\_\_\_\_ Amendment.
7. The ability to use critical thinking skills in accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating it is called \_\_\_\_\_ literacy.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ization associates tobacco use as a routine, natural, and acceptable part of everyday activities.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ placement.
10. The series of rough sketches that show the plot, action, characters, and setting of a film, used before actual filming begins is a \_\_\_\_\_ board.

## Down

1. Going beyond one's obligation to obey the law and being inclined to do the right thing is called \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility.
2. A part of the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.
3. The act of examining books, films, or other material and removing or suppressing what is considered objectionable or the governmental action to prohibit or restrict a given freedom or right.
5. To show or represent in picture or word.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ization associates tobacco use with popularity, success, attractiveness, independence, maturity, romance, fun, celebration, and relaxation.