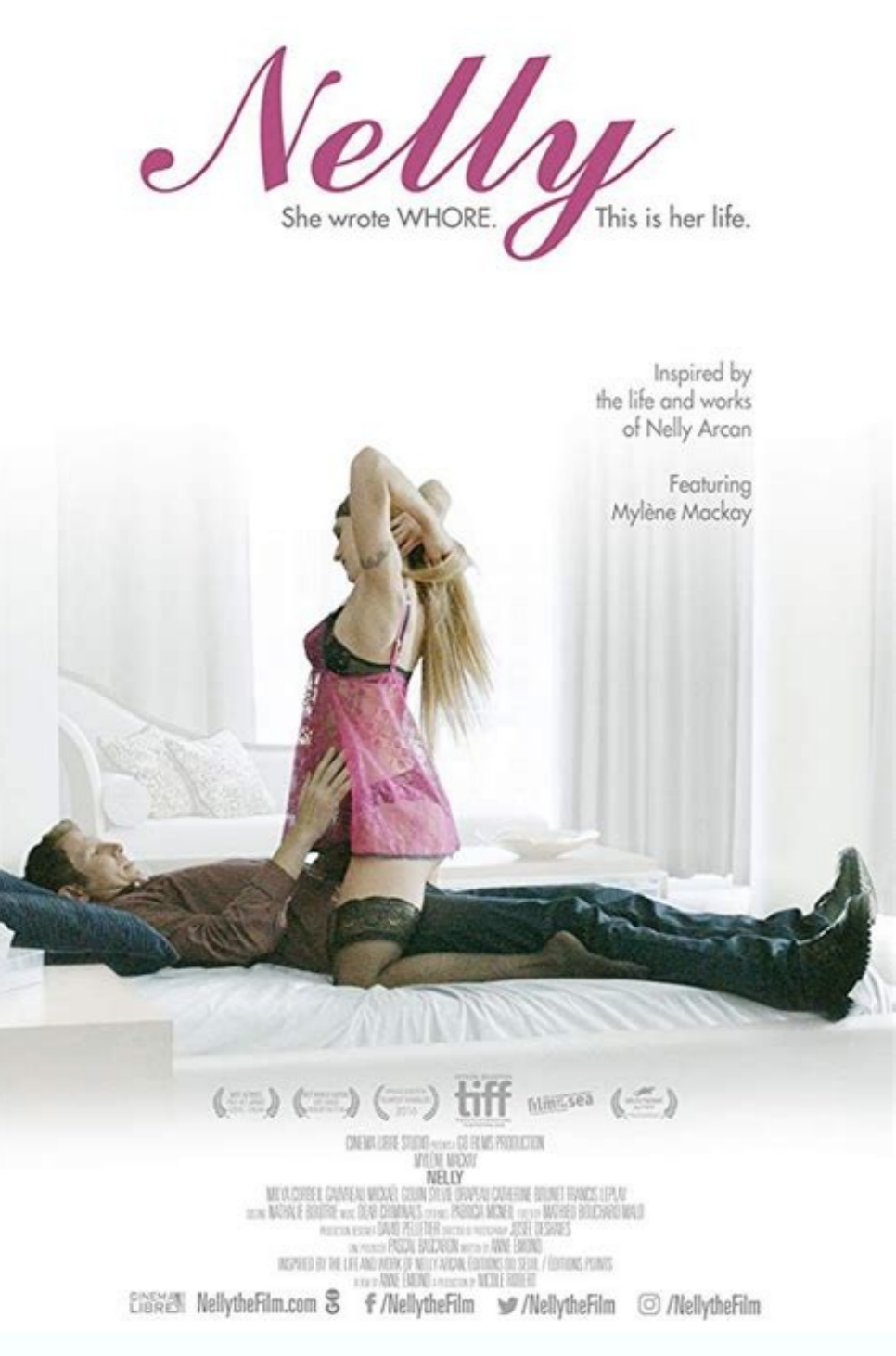


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Yes, it might be a little harder to follow these movies than videos that are made for English learners, but it is still worth the effort to learn with them. For starters, short films can help you learn a lot of new vocabulary words and phrases in a short amount of time. Here are some reasons why short films are great for your English: You learn to follow the natural flow of native speakers: The videos that are used as learning materials in most language courses have an artificially slow pace. In real-world short films, you will see how native speakers usually speak. Once you know how to follow the natural rhythm of English, it will be much easier for you to hold real conversations and use your English speaking skills. Short films are memorable, which makes vocabulary easier to remember: The plot, the setting, the characters and the visuals make it easier for you to remember the content of conversations. Every dialogue in a film has some purpose, and this helps you make sense of the conversation and makes you want to try to understand it. They often have many interconnected conversations: Short films often have many different interactions between different characters. The conversations are often located in different settings and about varied topics. This allows you to see how the same character talks in different situations and to different people. Since most short films are around 15 minutes long, all the conversations are usually short and to the point. This allows you to listen to conversations over and over to gain a better understanding of how natural English speech flows. The films below cover a lot of different content and types of conversations. Some of them may not be appropriate for everyone, especially younger viewers, so we recommend that you read the descriptions before playing the films. Now let's get started! "Welcome to My Life" Level: Beginner to Intermediate Genre: Animation Description: Monsters are often seen as being connected to evil. They are seen as things that are not normal and cannot be similar to humans at all. This short film turns this idea upside down. It is a story about Douglas, a teenage monster in high school who is trying to fit in. He is similar to many American teens. He has parents who care about him a lot. He plays football and even has a rap name (a name a rap artist uses that is different from their real name), "T-kash." He is also bullied, particularly because he looks different from other students. This short film is a simple way to learn basic school vocabulary. The voice acting in this film is also very natural. It gives you a good idea of how informal conversations and interviews might sound in American English. "The Fancy Gentleman" Level: Beginner to Intermediate Genre: Animation Description: "Classy" is a word used to describe a person who acts and speaks in a stylish or sophisticated way. A person like this is also described as "refined" and "respectable" and tends to have a high status in society. In the US, the accent, manners and fashion of rich Europeans are often associated with being classy. Specifically, American pop culture sees upper class French and British people as the most refined. In this film, learners can see this idea play out with the famous cartoon characters of Mickey and Minnie Mouse. In this film, you can clearly observe how the standard, casual American accent is seen as the opposite of being classy. Also notice how Mickey Mouse behaves and dresses differently before and after he is trained to be classy. Mickey starts speaking in a French accent after his training completes. He also expects certain things like servants and better food once he becomes classy. This film brilliantly shows how the language and the way of conversing is often seen as different between the lower and the upper classes of the same society. "Otherhalf" Level: Intermediate Genre: Comedy Description: "My other half" is a term you can use for a person who is in a romantic relationship with you. In this short film, you can see how the story plays with this English expression by using it literally. In the film, the lower half of a person breaks up with the rest of the body and just walks away. Eventually, the two halves realize that they need each other to stay happy. This film shows snippets of conversations from different situations. In the beginning, we see both parts of the body in a therapy session. The therapist and the person talk in a way which is typical of couples counseling. (Counseling helps people deal with mental and relationship problems through talking.) It also involves scenes in a bar where the lower half of the body goes for a date. "Hot Seat" Level: Intermediate Genre: Drama Description: "Coming of age stories" are stories where teenagers go through the journey of growing up. These are stories where teens learn what it means to become adults, both physically and emotionally. Usually, films in this category involve some challenges. The most common of them involve love, relationships or popularity. "Hot Seat" has all of these things, but not in the way you might expect. The story is about a birthday party where a shy girl, Andrea, uses a male stripper to gain popularity. (Strippers are people who entertain others by taking their clothes off.) This film shows emotional interactions where the characters explore their friendships. You will also learn a lot about the social vocabulary of American teens. You will be able to clearly see what is acceptable and desirable in these social circles and what isn't. Be aware that this film has some explicit and non-consensual sexual content. Avoid this one if that kind of a content is a trigger for you, or simple not your cup of tea. "Snake Bite" Level: Intermediate Genre: Horror Description: This film also deals with friendship and morality (the idea of what is right and wrong), but in a more horrific way. However, unlike most "horror" films, this movie does not involve ghosts or villains. It is about the friendship and the character of four boys in the face of danger. Dylan, Tyler, Cole and Xavier hike in the forest, looking for snakes. When a large snake bites Dylan and crawls away, the group has a tough decision to make. If the snake is not poisonous, they can just take Dylan back to the adults. If it is poisonous, they will need to cut off his leg or he will die within minutes. The film is great not only for observing an English conversation between teens, but also for learning words related to the forest. You should try to notice how the pitch (the highness or lowness of someone's voice), pace and length of sentences change as the situation becomes dangerous in the middle of the film. "Text Me" Level: Intermediate Genre: Comedy Description: This is a sweet short film about a date between two teenagers. As the name suggests, the movie involves conversations both through text and speech. The differences between these two ways of communication bring out the magic of the plot. The date between the teens starts out inappropriately. The girl is especially put off by the boy's behavior. But then, as the conversation moves forward, she discovers that he is actually sweet. Since the movie is set in a restaurant, you will observe how one is supposed to order food and interact with restaurant staff. Apart from that, you will also see how strangers get to know each other. The film focuses a lot on what is considered rude and polite according to American society. "Nadia" Level: Intermediate Genre: Drama Description: "Nadia" deals with the sensitive issue of homelessness for young people. The film starts with a classroom scene where the main character, Nadia, talks to the teacher in an extremely rude way. As the plot progresses, we discover that she has major problems with her family. After a big fight