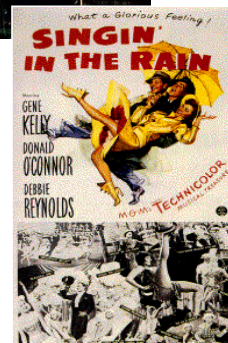


Unit One



Part A Singin' in the Rain

"Ladies and gentlemen, stop that girl!...That's the girl whose voice you heard and loved tonight! She is the real star of the picture..."



Released by: MGM (1952)
 Directors: Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen
 Songs: Freed and Brown
 Cast: Don Lockwood...Gene Kelly
 Cosmo Brown...Donald O'Connor
 Kathy Seldon...Debbie Reynolds
 Lina Lamont...Jean Hagen
 R. F. Simpson...Millard Mitchell
 Awards: two nominations for Oscar:
 Best Supporting Actress and Best Musical Score

Section I Before Watching the Movie

1 Gene Kelly



Born in 1912 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Gene Kelly was greatly influenced by his mother who loved the theater and sent him to dancing lessons.

After graduation from University, Kelly taught dance for six years. Kelly's big break came in 1940 when he was **cast** as the **lead** in the musical *Pal Joey*. He played the part of an Irish nightclub singer who was a good-for-nothing loner. The show was a hit and Kelly attracted the attention of Hollywood studio executive Louis B. Mayer who would like to have him under contract for the MGM studio for which then Kelly worked for 16 years.

His first Hollywood film was *For Me and My Gal* (1942). After a couple of years doing **stock** musicals, Kelly made a breakthrough with *Cover Girl* (1944). Thereafter, he established his reputation as an actor and dancer, but his contribution to the Hollywood musical also included



choreography and direction. He also made use of special effects, as in the “Alter-Ego” **number** in *Cover Girl*, where he danced with his reflection.

Kelly consciously integrated dance into film in order to help the audience gain insight into the types of characters he played. Kelly often played a guy who feels that the best way to get what he wants is to impress people. He almost always realizes, however, that his **brashness** offends people, and that he will more easily succeed by being himself. Though Kelly’s characters are naturally high-spirited, they also have a somewhat sad aspect and tend to **brood** about their loneliness at key moments in the films. And while most of Kelly’s audiences were not really aware of his sophisticated techniques—thus the magic—virtually all found him uniquely appealing as a leading man.



Nowhere was he more engaging than in 1952’s *Singin’ in the Rain*. One of the all-time great movie musicals, and perhaps the film most associated with Kelly. This comedy illustrates the late-1920s **transition** from silent pictures to “**talkies**.” *Singin’ in the Rain* **showcases** the considerable acting, singing, and dancing gifts of Debbie Reynolds and Donald O’Connor, but it is Kelly who dances away with the movie. His **rendition** of the title song has become an **icon** of American entertainment.

Notes:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. cast | v. to assign a certain role to (an actor or actress) |
| 2. lead | n. the leading role |
| 3. stock | a. repeated without any thought or originality; routine |
| 4. choreography | n. the art of creating and arranging dances |

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 5. number | <i>n.</i> dance, song, etc. for the stage |
| 6. brash | <i>a.</i> hasty, rash ~ness, <i>n.</i> |
| 7. brood | <i>v.</i> to be deep in thought |
| 8. transition | <i>n.</i> passage from one form, state, style, or place to another |
| 9. talkies | <i>n.</i> a movie with a sound track |
| 10. showcase | <i>v.</i> to display prominently |
| 11. rendition | <i>n.</i> performance of a musical or dramatic work |
| 12. icon | <i>n.</i> an image; a representation |

2 Synopsis



As the film opens in 1927, **dashing** Don Lockwood and blonde beauty Lina Lamont are one of Hollywood's favorite romantic teams and they are extremely welcomed by fans all over the country. They are so often paired romantically in movies that fans are convinced that their relationship extends beyond theaters. Lina mistakenly believes their on-screen love is for real, because she read it somewhere. In Don's mind, however, Lina is no more than a co-star. This is especially true once he meets and falls for the **suave** Kathy Selden, a self-respecting and "serious" chorus girl.

Don and his less famous former partner, song-and-dance man Cosmo Brown, have worked their way to the top the hard way. Then **The Jazz Singer** opens, and Hollywood is turned upside down, because it is the first movie with voice while all the previously made are silent ones. Monumental Pictures boss R. F. Simpson decides that he must make a talking movie to follow the new



cinematic rules and a pleasant voice becomes a necessity on the **lot**...

