



REEL
DIALOGUE

Discussion Guide

Film: Arrival

Discussion for a movie night: Enjoy the film. Afterwards, here are some discussion questions that might help you to engage with others on the topics from the film.

Enjoy the time engaging with the film, your faith and friends.



Film Synopsis

When twelve silent, monolithic alien spaceships touch down at twelve locations across the planet, humanity is thrown into chaos. Nobody knows what the aliens want, and whether they are dangerous. In Montana, linguistics professor Louise Banks (Amy Adams) is brought in, along with physicist Ian Donnelly (Jeremy Renner), to try and find a way of talking to these extraterrestrial visitors. Don't read too much about Arrival before you go and see it, because the story's gentle rug-pull in the third act needs to be experienced firsthand. We're left haunted by some timely questions about empathy, about reaching out towards the Other, and about the painful choices we must make in order to truly live.



Discussion points for Reel Dialogue

How did you react to Amy Adams' central performance?

What qualities did she bring to the character of Louise?

What did the film's cinematography and sound add to your experience?

Were there any visual moments, or moments from the soundtrack, which particularly struck you? How would you describe Arrival's overall atmosphere?

What do you think are the key components of good communication?

What does the film have to say about the power of language, both to connect us and to come between us? In what sense can language be a 'weapon'?

What do you think of the idea – known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis – that language actually shapes how we think and how we view the world? What deeper implications might this idea have?

What did you think of Louise's choice to embrace her future, despite knowing where it would lead?

At the end of the film, Louise asks Ian whether he would have made different choices in his life, if he'd been able to see the future. How would you answer this question in relation to your own life? How can we learn to make peace with the certainties and the uncertainties of our own futures?