

Year 11 Film Learning Guide:



'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty'

Koronga Ako: I can use film techniques to engage with the director's purpose.

Timeline: 5-6 Lessons/2 Weeks.

Checkpoints: Checkpoint 1: Week 1 Sunday - Activity 1, 2 & 3 complete.
Final Hand in: Week 2 Friday

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Mokoroa Norm: I approach all experiences with an open mind. I continue to grow through observation and reflection.



Kea Norm: I am curious and seek to find answers using investigation and questioning.



This film stars Ben Stiller as Walter Mitty, a behind the scenes worker at Life Magazine who realises he needs to push beyond day dreams to reach for the globe-spanning experiences he has spent so long developing the photographs for. It contrasts humour and relatable situations against far-fetched fantasies, far-flung environments and the beauty of nature to create an engaging film.

Complete this learning guide to develop your understanding of the film, its background and the details contained within, and to prepare you for the completion of an assessment.

Activity 1: Pre-Viewing

A) Discussion Prompts

Discuss these with the class or your group, and record a few notes about what comes up.

Prompts:	Notes:
1) How important is it to love your job?	I think loving your job is important, you will be happier where you spend most of your time but I also think it's not more important than making enough money to live
2) Should we all strive to see as much of the world as possible? Why or why not?	Yes I think we should strive to see as much of the world as possible because it allows you to explore different areas of the world and see the differences/ similarities between places
3) What makes daydreaming good or bad?	What makes daydreaming bad is getting off focus when doing a serious or important task – what makes daydreaming good is imagination and creativity but it depends on the task, and context it can be both.
4) In what ways does interaction with other people benefit us?	Interactions with other people can be beneficial for getting another perspective and listening to other people's ideas. It can be beneficial to improve social skills and connections.
5) Does the natural world have inherent value? Why or why not?	I think nature has its independent values and is not only determined by what nature can provide for us.

B) Questions

Write answers to the following questions in full sentences.

Questions:	Answers:
1. What do you think the meaning or intention behind the title could be?	a) I think the meaning behind the title is based of the term 'Walter Mitty' which means someone who daydreams and fantasizes about a better, more exciting life than their own. Calling someone Walter Mitty means they are adventurous, creative, imaginative, and a dreamer. So I think the intention/ meaning behind the title could be about the secret, or hidden life of someone who is walter mitty.
2. What do you know Ben Stiller from? What sort of movies/contexts?	a) Movies I know this actor from is 'Meet the Fockers' (and the Squeal movies as well) It is a comedy/ family film about meeting the couple family, and the sort of context the movie has is
3. What have you heard	a) Life magazine was a popular American photography magazine famous for vivid

about 'Life Magazine?' If you know nothing, guess.	photojournalism.
4. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?	a) If I could go anywhere in the world I would want to go to NYC to explore and visit the city
5. What do you think the message of this film could be, based on what you know so far?	a) I think the message of this film is to dream big, try new things, and explore the world.

Activity 2: Post-Viewing Questions

Answer the following 10 questions about the plot, ideas and details of the 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty'.

- 1. Find and record the definition of 'quintessence'**
 - a. A perfect example of quality (full/ rich is how they described it in the movie)
- 2. Name 5 of the main characters from the film.**
 - a. Walter Mitty
 - b. Cherlyn Melhoff
 - c. Ted Henricks
 - d. Sean O'Connell
 - e. Todd from Eharmony
 - f. Odessa Mitty
- 3. Name at least 4 different locations that Walter Mitty visits in the film (be as specific as possible).**
 - a. 125 Street Train station
 - b. Life magazine office NYC
 - c. The streets of New York City
 - d. Greenland ~ on the Erkigsnek boat
 - e. Iceland ~ Eyjafjallajökull volcano
 - f. Iceland ~ Papa John's Pizza place
 - g. Himalayas mountains
- 4. Describe at least 3 of the daydreams that Walter Mitty has.**
 - a. The first one is him rescuing Cherlyn's dog from an explosive in the building while building the dog a prosthetic leg
 - b. The second one was him insulting his new boss's beard by comparing it to Dumbledore
 - c. The third daydream was him thinking he was a mountain climber in the snow to impress Cherlyn the girl he likes, with a poet flacon on his shoulder

5. What is Walter Mitty's specific job? Does he like it?

- a. He is a negative asset manager, yes I believe he enjoys his job if he went through all this trouble, jumping out of a helicopter, swimming with a shark, racing to the volcano, all to just get one picture for the magazine cover.

