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 Ages 5 to 8 * F&P Text Level Gradient: 0
 Lexile® Measure: 620L

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ALICE!

*The Thrilling True Adventures
of the First Woman Filmmaker*

*By Mara Rockliff
Illustrated by Simona Ciraolo*

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Meet Alice Guy-Blaché. She made movies. Some of the very first movies—and some of the most exciting!

Blow up a pirate ship? Why not?

Crawl into a tiger's cage? Of course!

Leap off a bridge onto a real speeding train? It will be easy!

Mara Rockliff and Simona Ciraolo tell the story of one of film's pioneers—and the first woman in the world to make movies. Driven by her passion for storytelling, Alice saw a potential for film that others had not seen before, allowing her to develop new narratives, new camera angles, new techniques, and to surprise her audiences again and again. With daring and vision, Alice Guy-Blaché introduced the world to a thrilling frontier of imagination and adventure,

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide consists of discussion opportunities and classroom extension activities designed for use in grades 3–8 while reading, teaching, or discussing *Lights! Camera! Alice!* as a whole group, small group, or independently.

Lights! Camera! Alice! allows children to exercise a variety of reading comprehension strategies such as analyzing symbolism, identifying causes and effects, comparing and contrasting elements, analyzing text structure, and considering the importance of setting. Additionally, *Lights! Camera! Alice!* provides opportunities for word study, research, and history extensions.

Although this guide primarily focuses on the book's use in elementary and middle school classrooms, *Lights! Camera! Alice!* is also a relevant text for other grade levels. This book could be used as a resource in film and photography classes or in dual-language French classrooms at any grade level.

COMMON CORE-ALIGNED TEACHER GUIDE

The Common Core Anchor Standards in Reading and Writing that can be addressed using the discussion questions and activities in this guide are:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

The Common Core Anchor Standards in Reading and Writing that can be addressed using the discussion questions and activities in this guide are:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.



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VOCABULARY

These vocabulary words and phrases can be found throughout the book. Use these words as a starting point for a vocabulary study:

- spun colorful yarns
- nestled
- catastrophe
- ruins
- sensation
- cooked up
- troublesome
- bewitched
- rival
- nickelodeons
- modern
- severe
- pioneers
- old-fashioned
- dwindled
- auctioned
- tide turns

ACTIVITIES

Use these activities to extend student learning with *Lights! Camera! Alice!*

Pre-Reading Activity: Film History

To fully understand the importance of Alice's story, a basic history of cinematography and film would be helpful. Have students complete a small research project either independently or in collaborative groups as you see fit. Have students/groups of students create a display (digitally or traditionally) to share with their peers about their chosen topics.

Example topics:

L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat

Thomas Edison

Coloring in film

Sound in film

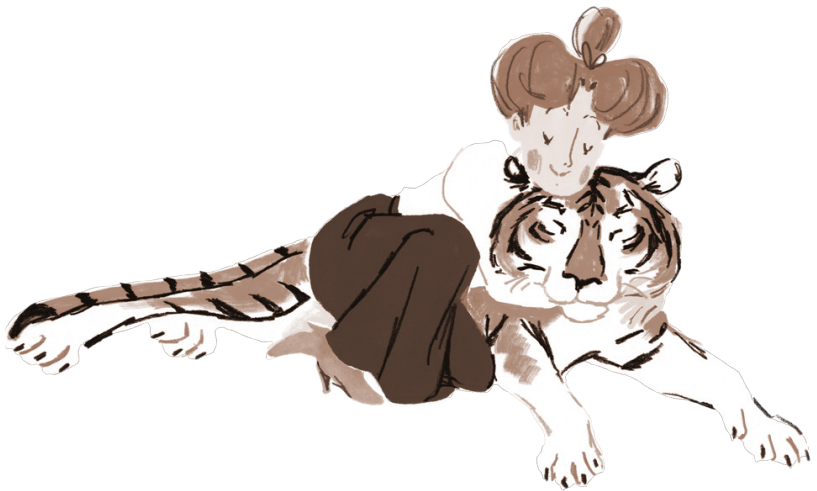
Silent films

Growth in Hollywood

Lumière brothers

Different types of film over time

Movie theaters



Introduction to Setting

It isn't until Alice returns to France that the name of her home country is revealed in the book. Before reading, share spreads from the book that show Alice in France but that do not feature any clues about where she is. Ask students if they can determine the setting based on these spreads. Then share spreads from the book that show Alice in France that include clues about her location, such as pages featuring French words (*grand-mère*, *magnifique*, *phénoménal*, *pardonnez-moi*, *voilà*, *mademoiselle*, *monsieur*) or the page that features the titles of Alice's films. Have students discuss the reasons why the author chose to offer clues about the story's setting rather than stating it.

