

## Brief synopsis of the film

This film (released in 2013) was directed by Hüseyin Tabak. It is the story of Mika, who loves Mathematics, always tells the truth and hates jokes. Mika suffers from Asperger syndrome. Once he meets Bucephalus his life changes.

This is a family film which covers topics such as family, relationships and problems associated with Asperger syndrome, as well as an addiction to gambling. As such, it fits in naturally with the AS topic 'Being a young person in German-speaking society'.

	Description of activity and suggested uses	Skills covered
<p><b>Activity 1</b></p>	<p>Put simply, this activity is a matching activity where students have to identify which themes/subthemes are contained in each extract. They play a short clip and click on the appropriate words (contained within the shapes on-screen). The added challenge aspect is that there is a penalty for wrong choices and a time limit. At the end of the activity students get a score.</p> <p>This activity could be done individually, in a group or as a whole class activity.</p> <p>To keep things brief and fit them all on-screen, the themes and sub-themes comprise only a small number of words. To exploit this exercise fully it is therefore necessary to have a whole class discussion once the on-screen activity has been completed. Such a discussion could for example take a "theme", and then discuss what the director was trying to say about it e.g. "relationships" – "What role do relationships play in this film?" "What difficulties did Mika have with relationships at the start of the film?" "How and why did this change?" etc.</p>	<p>Students will of course use reading comprehension skills and thinking skills while matching themes/ subthemes to the clips. If they work in a group, and if there are subsequent discussions as suggested in the previous column, then students will also be developing collaborative and oral skills.</p> <p>The rationale behind the activity was to provide a set of themes and sub-themes which can help students by supplying them with focusses which will serve as "ways into" the film. The aim is to help them come to a better appreciation of the thematic content of Das Pferd auf dem Balkon, and to develop their own views at the same time.</p>

This could be the basis of some engaging and rewarding discussions.

### **Other activities:**

Depending on the group, teachers could ask students to come up with their own list of themes/sub-themes **before doing the activity on-screen**. They could then check whether these accord with the ones given in this activity.

After completing the activity, students could discuss whether other scenes could have been used to illustrate the various themes and sub-themes, and discuss the merits and demerits of these alternative scenes.

### **Activity 2**

This activity is a translation exercise (German into English). Students have to translate a short text (around 80 words) which deals with key thematic content.

Support could be given to less linguistically strong students, by providing a short vocabulary list. Stronger students could tackle it without extra support.

After the exercise students could compare their translations with other student translations, and/or with the on-screen suggested possible translation. Discussion could centre on translation choices, e.g. why is one solution "better" or "more appropriate" than another one?

Students will of course have opportunities to develop their reading comprehension and translation skills. If the activities are done in a group, then they can also develop collaborative skills. They will in addition be developing their linguistic repertoire which they can draw on in future essays/oral exposés.

	<p><b>Other activity:</b></p> <p>Students could look for other customer reviews (e.g. on-line), and translate them into English. This would help not only their translation skills, but also help build up their linguistic repertoire for use with writing in German about this or another film/films.</p>	
<b>Activity 3</b>	<p>In this activity students have to read two quite different customer reviews. The final goal is that students should go on to write their own review.</p> <p>To do their own review well, students need to know the film well after watching it a number of times, and have reflected on what the film means for them. By way of preparation for writing their own review, students could study and discuss the two reviews in class. Such discussions could include evaluating the two on-screen reviews and developing the points raised in each of them. Students could “borrow” ideas and language (words/ phrases) as the basis of their own review.</p> <p>Depending on the group, students could do this on an individual, paired or group basis. When finished, the reviews could be shared and discussed and/or compared.</p>	<p>This activity can help students develop their reading comprehension and writing skills. If done in a group or as a pair, they will also be developing collaborative and oral skills.</p> <p>As the rationale behind the task was to expose students to “film review language” they will also have opportunities to develop this aspect of their German.</p>