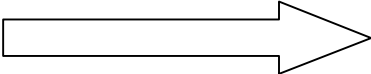
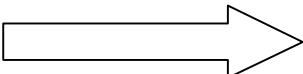


## What is an **INDEPENDENT FILM?**

1. Made outside of traditional Hollywood film system
2. Any movie funded with less than 50% of money from one of the "big six" major film studios: Columbia, 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros., Paramount, Universal, Walt Disney/ Touchstone
3. Very small budget
4. Character-driven 
5. Keeps the artist/filmmaker's original vision intact without corporate corruption
6. Strong, original and/or controversial storyline 

Interestingly...

- Film festivals is where most indie films are featured: Telluride, Sundance, Cannes, etc.
- More Hollywood stars are showing up in indie films in an effort to experience a piece of the hard-core acting side of the film industry, which is something they rarely get in big-budget studio films.
- One certain characteristic all true indie film-makers have is the willingness to take risks when they tell their stories.



» Olive

*LOVES: Beauty Pageants, Grandpa*  
*HATES: Fighting*

### CAST:

Greg Kinnear as	Richard Hoover
Toni Collette as	Sheryl Hoover
Steve Carell as	Frank Ginsburg
Paul Dano as	Dwayne
Abigail Breslin as	Olive Hoover
Alan Arkin as	Grandpa Edwin Hoover

## LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE



How do these characteristics show up in **Little Miss Sunshine?**

**DIRECTIONS:** The questionnaire was a popular social event party game 1870 to turn of the century . (1) Using our web pages, access the questionnaire online and answer 7 questions of your choice. Put your responses in the middle column. (2) Next, record Proust's responses to the same questions you choose. Put his answers in the right column. (3) Lastly, scan the research on Proust to find key ideas. Put them in the left column.

Who is <b>Marcel Proust</b> ?	Proust's Famous Questionnaire (7 of your responses)	Proust's Famous Questionnaire (Proust's responses to your 7)
Birth:	1.	
Proust is known for:	2.	
His parents were known for:	3.	
Illness that framed his life:	4.	
Major successes:	5.	
How he died:	6.	
Your favorite Proust quotes:	7.	

**DIRECTIONS:** Onto a more controversial character. (1) Using our web pages links, research Friederich Nietzsche's philosophical ideas and writings. Put the required information in the left column. (2) AFTER THE FILM, you'll be able to decide how Proust and Nietzsche are symbols for two main characters. Put those responses in the right column.

Who is **Friedrich Nietzsche**?

Key philosophical ideas:

•

•

•

•

•

Why is Nietzsche controversial?

Your favorite Nietzsche quotes:

**Post Film Reflection:** How is Proust an appropriate symbol for the character of Frank? Discuss three key reasons.

What effect did Nietzsche's thinking have on Dwayne?

Why do you think these ideas often resonate so much with teenagers?

In what ways does Dwayne grow up during the journey?

## Elements of a “Road Film”

The road movie has been a staple of American films from the very start, and have ranged in genres from westerns, comedies, gangster/crime films, and action-adventure. But the things road movies have in common include:

- An episodic journey or quest.
- In each episode, there is a challenge to be met, although not all of them will be met successfully.
- In most episodes, a piece of the plot is revealed - knowledge or allies are gained, and so on.
- There is (of course) an open road or undiscovered trail.
- A search for escape, or
- A quest for some kind of goal – either a distinct destination or the attainment of love, freedom, mobility, redemption, the finding or rediscovering of oneself, or a coming-of-age.

The road is a testing ground for the main characters -- These people on the road often have courage and determination they never knew they had, and the road movie proves it to them.

The genre deals with themes of:

- breaking from tradition and normality,
- embracing change,
- escapism – from the constraints of society or otherwise, and most obviously:
- freedom.

