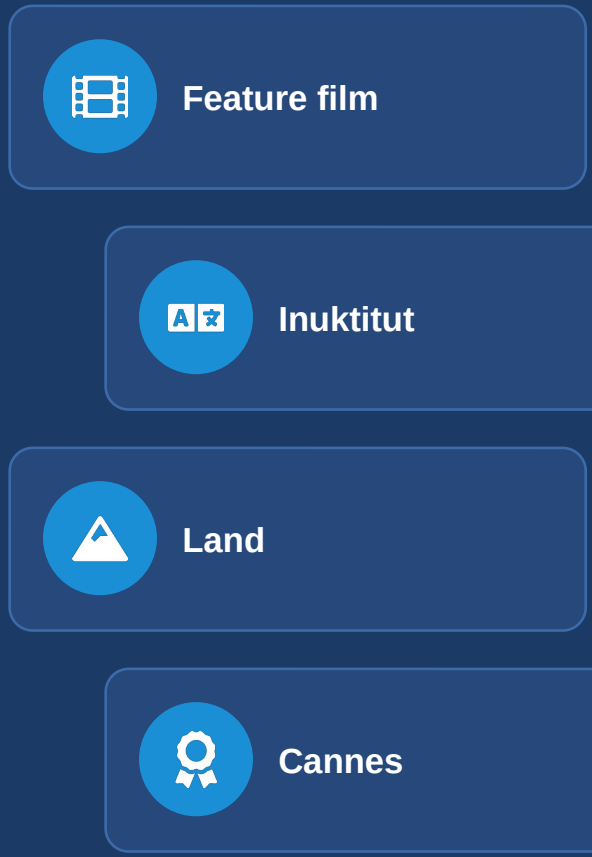
NBE3U Signal and Story, Lesson 4

The Fast Runner

Inuit filmmaking from Igloolik to the world



Today's goals

We are learning…

- How Inuit filmmakers shaped Canadian cinema.
- To analyse how a film's form and techniques create meaning.

I can…

- Describe Isuma's history and Atanarjuat's significance.
- Analyse how language, landscape, pace and sound create meaning in an excerpt.
- Evaluate how effectively a film communicates with different audiences.
- Explain how Inuit film influences identity and heritage in Canada.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–8 min	**Hook**	Predict
8–20 min	**Isuma**	Note
20–45 min	**Viewing**	Watch and note
45–62 min	**Form and meaning**	Analyse
62–75 min	**Influence**	Discuss and write

Warm-up



Most films you watch are in English or have English dubbing. What changes when a film is made in a language most of its world audience doesn't speak?

Sentence starters

“The audience has to…”

“The filmmakers don't have to…”

“It tells viewers that…”

How it works

- Pairs: 3 minutes.

Big idea

In 2001, Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, the first feature film written, directed and acted in Inuktitut, won the Caméra d'Or at Cannes. Made by an Inuit production company with its community, it showed the world that a film could centre Inuit language, land and story on Inuit terms.

Igloolik Isuma Productions

Founded 1990

In Igloolik, Nunavut: the territory's first independent production company.

Founders

Zacharias Kunuk, Pauloosie Qulitalik and Paul Apak, with Norman Cohn.

Atanarjuat, 2001

Caméra d'Or at Cannes; Best Film at imagineNATIVE.

Venice, 2019

Isuma represented Canada at the Venice Biennale.

Film terms

long take	A shot that runs a long time without a cut. *Lets time and land be felt.*
framing	What the camera includes and excludes. *Close-up, wide shot.*
diegetic sound	Sound from the world of the film. *Wind, footsteps, voices.*
subtitles	Translated text on screen. *Who is the original audience?*

Watch



Teacher-chosen excerpt from Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner (2001) or another Isuma film

Igloolik Isuma Productions

isuma.tv

While you watch: On page 1, note language, camera, landscape, pace and sound. Mark one moment you'll remember.

Compare notes

In pairs:

1. Compare your viewing guides.
2. Add one technique your partner noticed.
3. Agree on the most important technique.
4. Find two moments as evidence.

Two rhythms

A typical action film

- Fast cuts.
- Music tells you what to feel.
- The hero explains things.

The excerpt

- Long takes.
- Wind, ice, voices.
- The audience watches and waits.

What does each rhythm ask of its audience?

Model analysis

Task: How does one technique create meaning?

In the excerpt, the camera often holds a wide shot of the ice for several seconds after the characters have spoken. Because there is no music telling us how to feel, the wind and the long silence become part of the scene. The technique slows the viewer down to the pace of travel on the land, so the land feels like a presence in the story rather than a backdrop for it.

Why it works

- Names one technique.
- Describes a specific moment.
- Explains the effect on the viewer.
- Links technique to meaning.

Write your analysis

On page 2:

1. Choose the technique that matters most.
2. Two specific moments as evidence.
3. Explain how it creates meaning.
4. 150 to 200 words.

Talk it out



How might a film like this affect Inuit viewers' sense of identity and heritage? How might it change non-Inuit viewers' ideas about Inuit?

Sentence starters

“For Inuit viewers, seeing… could…”

“For others, it challenges…”

“Language on screen matters because…”

How it works

- Groups: 5 minutes.
- Don't speak for Inuit: use the evidence.

Exit ticket

1. One fact about Isuma.

2. One technique and its effect.

3. One way the film influences identity or heritage.

Next class: Witness.

Teacher reveal

The Fast Runner: key points

Isuma: Founded 1990 in Igloolik, Nunavut, by Inuit filmmakers Zacharias Kunuk, Pauloosie Qulitalik and Paul Apak, with Norman Cohn.

Atanarjuat (2001): A feature in Inuktitut, made by Inuit with their community; Caméra d'Or at Cannes.

Language: Inuktitut dialogue, subtitled for others: the film doesn't translate itself for outsiders first.

Landscape and pace: Long takes and natural light put the land and time at the centre, not a fast Hollywood rhythm.

Influence: It proved Inuit-language cinema could reach world audiences and inspired a generation of Indigenous filmmakers.

Effectiveness: Judge it by its purposes: for Inuit audiences, recognition and language; for others, an invitation to watch on Inuit terms.