with her mother, she decides to leave home. The teacher who was insulted by her is the one who comes out and helps her. Apart from the conversations in the classroom and the family, the film really focuses on the social issue of homelessness in the English-speaking world. Homelessness is a major problem in many English-speaking countries like the UK and US, where young people who get less support from their families may start to live on the streets. "Two Dosas" Level: Intermediate Genre: Comedy Description: Pavan is a British citizen from an Indian family. The film starts with him telling two of his friends about his date with Chloe from the night before. He had hoped to impress her by taking her to an Indian restaurant. But she turned out to be more knowledgeable about Indian culture than him. What is interesting in this film is that you get to learn about the culture of native English speakers from Pavan rather than Chloe, which may be surprising for some viewers. When Chloe starts talking in Hindi with the waiter, it is Pavan who is unable to understand a single word. This film is great for learning British English. It also helps you to understand Indian culture in Britain as well as the general culture of native English speakers. The conversations revolve around sharing cultural identity. You can use them to see how you can introduce your own customs and culture to other English speakers. "The Meltdown" Level: Intermediate Genre: Comedy Description: "The Meltdown" is a short film in a "reality TV" format. If you have ever watched any reality show on TV, you know that half of the show is usually filled with interviews about things that happened, and the other half shows the events actually taking place. This makes it perfect for English conversation practice. This story is about a rude and careless scientist in a nuclear power plant. Due to a silly mistake he makes, the whole power plant goes into a meltdown (a nuclear accident). By the end of the film, however, he does something so unexpected that we are forced to see him in a more positive way. The characters speak in casual

American English. And since they all are scientists, the film is also good for learning general scientific vocabulary. "A Reasonable Request" Level: Intermediate to Advanced Genre: Drama Description: A son meets his father after a long time and makes a horrific request. Since most of the point is in the suspense (uncertainty), it is better if you just watch this film instead of us telling you about it. For English learners, this film is a great tool to observe uncomfortable conversations between family members. "The iMom" Level: Intermediate to Advanced Genre: Science Fiction Description: When you think about the future, what do you imagine? Most people think about how robots will make our lives easier. But this film has a different point of view. "iMom" is about a robot who is supposed to take the place of parents. It is sold as a magic solution for parents, so they do not even have to check if their kids are okay. In the movie, we see a kid whose parents are completely unaware of his problems in school. He wants their attention but his parents have given all of their responsibility to the robot. Eventually, iMom does something that will send a chill down your spine. ("To send a chill down [someone's] spine" is a common expression used to describe the physical feeling of being scared.) The film has various kinds of interactions between characters, including phone conversations. Learners should focus on the dialogue between the iMom and the son and notice all the human communication that the robot is not able to understand. "How Was Your Day?" Level: Intermediate to Advanced Genre: Drama Description: There is a dark side of parenthood that many people don't want to talk about. Being a parent is often described as being selfless. Parents are supposed to be these magical human beings who sacrifice everything for their