

---

**Krueger, Cheryl Leah, Elizabeth Dolly Weber,  
and Brigitte G. Martin. *Mise en scène: cinéma et  
lecture.***

**Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc., 2006. Student text, ISBN: 0-13-183969-1. Pp. 303. Annotated Instructor's Edition, ISBN: 0-13-183976-4. Pp. 320. Instructor's Manual (available Online), ISBN: 0-13-18939756. Pp. 64.**

*Mise en scène: cinéma et lecture* offers a film-based approach to building language skills through critical thinking and the use of authentic texts. Building on students' interest in films, the authors aim to engage students more fully in language acquisition while enhancing their cultural knowledge about the French and Francophone world. The authors posit that the text can be adapted for intermediate-level courses, bridge courses to the advanced level, and more specialized courses for college students. The goals and objectives of the text are clearly linked with the Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. A variety of activities promote speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, while the authentic films and readings deepen students' cultural understanding.

Films presented include recent mainstream films, classic films by well-known directors, animated films, popular documentaries, historical films, thrillers, and comedies. The text is divided into six theme-based chapters, which each present three films and three types of authentic texts: non-fiction, prose, and a poem or song. Each chapter opens with an introduction and includes brainstorming, viewing, reading, note taking, comprehension, discussion, formal writing and expansion activities, grouped under the headings *Avant Scène*, *Séances*, *Lectures* and *Synthèse*. The readings are arranged in order of difficulty and are presented with a series of skill-building activities, including pre-reading, discussion, and expansion exercises. Films and readings are grouped together across centuries and countries, reflecting universal and timeless themes. These texts include rich perspectives from all of the French-speaking world. In order to prepare students to maximize their learning in the context of film, the *Chapitre préliminaire* introduces students to film genres, narrative elements, and basic analytical terms. *Le langage du cinéma* appendix further explains fundamental film terms and offers exercises related to film techniques.

The six chapters of the text are: *Les temps "modernes"*; *Histoire(s) racontée(s)*; *Le suspense et la surprise*; *Rites du passage*; *Le comique et le rire*; and *Emplois du temps*. I will look more closely at the first chapter in order to give you a better feel for the book's approach. *Les temps "modernes"* explores the theme of living in Paris. The three films studied are: *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (France, 2001); *Salut cousin!* (France, Belgium, Algeria, 1996); and *Bande à part* (France, 1964). The three readings are: "Voyage à Paris," written by school students in 2000; "United Cultures of Jean Reno," an interview with the actor, 1998; and "Sonnet sur Paris," written by Paul Scarron in the seventeenth century. The *Avant Scène* exercises introduce and discuss the use of the term "moderne," ask students to evoke images they already have of Paris, and have students interview each other about films they have seen that take place in Paris. These pre-viewing exercises help students access their existing thematic knowledge and set the stage for the films to be studied.

The chapter continues with pre-viewing exercises specifically designed for each film. For *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*, students see a photo of Amélie as a child and are asked to speculate on her personality, tastes, and habits. A short introduction to the themes and action of the film precedes two exercises where students reflect on these themes. The instructor then shows a clip of the

film without subtitles that further explores these themes. Students are asked to read out loud and reflect on the helpful glossary of words designed to help students to speak and write about the film. The film is then projected in its entirety to the class. Students are encouraged to take notes on the film and are guided specifically to note the names of the characters and the relationships among them; scene, decor, and color changes; differences and similarities with other films students have seen; words and phrases that students would like to know; and what they liked and did not like about the film.

After viewing the film, students are invited to write in their journals about their reaction to it; the ten most important developments in it; their own personality preferences; and the most eccentric character. The questions are open-ended and thoughtful, inspiring critical analysis of the film. There are further comprehension exercises about the film (true/false, matching, fill in the blank), followed by short answer and more extended discussion and analytical questions. Two group activities designed to be done in class are followed by a choice of three writing topics that move from more creative and descriptive modes to more analytical modes. This sequencing of activities is repeated for the other two films. The *Lectures* section follows a similar sequencing of pre-reading, close reading, and comprehension/application activities. Instructors have flexibility to pick and choose among the films, texts, and activities presented to best serve the learning needs of their students.

In addition to the student text, there is an *Annotated Instructor's Edition* that includes helpful tips, notes, and strategies for the instructor. An *Online Instructor's Manual* offers sample chapter breakdowns for use during a quarter, a semester or an academic year, further instructor tips, and helpful notes on how each film was selected. The Companion Website® ([www.prenhall.com/mise](http://www.prenhall.com/mise)) has guided Internet research for each film, each chapter's third reading, and pronunciation of all glossary terms by a native speaker. The Internet activities encourage an exploration of French, Francophone, and English Websites.

Written entirely in French, *Mise en scène: cinéma et lecture* offers students an intriguing approach to improving their reading, writing, listening, speaking and cultural literacy skills. Used in combination with the accompanying grammar review book, or as a supplement to a traditional intermediate course textbook, the materials are designed to spark the interest of students and engage them more fully in their language learning. Film has universal appeal, and students working with this text will acquire a better understanding of what the French call *le septième art*.

Linda Beane Katner, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of French  
and Director of Faculty Development  
St. Norbert College  
De Pere, WI

## **Publisher's Response**

Pearson Prentice Hall appreciates Professor Linda Beane Katner's wonderful review of *Mise en scène: cinéma et lecture*. This text is intended for the interme-

diate and advanced levels of French and provides instructors with the flexibility required at these amorphous levels where instructors encounter a broad range of students. *Mise en scène* is used in intermediate-level courses where students are still refining all four language skills; it is used in conversation/composition courses where the text's rich content enables students to think about and discuss significant issues; it is used in special-topics courses where instructors explore one or two chapters in depth; and it is used in introductory-level cinema and culture courses. "Instructors have flexibility to pick and choose among the films, texts, and activities presented to best serve the learning needs of their students." This is achieved by "offering a film-based approach to building language skills through critical thinking and the use of authentic texts," as Beane Katner remarks.

*Mise en scène* provides authentic texts (readings, films, Websites, etc.) which introduce students to the "rich perspectives from all of the French-speaking world." The texts and activities emphasize the 5 C's of *Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities*. Depending on the students' ability, instructors can choose among different types of activities, all the while promoting critical-thinking skills. Students are encouraged to collaborate with their classmates so that they can broaden their perspectives and polish their skills.

Students are guided through texts and films as they learn to analyze the characters, settings and style of the works, along with thinking seriously about the subject matter. In order for instructors to feel comfortable in using film in a language class, or discussing works with which they may not be familiar, "...there is an Annotated Instructor's Edition that includes helpful tips, notes, and strategies for the instructor. An Online Instructor's Manual offers sample chapter breakdowns for use during a quarter, a semester, or an academic year, further instructor tips, and helpful notes on how each film was selected. The Companion Website... has guided Internet research for each film, each chapter's third reading, and pronunciation of all glossary terms by a native speaker," Beane Katner notes.

Pearson Prentice Hall is proud to provide such rich educational materials as *Mise en scène*, and we are grateful to Linda Beane Katner for her thoughtful review and for sharing it with the readership of *The NECTFL Review*.

Rachel McCoy  
Senior Acquisitions Editor  
Pearson Prentice Hall World Languages