One important, conventional filmmaking technique in the road movie is the use of mobile cameras; shots of the vehicle as it moves along the road, as well as shots from the point of view of the driver, making the viewer feel part of the journey being undertaken. These techniques enhance the idea of mobility. This series of shots is also known as the ‘dynamic montage sequence,’ used to convey the passing of time and therefore length of the journey, as well as the thrill of driving.

Cars or motorbikes are the most common form of transport within a road movie, and as well as the aforementioned conventional landscape shot, empty roads, border-crossings, motels and gas stations frequently appear. Also typical are shots of wing-mirrors and side windows, as well as shots from a camera placed somewhere on the vehicle, so that features of it are prominent at close range to the viewer.

The Online Resources for Media and Society (4<sup>th</sup> edition, chapter 15) describes the movement within road movies as a car chase which extends to a whole film; making it constantly exciting, but always alluding to the **“American representations of space: the way to deal with or solve problems is to move.”**

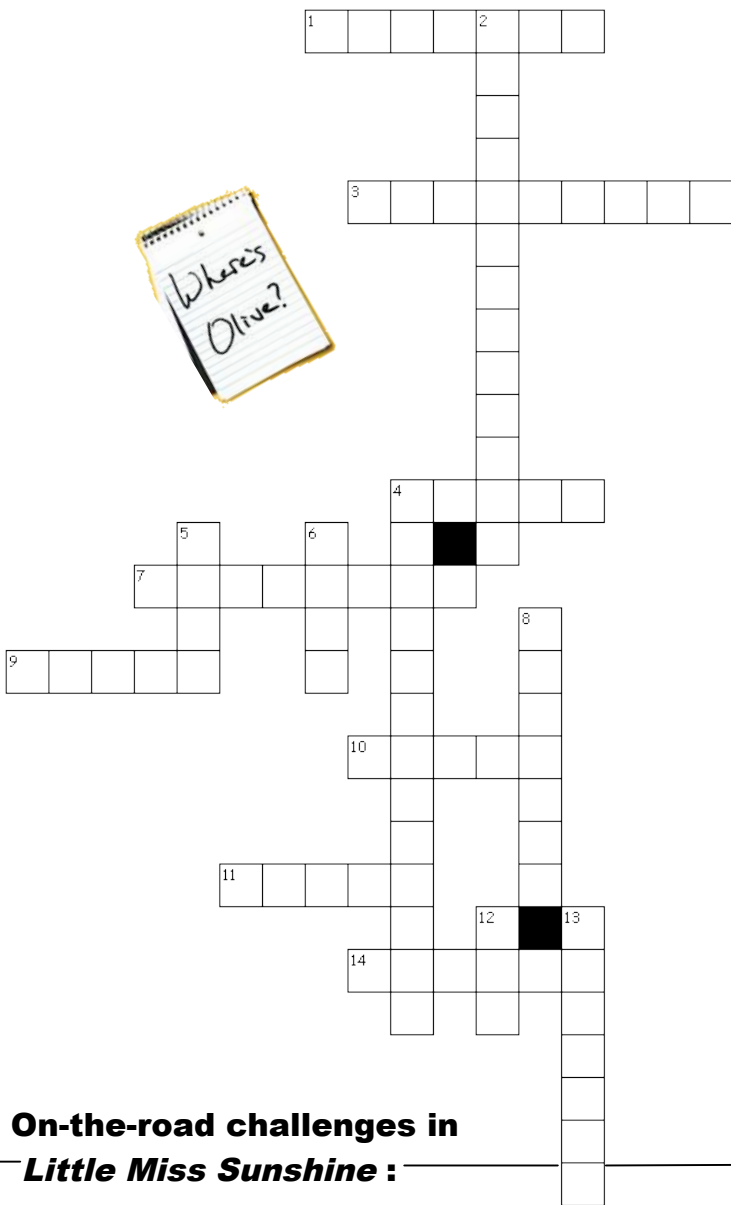
Road movies traditionally end in one of five ways:

- Having met with triumph at their ultimate destination, the protagonist(s) return home, wiser for their experiences.
- At the end of the journey, the protagonist(s) find a new home at their destination.
- The journey continues endlessly.
- Having realized that as a result of their journey they can never go home, the protagonists either choose death or are killed.
- The film ends without any implication of further jaunt.