Notes:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. dashing | a. marked by showy elegance; fashionable |
| 2. suave | a. smoothly agreeable and courteous |
| 3. <i>The Jazz Singer</i> | produced by Warner Bros. studio in 1927 as the first musical movie. It got the special award of the first Oscar in 1929. |
| 4. lot | n. a film studio |

3 Expressions Study

- 1) They used to **make such a fuss** over me.
to make such a fuss: to worry too much about sth. not very important
- 2) But most important of all, I continue **living up to** my motto: dignity.
to live up to sth.: to put one's faith, principles, etc. into practice
- 3) For heaven's sake, what's the **big idea**?
big idea: good idea, great idea
- 4) I'd like very much to know **whose hospitality I'm enjoying**?
to enjoy one's hospitality: to get cordial and generous treatment of guests
- 5) Don't tell me, you are a French aristocrat, and she is a simple girl of the people, and she won't even **give you a tumble**.
to give sb. a tumble: to show interest in
- 6) She is the first dame who hasn't **fall for your line** since you were four.
to fall for sth.: to fall in love with sth.
- 7) **Snap out of it**.
to snap out of it: to stop grief or complaining and pull oneself together
- 8) I think we **have** another smash **on our hand**.
to have sth. on one's hand: to be sure to get sth.

9) 'Cause you liked her, **I could tell**.

I could tell: I knew

10) We're going to **make our best feet forward**.

to make one's best feet forward: to do sth. that one is best at

11) Are you **speaking for** Lina also?

to speak for sb.: to say on behalf of sb.

12) **Hold it a second!**

to hold it a second: to wait a minute

13) Everybody is **picking on** me!

to pick on: to find fault with

14) No, there is no use **kidding myself**.

to kid oneself: to fool oneself

15) Do you think it will **get by**?

to get by: to pass; to be accepted

16) Why do you think Zelda **is in such a sweat**?

to be in sweat: to worry about sth.

17) Why don't you **tell her off**?

to tell off sb.: to blame sb.



Watch the movie now!

Section II After Watching the Movie

1 Oral Practice

A. Discuss with your neighbors and give answers to the following questions.

- 1) Why does Lina believe that Don loves her?
- 2) Why is Don the superstar attracted to the nobody girl Kathy?
- 3) What new profession came along with the talkies?

- 4) Why do the audience laugh off *The Dueling Cavalier* at the preview?
- 5) What is the story *The Dancing Cavalier* about?
- 6) What is the idea of the number "Broadway Melody?"
- 7) Why does R. F. give way to Lina before the premiere show of *The Dancing Cavalier*? What does Lina want?
- 8) How do you understand the memorable singing-dancing sequence of Kelly's *Singin' in the Rain*?
- 9) Don needs a proper setting to show his love to Kathy. What do you think is a proper setting for you if you were to show your love to your boyfriend/girlfriend?
- 10) Could you picture the transition of movie industry in the 1920s?
- 11) Why was musical the main trend at the early talking movie age?
- 12) List some other musicals that you know. See if you can make the longest list in your class.
- 13) Do you think musical is still loved by audience today? Why or why not?

B. Read the tongue twisters with your partners one by one.

- ♣ Around the rocks the rugged rascal run.
- ♣ Sinful Caesar sips his snifter, seized his knees and sneezed.
- ♣ Moses supposes his toeses are roses, but Moses supposes erroneously;
Moses, he knows his toeses are not roses, as Moses supposes his toeses to be.

2 Listening Drills

A. Watch the segment on Don's account of his success story. Listen carefully and fill out the table below.



motto	<i>n.</i> a maxim adopted as a guide to one's conduct
society	<i>n.</i> the rich, privileged, and fashionable social class
make a fuss over	pay too much attention to
vigorous	<i>a.</i> energetic, robust
conservatory	<i>n.</i> a school of music or dramatic art
round out	complete
exclusive	<i>a.</i> expensive
embark	<i>v.</i> to set out on doing sth.
strand	<i>v.</i> to bring into a difficult or helpless position
live up to	to put one's faith, principles, etc. into practice
vaudeville	<i>n.</i> a variety show

	Lockwood's Verbal Description APPEARANCE	The Screen Version REALITY
1	With him (Cosmo), I used to perform for all of Mom and Dad's society friends.	
2		They sneaked into movie theatres to watch a vulgar movie <i>The Dangers of Drucilla</i> .
3	To this was added rigorous musical training at the Conservatory of Fine Arts.	
4		They gave vaudeville performance and weren't always received with applause—sometimes they lost job.

