



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2003 Volume I: Geography through Film and Literature

Geography through Film: The Scale of Things

Guide for Curriculum Unit 03.01.08
by Evelyn Lawhorn

You could take a picture, look at a painting, or read a book, but it still wouldn't capture what you will get out of film. Feature and non-feature films are awe-inspiring, especially with their geography. Geography through film is three-dimensional: scenes have length, width, and height, and you are taken there. Ah! the places and locations you can go are: distant lands, open seas, the top of the highest mountain, the coldest black depths of the oceans, the eye of a storm, beyond earthly boundaries, soaring skies, and plains of unimaginable realms. You can travel not interacting, but reacting. Geography through film stimulates your senses and keeps your attention. The color, animation, excitement, and dramatization can hold audiences captive. Visually geography plays a big part in film, from breathtaking, unparalleled, panoramic vantage points, to roaring, thunderous, deafening waterfalls, or tumultuous, sinister, overcast skies. Geography through film can show how enormous and boundless regions, locations or places are. Geography through film can also show human ideas, economy, social structures and environment. Through film and geography I plan to use scale as my underlying theme. Scale in geographical terms means the size of one thing compared to the actual area. Scale is different from map to map depending on the information. In films objects can be scaled down to seem smaller or scaled up to create something larger. Non-feature and feature films alike play with scale. Come with me on a journey taking your students from the universe to their backyard using scale.

(Recommended for Social Studies, grade 5.)

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