*Review this info before attempting the puzzle on the next page.*

# LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

## Indie Film and Road Movie



### ACROSS

1. The series of moving shots are also referred to as the '\_\_\_\_\_ montage sequence.'
3. In each leg of the journey there is a \_\_\_\_\_ to be met.
4. The less ideal ending to a road movie includes \_\_\_\_\_ because the characters realize they can never go home.
7. Shots of the vehicle moving along the road enhance the idea of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Open road or undiscovered \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Characters, if successful on the journey, return home \_\_\_\_\_ for their experience.
11. An episodic journey or \_\_\_\_\_
14. "The way to deal with or solve problems is \_\_\_\_\_."

### DOWN

2. Pretty conventional filmmaking technique in road movies.
4. The road proves to characters a \_\_\_\_\_ they never knew they had.
5. Sometimes the journey is NOT about escape or freedom but the attainment of some \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In most parts of the journey, a piece of \_\_\_\_\_ is revealed.
8. The road proves to characters a \_\_\_\_\_ they never knew they had.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ (abbreviation) shots make the viewer feel part of the journey.
13. The road is a \_\_\_\_\_ ground for the main characters.

### On-the-road challenges in *Little Miss Sunshine* :

1. List the challenges the family as a whole has faced so far:

2. List the challenges each character has faced individually:

Richard:

Sheryl:

Frank:

Dwayne:

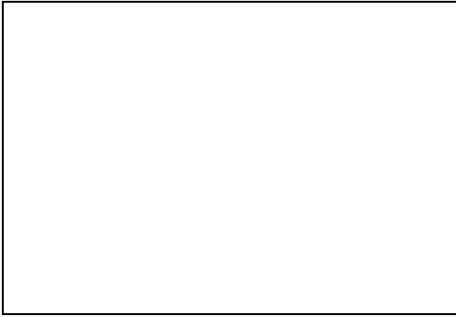
Grandpa:

Olive:

# LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

## “looking for...” challenge

1. Every shot is storyboarded in a film, so the composition of a shot, or the reaction of a character, or where the camera is pointed is significant. Notice these by sketching three different times (beginning, middle, end) the family is featured in a composition.



What scene is this? \_\_\_\_\_

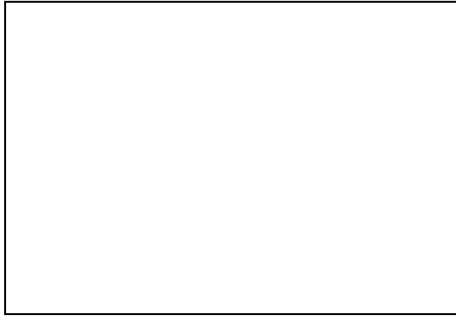
\_\_\_\_\_

What does this composition say about the family in the beginning of the film?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



What scene is this? \_\_\_\_\_

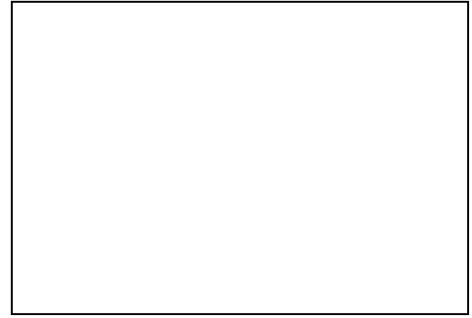
\_\_\_\_\_

What does this composition say about the family in the middle of the film?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



What scene is this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does this composition say about the family at the end of the film?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. (a) List five details from throughout the entire film that show the theme of WINNERS. (These details can include specific events, props, dialogue, description, music, some aspect of setting, etc.)

(b) At the end of the film, reflect. Which details work best to convey the theme? Why?

