

HorrorFest Lesson: Free Horror Movies

So, this week, with the STN 60 Second Horror Festival in full swing and a new batch of scary films dropping onto Netflix and HBOMax, it is clear that Halloween is creeping up on us (pun intended).

So, to add to the festivity of the season, this week's resource for teachers is the Public Domain Horror Film!

Public Domain films are titles that, due to copyright expiration, are free to distribute and download. These films can be easily found on youtube or other hosting sites and can be shared with students, both virtually and in-person. Plus, there are some amazing films in the public domain and the three that I am suggesting today are under 75 minutes long, which makes them perfect for a quick viewing during a class period. Win-win.

Oh, and since these were made prior to 1960, there is practically no need to worry about questionable content because everything had to be G-rated to pass the censorship board. Thank you [Hays Code](#)!

The first is a Horror classic: [The House on Haunted Hill \(1959\)](#)

Grabbing an 88% on Rotten Tomatoes, this horror classic has got it all. Ghosts! Acid Pits! Dancing Skeletons! This is campy horror at its finest. You will have a great time laughing through this one with your students.

The Second film is an adaptation of a familiar short story: [The Most Dangerous Game \(1932\)](#)

Pulling in an impressive 100% on Rotten Tomatoes, this film, starring Fay Wray and Joel McCrey, is an absolute hit. It has people being hunted on an island, a creepy villain and lots of Fay Wray screaming (which she became quite famous for during the golden age of Hollywood).

And the last, but certainly not least: [The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari \(1920\)](#)



This thing looks like it was made by Tim Burton's grandpa! Hailed as the first Horror film, this silent classic pulls in another 100% from Rotten Tomatoes. It was one of the most successful

German expressionist films inspired both the Gothic fantasy and the Noir genres of the 1940s to present. This is one of the most delightfully bizarre and unforgettable films of the bunch. You never quite shake Caligari once you've seen it.

If you are looking to turn this into an extended classroom lesson, I recommend using the lesson plans sent out with the film festival materials ([off-screen space](#), [gradual reframe](#) , and the [Kuleshov Effect](#)) to analyze these films.

Films like this are all over and just because they are in the public domain doesn't mean they are not quality, influential pieces of cinema history. So enjoy the Halloween season in style with some classics, free to use, and widely available online.

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