Continued

	Lockwood's Verbal Description APPEARANCE	The Screen Version REALITY
5	Finally we decided to come to sunny California.	
6	My role in these films was urbane, sophisticated and suave...	
7		They have never got along well with each other, from the very beginning of their acquaintance.

B. Watch the segment on the first meeting of Don and Cathy. Fill in the missing words of their conversation.



enchant	v. to attract and delight
heartache	n. emotional anguish; sorrow
glamour	n. power of beauty or romance to move the feelings
pantomime	n. the telling of a story without words, by means of bodily movements, gestures, and facial expressions
Ibsen	(1828–1906) Norwegian playwright who influenced the development of modern drama with his realistic masterpieces such as <i>Peer Gynt</i> (1867), <i>A Doll's House</i> (1879), and <i>Ghosts</i> (1881).
lofty	a. noble, distinguished
brush up	review and improve
conceited	a. holding an unduly high opinion of oneself

molest	v. to disturb or annoy
jester	n. a fool
Ethel Barrymore (1879–1959), American actress who appeared mainly on stage but also won an Academy Award in 1944 for <i>None but the Lonely Heart</i>	

Don: I'd very much like to know whose (1)_____ I am enjoying?

Kathy: Seldon. Kathy Seldon.

Don: Enchanted, Miss Seldon. I'm sorry I've frightened you. I was getting a little too much love from my (2)_____.

Kathy: Oh, that's what you were (3)_____. They did that to you? That's terrible!

Don: Yes, yes, it is, isn't it? It is terrible. Well, we movie stars get the (4)_____, I guess we have to take the little (5)_____ that go with it. People think we lead lives of (6)_____ but we're really lonely—terribly lonely.

Kathy: Oh, Mr. Lockwood, I really can't tell you how sorry I am about (7)_____ before, but it was understandable under the (8)_____. I knew I'd seen you.

Don: Which of my pictures have you seen?

Kathy: I don't remember. I saw one once.

Don: You saw one once?

Kathy: Yes, I think you were (9)_____. And there was a girl, Lina Lamont. Well I don't go to the movies much— (10)_____.

Don: Oh, thank you.

Kathy: Oh, on offence. Movies are entertaining enough for the (11)_____, but the (12)_____ on the screen just don't impress me. I mean, they don't talk. They don't act. They just make a lot of

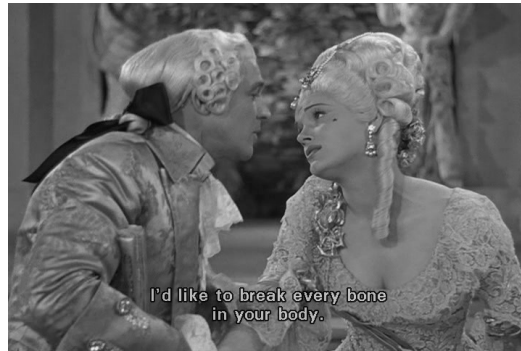
- (13)_____... well, you know, ...like that.
- Don: You mean, like what I do.
- Kathy: Well, yes. Here we are, Sunset and Camden.
- Don: Wait a minute. You mean I am not an actor. Pantomime on the screen isn't acting.
- Kathy: Of course. Acting means (14)_____.
Shakespeare, Ibsen...
- Don: Tell me, what's your (15)_____ that lets you
(16)_____ my humble profession?
- Kathy: Well, I am an actress.
- Don: What?
- Kathy: On the stage.
- Don: Oh, on the stage. Well, I'd like to see you act. What are you in right now? I can (17)_____ my English, or bring along an interpreter, that is, if they (18)_____ a movie actor.
- Kathy: Well, I am not in a play right now, but I will be. I am going to New York...
- Don: Oh, you are going to New York! And then some day we'll all hear of you, won't we? Kathy Selden, as Juliet, as Lady Macbeth, as King Lear. You'll have to (19)_____ for that one, of course.
- Kathy: Oh, you can laugh if you want to, but at least the stage is a
(20)_____. And what have you got to be so
(21)_____ about? You are nothing but a shadow in film. A shadow. You are not (22)_____.
- Don: Oh, no?
- Kathy: Stop!
- Don: What can I do to you? I am only a shadow.
- Kathy: You keep away from me! Just because you are a big movie star,
(23)_____, you expect every

girl in a dead faint at your feet! Well, don't you touch me!

