

Brief synopsis of the film

La classe (original French title “Entre les murs”) is a 2008 French drama film directed by Laurent Cantet. It is based on the novel **Entre les murs**, published in 2006 by François Bégaudeau. It relates the latter’s experiences as a French language and literature teacher in a middle school in the 20th arrondissement of Paris. François Bégaudeau himself plays the role of the teacher, Mr Marin in the film version.

The film covers an academic year in the middle school.

The film is set mostly in the classroom where François Marin teaches French to a mixed group of difficult 14-year-olds and also in the staff room, the playground, the principal’s office and in a conference room.

The film centres around Mr Marin and the difficulties he has teaching French and French literature to these particular pupils who do not share his values and cultural or linguistic background. Although many pupils are ‘difficult’, three, namely Esmeralda, Khoumba and Souleymane are very difficult. Not all pupils are difficult, however. Wei, for example, is intelligent, hardworking and keen to learn but is hindered by his lack of French and his non-European background.

	Description of activity and suggested uses	Skills covered
Activity 1	Scaffolded mind map. Students have a photo of one of the characters (Wei) surrounded by “mind map” bubbles containing questions about her. They also have statements which they drag to the appropriate mind map. Paper versions of the task are also available.	This matching exercise tests reading comprehension and students’ knowledge of the film. The task can be completed by an individual, or discussed orally by groups of students. Students can create similar tasks for other characters in the film, using generic type questions starting with Qui ? Pourquoi ? Quand ? Où ? Que ?

Activity 2	Mind map without 'scaffold'. Students have a photo of one of the characters (Esmeralda) surrounded by "mind map" bubbles containing questions about her. This time, however, they have to answer the questions themselves. Examples of possible answers are given as a check.	This reading and writing exercise tests reading comprehension and students' knowledge of the film. The task can be completed by an individual, or discussed orally by groups of students. Students can create similar tasks for other characters in the film, using generic type questions starting with Qui ? Pourquoi ? Quand ? Où ? Que ? and expect their fellow students to provide answers which can then be checked by the class or the teacher.
Activity 3	Removing a character. This task essentially asks students to evaluate the contribution of the chosen character (in this case François Marin, the teacher) to the film. Students are required to read a character description and evaluation and to summarise the essentials.	This is a reading and writing task which can only be completed when the students are familiar with the character. It requires the ability to summarise the essentials in French. Teachers or students can create similar tasks using other characters essential to the events in the film, such as Khoumba or Souleymane.