6. Walter Mitty can be viewed as going on a 'Hero's journey' in the film. What would you say is his 'call to action'?

- a. His call to action was his mission to find Sean O'Connell's missing photo which led him to an adventurous journey that allowed him to step out of his comfort zone, make new connections with people, and explore the world. His hero journey allowed him to truly express who he was, and who he wanted to become ~ his daydreams were the life he wanted, the life he had never lived, and as he started to be more adventurous and himself he had less and less daydreams.

7. Identify 2-3 symbols from the film. What do they represent?

- a. Stretch Armstrong - representing his childhood/ growing up
- b. Skateboard - his connection to his dad and taking risks in life
- c. Travel journal - showing at the start of the film he hasn't been anywhere
- d. Celentone cake -

8. What is the context of this quote and what do you think it means? "*Beautiful things don't ask for attention.*"

- a. In the context of the movie, Sean refers to the snow leopard as a ghost cat that never allows itself to be seen, and says "Beautiful things don't ask for attention" I think this quote means that beautiful things don't show off their beauty but rather they are humble and they draw others to them because they are being themselves and not trying to impress others.

9. What significant song is referenced throughout the film? How does it connect to the character of Walter Mitty?

- a. Space Oddity relates to the character of Walter Mitty because it's about whether you dare to leave the capsule, in this case, his boring life, and he finally did, he stepped out of his comfort zone, went on a real adventure and started becoming the person he always wanted to become.

10. When Walter arrives in Greenland and asks if there are any cars available, they tell him that they have "a blue one and a red one." Explain what this is alluding to, and what the significance of it is.

- a. He chose the red car. Red can be associated with feelings of adventure, danger, and power compared to blue, which is often associated with calm, safety, and relaxation. Walter Mitty wore the same outfit every day to work: a blue shirt and tie. I believe this suggests that he wanted a change in his life. By the character choosing the red car, I believe it indicates that he is trying to create a more adventurous life for himself.


Activity 3: Maladaptive Daydreaming Video







Watch [this video](#) before responding to the following prompts.




- 1. What is 'Maladaptive Daydreaming'? Write the definition in your own words.**
 - a. Maladaptive daydreaming is when a person has constant/ frequent powerful daydreams that may cause the person to disengage from what they are doing.
- 2. Record at least 3 things you learned from the video that you didn't know before. Be specific.**
 - a. It can be triggered by real-life events, music or conversations
 - b. A symptom of this can be acting out your daydreams as if it were really happening
 - c. Walter's mitty daydreamers get less and less throughout the film as he starts to express himself how he wished he could
- 3. What is your opinion on daydreaming? Do you think it is good or bad after watching the video? Write at least 2-3 sentences and relate your answer to specific evidence (a quote and/or film technique) from the film.**
 - a. I think it depends on the situation, it can be a bad thing if it distraction you from a important task. For example at the start of the movie, the secret life of Walter Mitty, the character starts daydreaming so intensely he loses focus and misses the train, this would be a navigate example of daydreaming. However, a situation where creativity and imagination could benefit ~ your daydreaming could be seen as a good thing.

Activity 4: Film Techniques & Evidence

Use [these clips](#) (or the film itself) to record examples of the following film techniques using the table provided. Refer to [WR Film Techniques Definition Sheet](#) or [Camera-AnglesShots.pptx](#) if you get stuck. If you have difficulty screenshotting, turn off graphics acceleration in chrome settings.

