French miss: is the future of movie kissing in jeopardy?

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The article discusses the use of CGI as a replacement for physical kisses between actors in films, using an example from a recent film, and suggests some possible ways this may change things in the future.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Vocabulary: Cinema; items using "in"; phrasal verbs with "on" and "out"

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

a. Students should look at the pictures for context and read the film summary. They can then discuss the questions to personalise their responses. Answers will vary, but students need some background context for the article. The article's title is a play of words with the word 'French kiss'.

2. Key words

a. Students can complete the activity in pairs or individually. They should match the words from the box to the definitions.

Key:

1. *contractual*
2. *climactic*
3. *legitimate*
4. *airbrushed*
5. *comeback*
6. *perspex*
7. *fleet*
8. *clump*
9. *gesture*
10. *forewarning*
11. *workaround*
12. *consensus*
13. *confetti*
14. *foundations*
15. *schemed up*
16. *gonna*
17. *critique*
18. *mash*
19. *morph*

3. Comprehension check

a. Students should match each of the summaries to parts of the article by underlining. Students can do this activity independently and then compare their answers in pairs.

Key:
1. *Paragraph 1: "Do we really need an update of Guess Who's Coming to Dinner in 2023?" and "Shouldn't a 2023 remake of Guess Who's Coming to Dinner have more to say than this?"*
2. *Paragraph 4: CGI helped Thanos throw a moon at Iron Man ...*
3. *Paragraph 7: If you're signing on for a project, how can you trust the director not to rush out and make you do things you didn't physically film? Is the future of intimacy in Hollywood going to be deepfaked sex scenes? Will actors need to seek out specific contractual clauses promising them that they won't be turned into a horny avatar in post-production?*
4. *Paragraph 2: Right at the end, Hill and London get married, and they lean into each other, and they kiss. Confetti falls from the sky and lands on them. A supporting character even negatively critiques the kiss, pointing out that Jonah Hill is using more tongue than is generally considered acceptable.*
5. *Paragraph 6: … actors thoroughly disinfecting their mouths after each kiss, in the thick of it, continuing dramas like EastEnders made their stars kiss through perspex screens that were subsequently airbrushed out and, perhaps taking their cue from Cameron, brought in the actors' real-life partners to dress up and kiss.*
6. *Paragraph 5: Netflix's big Lindsay Lohan comeback film Falling For Christmas ended with a kiss between Chord Overstreet and what was very obviously Lohan's stand-in. And in his fleet of Christian films, Kirk Cameron will only ever kiss his wife even if she has to dress up as his co-star so as to not destroy the foundations of their marriage.*
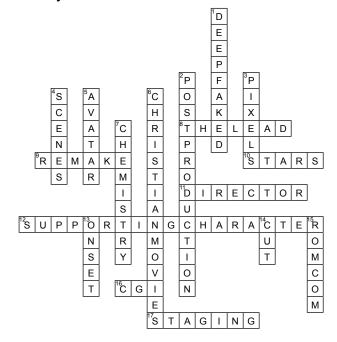
7. *Paragraph 3: "I don't even know if I should share this," Schulz said before immediately sharing the weird staging of the kiss on set. "It's CGI. Swear to God. I'm there, I'm watching the wedding, and I see them go in for the kiss, and their faces stop like this far. And I'm like, I wonder how they're gonna play that in the movie. Oh, they're probably just gonna cut right there.' But in the movie, you could see their faces come close, and then you could see their faces morph a little bit into a fake kiss."*

4. Key language

a. Students should complete the crossword using the cinema and film-making words in the box and matching them to the clues.

Key:

b. Students can personalise the language they learned in task A by writing sentences. Remind students that choosing the vocabulary they will find the most useful will help them to remember it. During feedback, ask volunteers to share one or two of their sentences.

5. Discussion

a. In the discussion prompts, students can talk about the issues raised in the article. Students can work in pairs or small groups.

6. In your own words

a. Students will need access to the internet for this activity. They should find clips of the kisses mentioned in the article. In pairs, students should discuss whether they can tell the kiss was fake. Ask them to give reasons for their ideas.

b. Students will research other scenes they remember from famous movies and research whether they were real or fake and how they were filmed. Depending on class size, they can present in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class.