

FRANKENWEENIE

FILM EDUCATION'S FRANKENWEENIE FOCUS ON WRITING

TEACHING MAP

This Teaching Map uses the film *Frankenweenie* as a way into creative writing for upper Primary and lower Secondary age school children who will be developing their ideas about **genre** and **story creation**.

These notes provide teachers with an outline for a '**Big Writing**' project focusing on the unique characters, setting, style and events of the film.

THE FRANKENWEENIE BIG WRITING PROJECT

Introduction

Using focussed study sessions on stills and sequences from and about the film, children will find themselves immersed in the world of the film and inspired to write about it.

Form and style

In *Frankenweenie*, Tim Burton's combination of:

- animation
- horror
- science-fiction
- stop-motion animation
- classic style and black and white colour palette

makes it the perfect text to inspire a variety of writing styles in the classroom.

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Preparation for the *Frankenweenie* Big Writing day

Use the [film's trailer](#) to generate discussion about:

- character descriptions
- the key plot events

Preparation activity ideas:

1. Ask the children to write sentences using third person and past tense, describing the actions of the main character, Victor.
2. Explore the details that have gone into the stop-motion animation – describe them using adjectives, similes and metaphors to create 'patterns' and texture in their own descriptions of the action.
3. Focus on the dialogue of the film's trailer and use speech marks to relay what was said.
4. Express an opinion and explain their point of view about the film's unique style using evidence from the trailer (screen-grabs or still images).

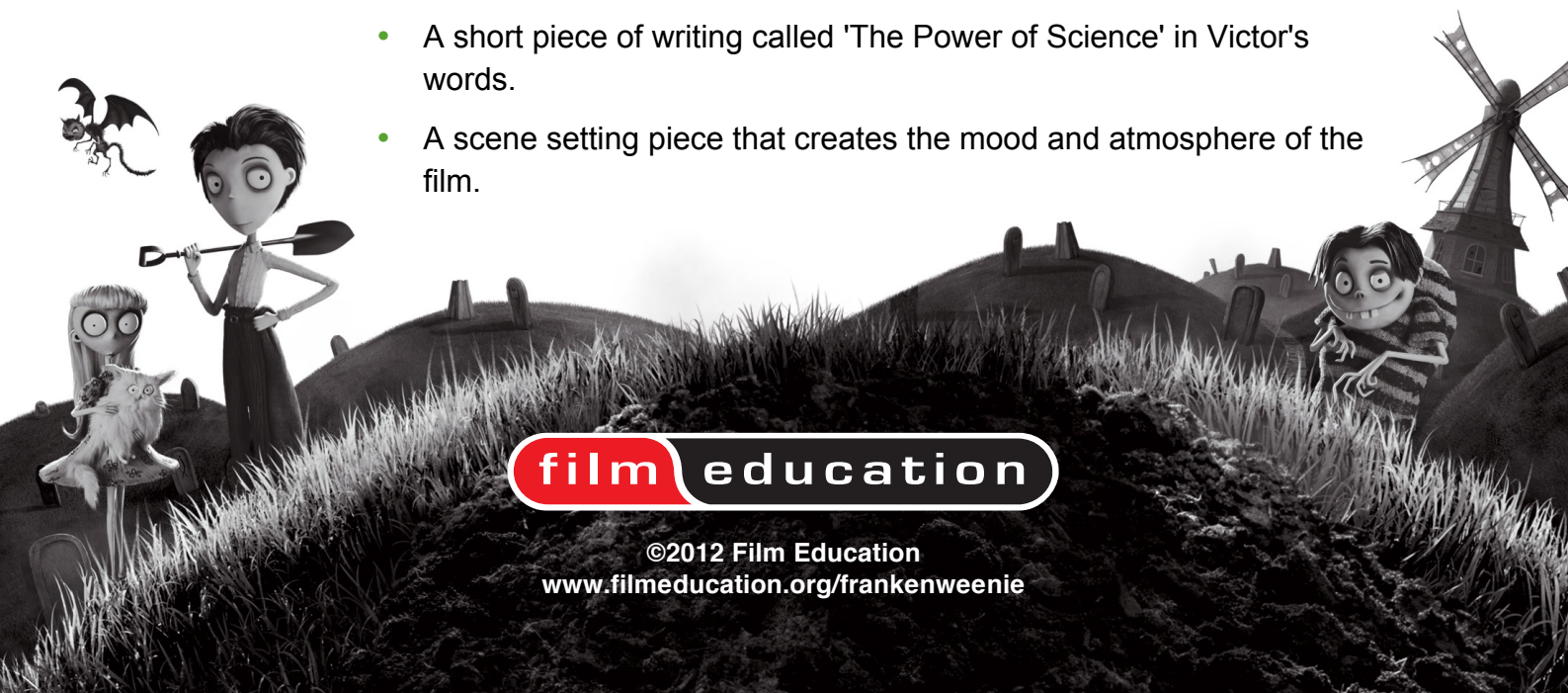
Explain that during the 'Big Writing' day, children will be able to write freely about the film. They will be given a choice from the following to focus on:

- As a local news reporter, report on sightings of Sparky after Victor has 'recreated' him.
- Write a story in response to a given image from the film.
- A short piece of writing called 'The Power of Science' in Victor's words.
- A scene setting piece that creates the mood and atmosphere of the film.

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- A letter to Victor, from a person begging him to bring their own ex-pet to life, with reasons why.
- The opening sequence as they imagine it in the style of a film script.
- An annotated film still, outlining how the story is created on screen, using the headings of: character; setting; lighting; props and placement.
- A Director's Commentary for the Frankenweenie trailer.
- A piece of writing which gives advice to the voice actors and how to read their lines.
- A scary poem.
- A list of questions to ask Tim Burton in email form.
- A blog about a day working on the film set.

Homework

Children could discuss and make notes on *Frankenweenie* and their **Big Writing** ideas at the kitchen table as a homework activity. Pupils will be asked to have a **Big Talk** about what they plan to write before the Big Writing day. This involves them talking about the film and their plans in detail with their parents or guardians. Verbalising ideas in this way is a useful activity to aid the pre-writing planning process.

The *Frankenweenie* Big Writing day

Try to create a relaxed, working atmosphere in the classroom to put children in the right mood for the **Big Writing** day itself.

Try the following ideas:

- draw blinds to create the feeling of shadows, dark and light.
- perhaps you could create a 'science experiment' corner in the classroom just like Victor's attic.

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- use soft lighting and candles (Health and Safety rules permitting!)
- use the images and activities on the [website](#) as visual stimulus.
- if possible, allow pupils to work across age-ranges, sharing work and ideas.

Outcomes

Please send any written outcomes to Film Education's Primary Teacher at primary@filmeducation.org. We will showcase the best ones on our website and share them with the teachers on our database.



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