Don: Fear not, sweet lady! I will not molest you. I am but a humble jester, and you, you are too far above me. Farewell, Ethel Barrymore. I must (24)_____.

Kathy: Ha, ha, ha...

C. Watch the segment on the shooting of a film. Take down Don's words.



rattlesnake *n.* a kind of snake that can produce rattling sound by the tail

reptile *n.* cold-blooded animal that creeps, like a snake; a person regarded as treacherous

sticks and stones may break my bones (but names can never hurt me):
(*idiom*) what you call me is not important

lummox *n.* a person regarded as clumsy or stupid

Don: _____.

Lina: That's not all I'm gonna do if I ever get my hands on her.

Don: _____?

Lina: Cause you liked her, I could tell.

Don: _____!

Lina: Sticks and stones may break my bones...

Don: _____...

Lina: You and who else, you big lummo?

3 Role Play

Work with your partner and role play the part of Listening Drill C.

4 Reading Reviews

Singin' in the Rain (1)

Roger Ebert

www. Chicago sun-times.com (abridged)

The image that everyone remembers from *Singin' in the Rain* is Gene Kelly, dressed in a yellow **slicker**, hanging from a lamp-post and swinging his umbrella in the wild joy of new love. The scene builds to a gloriously **saturated ecstasy** as Kelly stomps through the **puddles** of water in the **gutters**, making big wet splashes.

The entire sequence, from the moment Kelly begins to dance until the moment the cop looks at him strangely, is probably the most joyous musical sequence ever filmed. It celebrates a man who has just fallen in love and has given himself over to heedless celebration. And the rainwater provides the dancer with a **tactile** medium that reflects his joy in its own noisy way.

Singin' in the Rain has been voted one of the greatest films of all time in international critics' **polls**, and is routinely called the greatest of all the Hollywood musicals. I don't think there's any doubt about that. There are other contenders—*Top Hat*, *Swing Time*, *An American in Paris*, *The Bandwagon*, *Oklahoma*, *West Side Story*—but *Singin' in the Rain* comes first because it is not only from Hollywood, it is about Hollywood. It is set at the moment in the late 1920s when the movies first started to talk, and many of its best **gags** involve technical details.

...

Maybe because the movie was made quickly and with a certain freedom, it has a wonderfully free and **imprvisational** feeling. We know that sequences like Donald O'Connor's neck-breaking "Make 'Em Laugh" number had to be painstakingly rehearsed, but it feels like it was made up **on the spot**. So does "Moses Supposes," with O'Connor and Kelly dancing on **tabletops**.

Debbie Reynolds was still a teenager when she starred in the movie, and there is a light in her eyes to mirror the delight of her character, who is discovered leaping out of a cake at a party, and soon becomes the offscreen voice of Lina Lamont, a silent star whose voice is not suited to talkies, to say the least. The movie's climax, as Reynolds flees from a theater while Kelly shouts out "Stop that girl!" and tells everyone who she is, and that he loves her, is one of those **bravura** romantic scenes that make you **tingle** no matter how often you see it.

There's great humor in *Singin' in the Rain*, too, especially in the scenes that deal with the technical difficulties of the early days of talkies. Lina Lamont can never seem to remember which flower arrangement holds the concealed microphone, and so her voice booms and whispers as she turns her head back and forth. This was not an imaginary problem for early actors in the talkies; Chicago **bandleader** Stanley Paul collects early sound movies with scenes that reflect that very problem.

Although *Singin' in the Rain* has been on video in various versions for a decade and is often seen on TV, a big-screen viewing will reveal a richness of color that your **tube** may not suggest. The film was photographed in bold basic colors—the yellow raincoats are an emblem...but is this really the greatest Hollywood musical ever made? In a word, yes.

Notes:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. slicker | <i>n.</i> a raincoat made of plastic or rubber |
| 2. saturated | <i>a.</i> unable to hold or contain more; full |

3. ecstasy	<i>n.</i> intense joy or delight
4. puddle	<i>n.</i> a small pool of water, especially rainwater
5. gutter	<i>n.</i> a channel at the edge of a street for carrying off surface water
6. tactile	<i>a.</i> perceptible to the sense of touch
7. poll	<i>n.</i> the casting and registering of votes
8. gag	<i>n.</i> a comic effect or remark
9. improvisational	<i>a.</i> acting without preparing beforehand
10. on the spot	at the time in the place
11. tabletop	<i>n.</i> the flat surface of a table
12. bravura	<i>n.</i> a piece of brilliant performance
13. tingle	<i>v.</i> be stirred, excited
14. bandleader	<i>n.</i> one who conducts a band, especially a dance band
15. tube	<i>n.</i> a television set

***Singin' in the Rain* (2)**

Daniel Griffin

Film as Arts: Daniel Griffin's Guide to Cinema (abridged)

I never came to appreciate the movie musical until I realized how much better and colorful the world would be if people really could break out into song at any moment and display uncharacteristic, amazing physical dancing **feats**. With a seemingly invisible, full-piece orchestra playing in the background to back them up, of course. With such a gift, wouldn't the world literally have more color and more joy.