Film Technique	Screenshot	Intention and/or effect
Two Shot		To show the relationship between the two people in the frame

POV Shot	 A screenshot of a computer screen showing a profile for Cheryl Melhoff on the eHarmony website. The profile includes a photo of a woman with long brown hair, a smiley face icon, and the text 'send a wink'. The website interface includes navigation links like 'MATCHES', 'eHarmony', and 'Start a conversation with Cheryl'.	To show the audience what the character see's, showing their perspective
Close Up Shot	 A close-up shot of a person's finger pressing a small, round button on a white surface, likely a computer mouse or a remote control.	Emphasising on the small details The effect to the audience shows walter mitty trying to send a wink to cheryl focusing on the details
Establishing Shot	 A wide shot of a city skyline featuring several tall, modern skyscrapers under a clear blue sky. A person is visible walking on a bridge or walkway in the foreground.	Setting the scene of the movie In this photo it is showing us where he lives, and works
Tracking Shot	 A tracking shot of a person skateboarding down a paved road. The person is wearing a dark jacket and jeans, with their arms outstretched. The background shows a vast, open landscape with mountains in the distance under a cloudy sky.	The effect if the tracking shot makes it feel like the audience/ viewer is following along with the character
High Angle Shot	 A high-angle shot looking down at a person sitting at a desk. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and is using a laptop. The desk is cluttered with various items, including a coffee cup, papers, and a small plant.	To show different perspective, making something look smaller than it is, here we see what walter mitty sees as the helicopter flies away
Low Angle Shot	 A low-angle shot of a dark-colored car driving on a road. The car is viewed from the front, and the license plate reads 'B6G 4X5'. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky.	Changing perspective to make something look larger/ taller In this photo it makes the explosion in the background seem bigger than it is

Handheld Camera		The effect of this adds confusion or uncertainty to create a more realistic impression
Diegetic Sound		The effect of this allows the audience to hear and understand what's happening in the film, here the sound is about taking risks in life right before he jumps onto the helicopter
Non-Diegetic Sound		This is sound that only the audience can hear, this creates a more intense or dramatic lead up towards another scene.
Music		There are different kinds of music used in films that can connect the plot/ action, for example a very cheerful song indicates there is something happy or positive happening, in the photo the song is about leaving your capsule if you dare which relates to the film as he starts to take risks in life

Activity 5: Themes/Author Purpose Paragraph

Select one of the purposes, and then write a TEXAL paragraph linking two of your identified techniques to the fulfilment of this purpose.

<u>Purpose Options:</u>	<u>TEXAL:</u>
<u>Purpose 1:</u> The importance of living life to the fullest.	<u>T- Topic Sentence:</u> State your argument in a full sentence, referring to your purpose and techniques. <i>E.g. Taika Waititi uses an establishing shot and a non-diegetic sound to show the development of character relationships.</i>
<u>Purpose 2:</u> The value of human connection.	<u>E- Explain:</u> Explain your idea in a bit more depth and address where in the film your techniques take place.
<u>Purpose 3:</u> The beauty of the natural world.	<u>X- eXample:</u> Provide a piece of evidence - describe/quote your technique in detail.
<u>Purpose 4:</u> Experiencing fantasy versus reality.	<u>A - Analyse:</u> Analyse your evidence in relation to how it fulfils your purpose
	<u>L - Link:</u> Summarise your discussion with a clear, overarching

statement.

Paragraph:

Extra for Experts: Activity 6: Related Article/Resource Analysis

If you finish the learning guide early or want to extend your learning, read [this interview](#) with Ben Stiller and record the following things.

Skim read the article, and remember to use Ctrl+F to find specific words or parts quickly.

1. What is the title, focus and name of the interviewer of the article?
 - a.
2. Record three things that you find interesting from the article.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. What is the most unexpected thing you learnt about Ben Stiller?
 - a.
4. How did the article change how you view or understand the film?
 - a.
5. Record at least one quote that you could use within an essay to provide context to the film or the author's purpose behind.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.