children. But, like all humans, parents are flawed. This film aims to show the broken side of parenthood. It is a story about a mother who is not happy with her child. Her baby is born with a problem and cannot act like all the other kids. In a few minutes, we see this mother go through a journey that completely breaks her. Since she cannot talk about this to anyone, she directs all her hate towards her child. No viewer will be able to forget this short film after watching its ending. This film is great for learning Irish accents. There are many intimate (personal, between a smaller number of people) scenes such as baby showers, conversations between couples and also phone conversations with friends. There is also a short scene where the doctor gives the parents the news about their daughter. The way they interact in this uncomfortable situation gives you a good idea about how conversations like this could go in real life. "A Conversation with My Black Son" Level: Intermediate to Advanced Genre: Documentary Description: Racism is a major topic of discussion in the US today. This short film showcases some powerful perspectives on this issue without beating around the bush. ("Beating around the bush" is an idiom that means to talk about things indirectly, or to avoid talking about unpleasant things.) In it, parents of black sons describe how they prepare their kids for encounters with the police. "How I Faked Being American" Level: Advanced Genre: Documentary Description: Jack Barsky was a German spy for the Soviet Union. In this short documentary, he talks about how he trained himself to not only speak like an American but also dress, behave and eat like one. In the film, he talks about the differences between the German and the American way of acting. He also talks about differences in drinks and the way you open them. This film is not only educational for English learners but also inspirational. Even though Jack was a spy who was expected to be intelligent and cunning (clever), he took a lot of time to learn the basics of American English. As he explains, he practiced until he was "blue in the face." (This is an idiom that means that you work so hard that you run out of breath. When people actually become breathless, their faces often become blue because of a lack of oxygen.) "Sally Ride on Dumb Questions" Level: Advanced Genre: Documentary Description: Sally Ride was the first American woman to reach space. This was almost 20 years after the first woman was sent to space from the Soviet Union. In this interview, she talks about the challenges of being an astronaut in general. But she also talks about silly things journalists and other people often ask her because she is a woman. This short documentary was made using a recording from 1983. Learners can get a sense of the history of American science, culture and society from this interview. Sally talks about the school system, NASA (the American space association) and journalism. The conversation flows very smoothly. The animation also provides a good visual for all the topics covered in the interview. The best way to learn conversation skills from short movies is to try to imitate a scene after you watch it. Watching a conversation and writing down the dialogue also helps in observing and remembering information. You can pause and replay specific spots of any movie to do this, or you can find clips on YouTube. You can also use FluentU for movie clips and other authentic videos, since each FluentU clip is short and sweet, and has a transcript and accurate subtitles. Plus, these subtitles are interactive, allowing you to see the definition of any word without leaving the video, and to add words you don't know to a flashcard deck to review later. Of course, don't forget to enjoy the stories and have fun while you watch these films. Remember, the best learning happens when you love what you do!

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