



© Universal Pictures

Revivre la conquête spatiale à travers la bande-annonce de First man

Un film de Damien Chazelle, 2018

Type d'activité : Analyse de la bande-annonce

Durée : 2-3 h

Introduction

Premier biopic consacré à Neil Armstrong, le film First Man, dans la lignée du célèbre discours de Kennedy, se concentre sur les nombreuses difficultés rencontrées pour parvenir à envoyer un premier homme sur la lune.

Si la bande-annonce fait fi du contexte historique de la guerre froide et de la nécessité pour les Américains de planter leur drapeau sur la lune avant les Russes, elle soulève plusieurs problématiques inhérentes au programme de Cycle terminal : le progrès se fait-il toujours au profit de l'humanité ? Quels sont les sacrifices auxquels sont confrontés les héros ? Quels sont les risques encourus pour un homme dans l'espace ?

First Man dresse le portrait d'un père de famille en apparence ordinaire voué à devenir l'emblème mondialement connu de la conquête spatiale. Mais le film ne se limite pas à sa portée historique, il se présente comme une expérience, véritable plongée en Imax dans l'aventure spatiale qui ne manquera pas de subjuguier les élèves qui auront la chance de le voir en salles.

Dans les programmes

Niveau	Objets d'étude	Compétences
Cycle terminal	Mythes et héros L'idée de progrès Espaces et échanges	▶ Compréhension orale ▶ Expression orale ▶ Utilisation des TICE



First man

Un film de : Damien Chazelle
Genre : Biopic
Année : 2018

L'histoire

Une plongée en immersion dans la première mission Apollo, des essais infructueux sur Terre aux premiers pas de Neil Armstrong sur la lune.

1 / Look at following picture and say as much as you can about it.




2 / Watch the trailer and answer the following questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSoRx87OO6k>



a/ Fill in the following chart about the main characters :

NAMES	FEELINGS/ PERSONALITY (circle the correct words)
	quiet loud extrovert funny talkative loving impatient talented enthusiastic introvert excited terrorized humble bad-tempered lunatic caring vain anxious
	stressed ambitious vain angry realistic fearful happy loving worried relaxed busy enthusiastic supportive reliable strong excited funny cool caring calm

Comment on their relationship.

Is the man portrayed as an American hero ?

b/ What is the atmosphere of the trailer ? Pick out elements (images, music, words...) to justify your answer.

c/ Which genre(s) does the film belong to ? Justify your answer(s).

- | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| ROMANCE | ROAD TRIP | COMEDY | HORROR FILM | THRILLER |
| BIOPIC | MUSICAL | DISASTER FILM | HISTORIC FILM | DRAMA |

Comment on the slogan « Experience the impossible journey ».

d/ How is the story of the first Apollo mission presented ? in your opinion, is this more a film about a man, or a film about history / space discovery? What makes you think so ?

e/ In a famous 1962 speech President John Fitzgerald Kennedy said : « We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard ». Say what is hard about going to the moon in the trailer. Can you think of other difficulties the Apollo Missions had ?

3 / Put the video into perspective

a/ Comment on the title of the film. What/ who does it refer to ? What else could it refer to ?

b/ Watch the original moonlanding video and compare it to the *First Man* trailer :

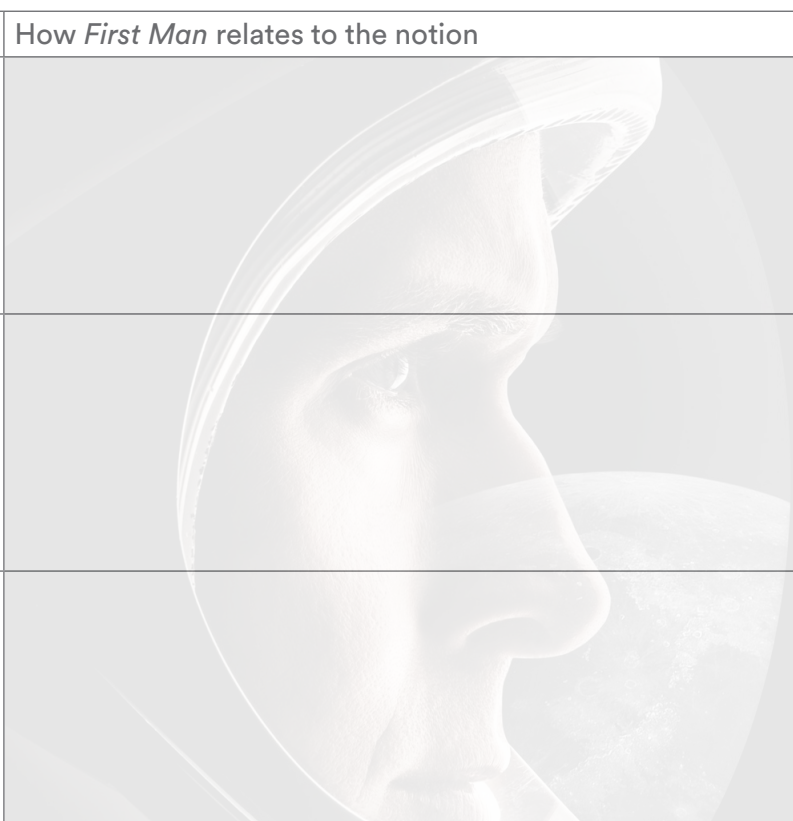
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwZb2mqld0A>