Post-Reading Extension Activity: Ask the class to try translating the French words shared in the book. Can any be defined using context clues?

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Introduction to Symbolism

The illustrator chose to include the Statue of Liberty in the scene depicting Alice and her husband coming to America. This is because the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of America. Explain that a symbol is an object that represents more than its literal meaning. Ask students to brainstorm other symbols the illustrator could have used to symbolize America and make a graphic organizer to collect the various symbols proposed. Then lead the class in a discussion about why the Statue of Liberty was probably chosen. Students can also brainstorm symbols the illustrator could have included to show that Alice's home country is France.

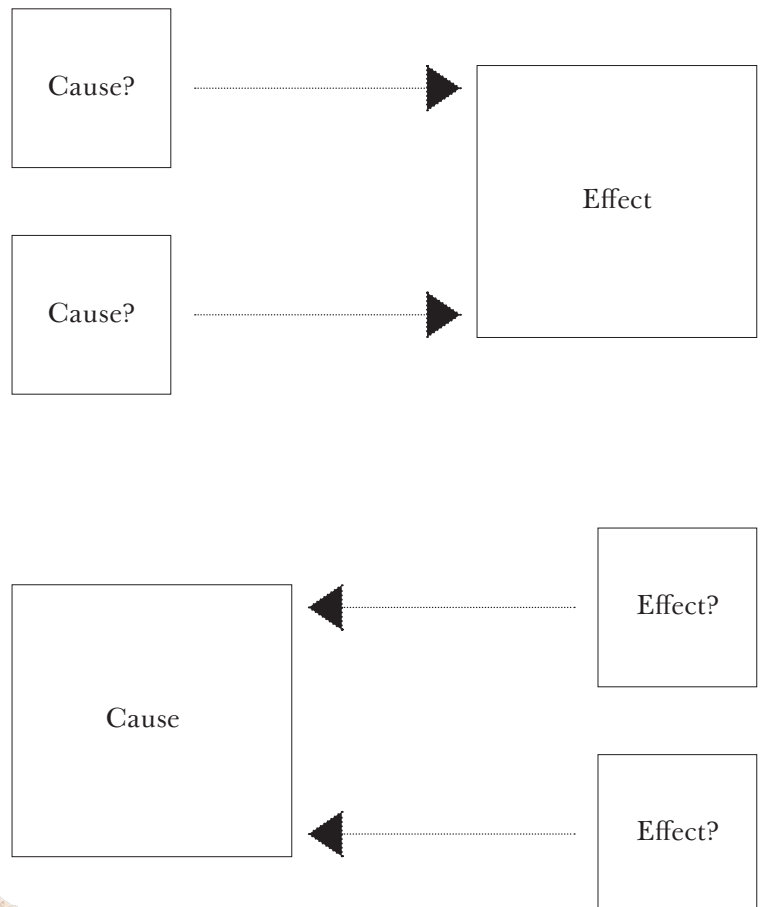
Optional Extension Activity: Have students look at the second-to-last spread in the book. In this illustration, objects that symbolize different parts of Alice's life are displayed on her bookshelf. Ask students to match the objects to their symbolized significance in Alice's biography.

Cause/Effect

Much of Alice's story lends itself to studying cause and effect. *Lights! Camera! Alice!* often details Alice's reasons for making certain decisions. Ask students to share their answers to the following cause/effect questions:

- The Solax Company Studios were destroyed by fire the year after Alice's husband left to pursue a career in Hollywood. What did these two events, as well as others shared in the book, cause Alice to do?
- Fire was the cause of two different downfalls in Alice's life—what are they?
- What caused Alice to want to create more entertaining films?

You can use a cause/effect graphic organizer to complete these questions in a classroom. For any event that has multiple causes or effects, use a multi-cause/effect graphic organizer.