...

But compare *Singin' in the Rain* with a film like, say, *The Terminator*. Is there really that big of a difference? Both have storylines intended to **shuffle** their audience along from one amazing physical sequence to the next. Both

have interesting stories anyway, making the shuffle forgivable. In both, the guy gets the girl. The key difference, of course, is in the tone of each film: In *The Terminator*, lots of people ultimately die and there is much sadness and despair. In *Singin' in the Rain*, no one dies and everyone is still smiling. Have we become such bad-news **junkies** that a film like *Singin' in the Rain* is outdated, and the harsh, **gritty** tone of *The Terminator* remains the more popular filmmaking trend? Consider this: When was the last time you saw a really good, joy-filled musical? Not *Moulin Rouge!* or *Chicago*, which both have generally dark subject matter and feature bizarre **distortions** of people and places. I mean, when was the last time you saw a man dance up the wall with a big smile on his face, and it was so **exhilarating** in its feel-good innocence that you wished that you had the ability to do the same, with the same free-spirited attitude? If you think hard, you'll realize that the last time you saw something like that was probably the last time you saw *Singin' in the Rain*.

That's the triumph of movie musicals. They represent a time when cinematic magic had more to do with people's talents and less to do with special effects. They are **capsules** of joy and light-heartedness, celebrations of **fluff** and physical beauty, packaged into an hour or two of pure family entertainment...They were simply about happiness, about beauty, about talented people showcasing their singing/dancing skills, and about art as entertainment. Of the movies made in this era of the musical, *Singin' in the Rain* remains the most colorful, the most joyful, and the most beautiful.

...

More than anything else, the dance sequences are amazing feats of physical strength and beauty in their own right, demonstrating ballet and rhythmic energy as **crisp** as the best of **Bruce Lee's martial arts**. If for no other reason, *Singin' in the Rain* must be admired for such powerful displays of the human body realizing its highest physical potential, and if you don't recognize such beauty in your first viewing, it is only because the actors and

performers have done their jobs: They've made it all look easy and **contagious**.

And so I come back to my original observation: how nice it would be if we had the ability to break out into song and dance, just like they do it in the movies. Maybe I'm old fashioned, but it would suit me fine. *Singin' in the Rain* is about that joy and liberty, about the freedom and cheerfulness that comes with innocence and the determination to live life to the fullest, and to keep smilin' and keep singin' no matter what twists and turns life may bring...

Notes:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. feat | <i>n.</i> an act of skill or strength; an achievement |
| 2. shuffle | <i>v.</i> to slide (the feet) along the floor or ground while walking |
| 3. junkie | <i>n.</i> drug addict |
| 4. gritty | <i>a.</i> containing or covered with tiny hard bits of stones or sand |
| 5. distortion | <i>n.</i> twisted form |
| 6. exhilarating | <i>a.</i> causing happiness or excitement |
| 7. capsule | <i>n.</i> a condensation |
| 8. fluff | <i>n.</i> light or superficial entertainment |
| 9. crisp | <i>a.</i> lively, invigorating |
| 10. Bruce Lee | the famous Chinese swordsmen film star, Li Xiaolong |
| 11. martial arts | <i>n.</i> traditional Chinese boxing or sword play |
| 12. contagious | <i>a.</i> spreading from one to another |

5 Do You Know?

- * Gene Kelly had a 103°F fever when he danced to the title song.
- * The rain consisted of water plus milk so the rain would show up better on film but it caused Kelly's wool suit to shrink.
- * While the film makes a central point of the idea that Kathy's voice is

dubbed over Lina Lamont's, what is not told is that ironically, in some of these songs, notably "Would You," Debbie Reynolds, the actress who plays Kathy, is actually dubbed by Betty Noyes.