What do you think of Damien Chazelle’s recreation of the historic event ?

c/ Do your research !

In groups, search online for information about : the real Neil Armstrong, the Apollo missions, the Cold War context, Kennedy’s « We go to the moon » speech and the Soviet space program. Then share your findings with the class and make a collective timeline of space discovery on a poster for the classroom.

3 / Link the video to the notions on the syllabus

Notions	How <i>First Man</i> relates to the notion
<p>Myths and heroes</p> <p>What made the real Neil Armstrong a hero ? In the trailer, how is the hero portrayed ? Why has the first moonlanding become mythical ?</p>	
<p>Spaces and exchanges</p> <p>Why have humans tried to conquer space since the Cold War ? What sort of exchanges could there be between Men and space ? What is the point of them ?</p>	
<p>The idea of progress</p> <p>Is space exploration a form of progress ? How so ? What is shown as the cost of progress in the trailer ? Why are there people opposing it ?</p>	



Éléments de correction

2/a/ Neil Armstrong : quiet introvert loving talented humble caring anxious

Janet Armstrong : stressed angry realistic fearful loving worried supportive reliable strong caring

Their relationship is threatened by the mission / will their marriage withstand Neil's absence and full commitment to his job ? Janet blames Neil for sacrificing his family / his role as a father to his work.

b/ tense atmosphere (dramatic music vs. lullaby, dramatic punchlines « You don't have anything under control », gloomy lighting, image of the broken glass in Neil's hand)

c/ adventure film / biopic / disaster film / historic film / drama (family scenes)

It's not a film, it's an experience >> shot in Imax for full audience immersion >> the goal is to share the feelings of the first men traveling to the moon, not just hear about their story.

d/ Focus on the man / the hero torn between his private life and his public life (like a superhero). History is evacuated from the trailer (context of the cold war / political stakes of the mission).

The film is about a personal journey, how his story becomes history (classic tactics in literature and film : tell history from the prism of one iconic individual, ex : Forrest Gump).

e/ In the trailer : leaving one's family, death of loved ones, repeated technical failures, fear of the unknown
Other difficulties : financing the project / outrun the Russians (first man in orbit Yuri Gagarin 1961) / creating space-resistant materials / anticipating problems outside the atmosphere / crew safety etc).

3/a/ First Man = could be Adam in the Bible / prehistoric men

Chazelle presents Armstrong as an American hero / explorer, in the line of Columbus bringing progress / civilization to the savages. The Apollo mission is seen as part of the Manifest Destiny of the USA (a chosen people guided by God to a promised land).

4/b/ The original moonlanding conveys a sense of happiness / joy that is absent from the film. Chazelle chooses to focus on the tension / risks, which may seem strange as we all know how the story ends. Somehow ironically, the original film is less stressful for the viewer.

5/ Myths and heroes >> focus on the sacrifices a hero must make for his cause / the hero serves his country before his family, however much he loves them.

Spaces and exchanges >> space as the ultimate frontier / the moon as another land to conquer and colonize (first) : the endless story of men fighting over borders for power.

Men pollute space as they conquer it : not a beneficial exchange (will the moon end up as damaged by Men as

Pour aller plus loin

► *First Man, The Life of Neil A. Armstrong*, de James R. Hansen, Simon & Schuster, 2005.

La biographie officielle de Neil Armstrong, dont le film est l'adaptation

► Le site officiel américain du film : www.firstman.com

► Le site officiel de la Nasa, mine d'information sur les missions Apollo et leurs équipages : www.nasa.gov

► Les images du premier alunissage : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwZb2mqld0A>

► Le célèbre discours de J.F. Kennedy, « We choose to go to the moon », qui lance la conquête spatiale : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuW4oGKzVKc>