

MEMBERSHIP

MILES ON THE RUN



About this activity

⚠ WARNING: This activity features Woody Allen – a controversial figure whose work may evoke strong opinions due to allegations against him. Please proceed with caution.

- ▶ **Language level:** B1
- ▶ **Age of learner:** Teenagers and adults
- ▶ **Duration of activity:** 40 minutes
- ▶ **Activities:** Storytelling gap fill; describing a film scene
- ▶ **Topics:** Comedy films; slapstick humour; science fiction
- ▶ **Language aims:** Film genres, phrasal verbs

For this activity, you will need the following:

- **A film scene** (see below)
- **A handout** on page 5 – one for each student
- **A Canva slideshow**

IMPORTANT: For all materials and discussion, please go to the corresponding page in the Resources section – scan or click on QR code.



About the film scene

This scene is from the 1973 science fiction comedy *Sleeper*, directed by and starring Woody Allen. The film follows Miles Monroe, a man who wakes up 200 years in the future after being cryogenically frozen. The scene featured in this activity includes slapstick humour and pays homage to classic comedians like Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, and Charlie Chaplin.

Activity outline

1. Put students into groups. Display the film genre anagrams in the Canva slideshow. Ask students to work together in their groups to see who can solve the most anagrams.

(An anagram is a word made by changing the order of the letters in another word. For example, "silent" is an anagram of "listen".)



FILM GENRE ANAGRAMS
Can you solve them?

atonic army counted orr rho

commodity crane any fast my code

ad ram her trill coni feci insect

Tips ✨

- Give students an example to get them started – see answers in the box below
- Set a time limit – four minutes, for example.
- Explain that it can be challenging to solve the anagrams just by looking at them. Encourage students to think of a genre first and then see if it is represented.

2. Go over the answers which are also included in the Canva slideshow.

3. Ask students about their own film preferences and then tell them:

“ I am going to read to you a short text which describes film scene. Before I read it, I am going to show you eight phrases from the text.

atonic - Action
army counted – Documentary
orr rho – Horror
commodity crane – Romantic comedy
any fast – Fantasy
my code – Comedy
ad ram – Drama
her trill – Thriller
coni feci insect – Science fiction

4. Show students the eight phrases which are also included in the Canva slideshow.

*knocks him unconscious
to pick up a strawberry
unplugs a banana
on the banana peel*

*breaks off a stalk of celery
caught in the act
at the scene
a farm worker*

Rather than show all eight phrases at once, you can write them on individual scrap pieces of paper and introduce them one at a time. This will allow you to pre-teach unknown words, ask questions and personalise language.



- What is the difference between “to pick a strawberry” and “to pick up a strawberry”?
- Tell me something you could unplug. (Elicit ideas before showing the phrase “unplugs a banana”.)
- What verb might go before “on the banana peel”?
- Does anyone here like celery?
- Give me an example of a situation in which someone is “caught in the act”.
- What verb might go before “at the scene”?

5. Once all eight phrases are displayed on the board or screen, ask students to discuss the following questions in pairs:

- What do you think happens in the film scene?
- Can you guess what the film genre is?

6. Read aloud the text on page 5. Read it slowly and clearly. Use gesture to strengthen students’ comprehension of the phrase, “which he brings down on the farm worker’s head”.

Storytelling gap-fill

You can use the text for a storytelling gap-fill. To do this, make sure all eight phrases are visible on the board or screen for students to see. Here’s how it works:

- Read the text aloud. Each time you reach one of the phrases (**in bold** in the handout), pause before you say it and invite students to identify the correct phrase to fill the gap.
- You can manage the activity by nominating individuals (the orderly way) or by allowing everyone to shout out their answers (the disorderly way). Whichever method you choose, encourage students to think about their answers and discourage guessing.
- Instead of telling students if they are right or wrong, read the text two or three times. Let students work out the correct solution on their own – they will know when they’ve got it.

7. After reading the text a few times, ask the following questions:

- Can you identify anything strange about this film scene?
- Does anyone think they know the film?
- Can you guess what the genre is?

There are a number of unusual details in the text:

- Unplugging a banana
- Two men slipping on the same banana peel
- Knocking someone unconscious with a single strawberry
- Taking a chicken for a walk

Tip
✨

Most people will correctly guess that this is a comedy, but that is only half the answer. The text withholds the fact that Miles is stealing giant fruit and vegetables. This is a futuristic depiction of farming and the film is a science fiction comedy.

Don't expect students to guess this, but do tell them that the clues are in the text. Read it again, encourage intensive listening and invite them to keep guessing. If they can identify the oversized nature of the fruit and vegetables, that is sufficient.

8. Show students the film scene from *Sleeper* and find out what they think. Is that what the imagine the future to be like?

⚠ WARNING: As mentioned on page one, the video may evoke strong opinions due to the allegations against Woody Allen. Personally, I would approach this with transparency by discussing it with students before showing the video. Explain that you have mixed feelings about using it, and afterwards, ask students for their opinions.

9. Show students the gap-fill slide in the Canva slideshow. Ask students to recall the missing words to complete the phrasal verbs.

to run _____ the bananas
 to shout _____ someone 🤔
 to run _____ from someone or something
 to slip _____ a banana peel
 to fall _____
 to arrive _____ the scene
 to pick _____ a strawberry
 to bring something _____ on someone's head
 to break _____ a stalk of celery



10. Give out copies of the handout on page five which includes the text. Let students read it and correct their answers to the above gap-fill.

11. For homework, ask students to prepare to describe a funny scene from a comedy film of their choice.



Miles on the run

Miles is hungry and looking for food. He arrives at a fruit and vegetable farm and sees rows of tomatoes, bananas, celery, strawberries and onions. He runs towards the bananas.

As quickly as he can, Miles **unplugs a banana** and starts to peel it. He throws the peel on the ground.

But the fruit thief is **caught in the act**. He is spotted by **a farm worker**, who shouts at Miles and starts running towards him.

Miles tries to run away. But he slips **on the banana peel** and falls over. He gets up but slips again. And again. And again.

The farm worker arrives **at the scene**. But, before he can catch Miles, he too slips on the banana peel and falls over. He gets up but slips again. And again. And again.

Miles manages to stay on his feet long enough **to pick up a strawberry**, which he brings down on the farm worker's head and **knocks him unconscious**.

Miles **breaks off a stalk of celery** and picks up another banana. In the distance, another farm worker is walking a chicken. The farm worker shouts at Miles and starts running towards him. Miles runs away with his arms full.