- * Donald O'Connor admitted that he did not enjoy working with Gene Kelly since Kelly was somewhat of a tyrant. O'Connor said that for the first several weeks he was terrified of making a mistake and being yelled at by Kelly.
- * Following the "Make 'Em Laugh" sequence, Donald O'Connor spent several days in the hospital, recovering from numerous bumps and bruises.
- * A microphone was planted into Debbie Reynolds' blouse so her lines could be heard more clearly. During one of the dance numbers, her heartbeat can be heard.

—www.imdb.com

6 Songs in *Singin' in the Rain*

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ♣ <i>Singin' in the Rain</i> | ♣ <i>Fit as a Fiddle</i> |
| ♣ <i>All I Do is Dream of You</i> | ♣ <i>Make 'Em Laugh</i> |
| ♣ <i>Beautiful Girl</i> | ♣ <i>You Were Meant for Me</i> |
| ♣ <i>Moses Supposes</i> | ♣ <i>Good Morning</i> |
| ♣ <i>Would You?</i> | ♣ <i>You Are My Lucky Star</i> |

Singin' in the Rain

I'm singin' in the rain
Just singin' in the rain
What a glorious feeling
I'm happy again
I'm laughing at clouds
So dark above us



*The sun's in my heart
 And I'm ready for love
 Let the stormy clouds
 Chase everyone from the place
 Come on with the rain
 I wear a smile on my face
 I walk down the lane
 With a happy refrain
 Dancing in the rain
 I'm happy again
 Just singin', singin' in the rain
 I'm singin' and dancin' in the rain
 I'm dancin' and singin' in the rain*



7 Homework

A. Free writing: write a 300-word composition on one of the following topics:

- a. Why I Like/Dislike Musical Movie?
- b. A Short Story on Lina's Life After the Audience Know the Truth

B. Movie review:

Watch the movie **High School Musical** (2006) after class and write a 300-word movie review.

C. Research project:

4 or 5 students form a group and do research on **American Musicals: Past and Present**.

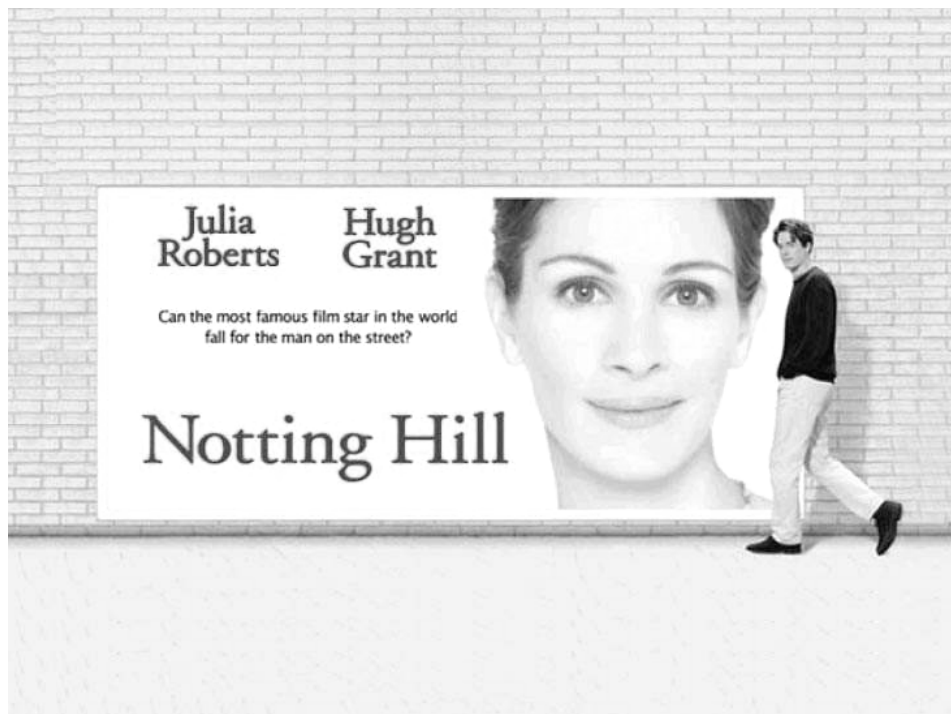
D. Presentation:

Prepare a presentation on the research result you get for the project and give a presentation in class next week.



Part B Notting Hill

Enjoy another movie about film stars!



U.S. Release time:	1999
U.S. Distributor:	Universal Pictures
Director:	Roger Michell
Screenplay:	Richard Curtis
Cast:	Julia Roberts...Anna Scott Hugh Grant...William Thacker
Music:	Trevor Jones