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History

It is not until we read the Director's Notes at the end of the book that we learn exactly what year it is. While the newspaper headlines shared throughout the text offer some hints about the year, many students will not be familiar with these events or when they took place. Divide the class into three groups and use the below articles from Kiddle (or another kid-friendly search engine) to give one group information on the Spanish Flu, another group information on World War I, and another group information on the Great Depression. Have each student close read their article: for read 1, they should read for the gist; for read 2, they should highlight any important dates; and for read 3, they should highlight important events. Next have students come up with a short presentation to share with others. Finally, arrange your students in groups of three so that each topic is represented in each group, and have students teach each other about the historical events they've studied.

Articles:

- Spanish Flu: https://kids.kiddle.co/Influenza_pandemic_of_1918
- World War I: https://kids.kiddle.co/World_War_I
- Great Depression: https://kids.kiddle.co/Great_Depression



Extension Activity: Tabletop Twitter and the Misattributed Inventions of Thomas Edison

One historical reference that is briefly mentioned in *Lights! Camera! Alice!* is the idea that Thomas Edison invented moving pictures. As we learn throughout the story, film was already prominent in Europe when Edison “invented” moving pictures. This is not the only thing Edison is incorrectly credited with inventing.

As a class, look at the article “Did Thomas Edison Steal Inventions?” on Historic Mysteries:

<https://www.historicmysteries.com/did-thomas-edison-steal-inventions/>

Use this information to extend learning by having your class participate in Tabletop Twitter, a collaborative activity. First, find inventions that are historically credited to Edison and print out accurate information about the invention. Place each article/paragraph/text in the middle of a poster board or other large piece of paper. Have students move around the room, silently, reading about each invention and writing on the poster board/paper information they learned from the text about the invention's true history. Make sure every student gets to every invention. Afterwards, hang the Tabletop Twitter papers around your classroom and allow for a gallery walk so all students can view what they each found to be important about the various inventions.

Teacher Extension: HERstory

Why hasn't anyone heard of Alice Guy-Blaché? The author's backmatter, titled “Director's Cut,” includes a sub-section titled “So why hasn't everybody heard of Alice Guy Blaché?” Use this section to discuss with students why women are often left out of history books. Many articles about this topic can be found to help you guide the conversation, including:

- <http://time.com/4480944/invisible-women-history/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/may/19/why-female-artists-airbrushed-history-annie-kevans>
- https://www.huffingtonpost.com/shirley-streshinsky/why-were-so-many-womens-history-month_b_4974642.html

Use this opportunity to teach about other women who have made significant contributions to history yet are not always taught in history lessons.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions during class discussions, reading check-ins, or as writing prompts with *Lights! Camera! Alice!*:

- How did Alice's childhood filled with books and stories contribute to her success as a filmmaker?
- What traits would you say helped Alice find success within a male-dominated industry?
- Why do you think the man in charge of the camera company hired Alice after she said, "I will get over that"?
- How did Alice use her job as a camera seller to break into the film industry?
- Why did Alice begin writing stories for film?
- Why was Alice surprised when she arrived in America?
- If Alice made the claim that Hollywood took away her livelihood, would you agree or disagree with that statement? Why or why not?
- How did the success of the movie industry lead to Alice no longer making movies?
- What did Alice's desire to write a memoir indicate about how she thought she was going to be written (or not written) into history?
- A text's structure can be understood by looking at how it is put together to meet a certain purpose. *Lights! Camera! Alice!* includes some very specific structure choices. Have students look only at the structure of the book and describe the choices that the author, illustrator, and publisher made to ensure that the book captured the feeling of film.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mara Rockliff is the author of many books for children including *Anything But Ordinary Addie: The True Story of Adelaide Herrmann*, *Queen of Magic* and *Around America to Win the Vote*, as well as *Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery that Baffled All of France*. She lives in Pennsylvania.

Visit her online at www.mararockliff.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Simona Ciraolo is a children's book author and illustrator. She grew up in Italy where she received a degree in animation from the National Film School. She has also earned an MA in children's book illustration in Cambridge. She lives in London.

This guide was created by Kellee Moye, a middle school reading coach and teacher from Orlando, Florida. Kellee is the co-author of the blog *Unleashing Readers*, the author of various teaching guides, the chair of the 2014 Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee, a member of the 2016–2018 ALAN Board of Directors, and a member of NCTE, ALAN, and ALA.

