ANIMATION RESOURCE

film education

Anastasia

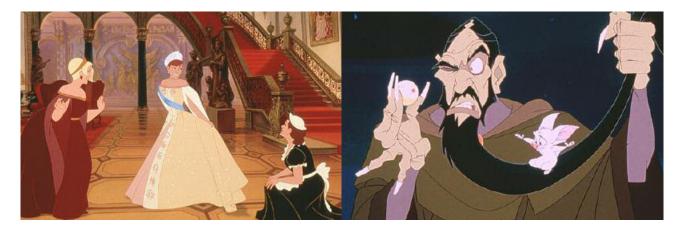Certificate U
Running time: 95 minutes
Website: www.foxhome.com/anastasia

Anastasia's family is put under a curse by the evil monk, Rasputin when she is only eight-years-old. Luckily Anastasia, the daughter of the last Russian Czar, manages to escape with the help of her grandmother. However, during her escape she falls and hits her head, losing her memory. Anastasia grows up in an orphanage as 'Anya' until she leaves to travel to St Petersburg to find her true identity. There she meets Dimitri, a boy who helped to save her along with her grandmother ten years ago. Dimitri helps to reunite Anastasia with her grandmother, the Empress, and protects her from the evil Rasputin who is trying to kill her.

Film Fact

The story of Anastasia is based on a true story. Anastasia was a Russian Princess who lived with her family in a Royal Palace in the early years of the twentieth century. In 1917 the Russian people grew tired of the Royal Family living in luxury while they were poor, so the family were taken away in the middle of the night. It is unknown whether Anastasia actually escaped or not.

Pre-viewing activity

1. Find some Russian music that may be used as the background music for the film.

Post-viewing activity

1. Use travel magazines to collect pictures of Russian buildings that you may have seen in the film to create the background for a cutout animated tale. Draw your own Anastasia characters and add them to the background to tell your own tale.

Animated Shakespeare

Certificate PG
Running Time: 90 minutes

The Taming of the Shrew
Love blows hot and cold for the impulsive couple, Petruchio and Kate. The play follows their stormy relationship using comic twists and turns to chart the often surprising course of a powerful love affair.

This animation was created using stop-motion animation with puppets.

The Tempest
Exiled twelve years earlier to a mystical island, Prospero has spent his time perfecting his magic art and planning revenge on his wicked brother who betrayed him. When a powerful sea-tempest shipwrecks his former adversaries, they are tricked and tormented by Prospero's magic to hilarious effect.
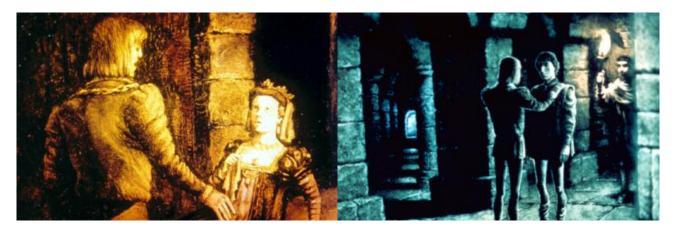

This animation was created using stop-motion animation with puppets.

Hamlet

Hamlet, son of the King of Denmark, is summoned home for his father's funeral and his mother's wedding to his uncle. Hamlet discovers that his uncle, whom he hates, murdered his father. In a complicated plot, Hamlet manages to feign madness, murder the 'prime minister', and take his revenge on his uncle, but only at the cost of almost everyone's lives, including his own and his mother's.

This animation was created by painting on glass.

Film Facts

Shakespeare – The Animated Tales series is noted for its wide range of animation techniques. The animation was produced completely in Moscow at ChristmasFilms Studio, by a selection of Russia's most renowned animators. The techniques include stop-motion animation with puppets, cell animation, paint on glass and oil paint on cell animation.

Pre-viewing activities

1. Choose a character from a Shakespeare play that you are studying and sketch a picture of how you think that character will look from reading the descriptions of the character in the play. Create a moving puppet of your character by re-drawing your character's body parts e.g. legs, arms, head, neck, onto cardboard and fastening the parts together with paper fasteners. Animate your character by taking shots of the character using a digital camera or web camera.

2. Work in small groups to create all the characters, props and backgrounds from your chosen play and choose a scene from the play to animate together.

Post-viewing activities

1. In small groups, discuss the animation techniques used in each short film. Which did you like? Which was more eye-catching? Was one technique more effective then the other techniques in telling a story? Why do you think each technique was chosen for that specific story?

2. Use the internet to find out more about the techniques used in these short films and the rest of the Animated Shakespeare series.

Barnyard

Certificate PG
Running Time: 90 minutes
Website: www.barnyardmovie.com

When the farmer's away, all the animals play ... and sing, and dance. Eventually, though, someone has to step in and run things, a responsibility that ends up going to Otis, a carefree cow who doesn't like to keep his humanlike talents hidden.

Film Fact

It took more than 200 artists and technicians nearly four years to produce 'Barnyard' using computer-generated 3D animation.

Pre-viewing activity

1. Otis the cow and his barnyard friends are animals with humanlike talents. Make a list of the behaviour of real cows and think about how the animators might make this normal behaviour more amusing in the film Barnyard.

Post-viewing activities

1. Make a list of the 'humanlike' behaviour that the animals displayed in the film.

2. Choose one of the 'humanlike' behaviours that Otis displays and create a ten-frame storyboard of the moves that Otis needs to make to display that behaviour.

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Cars

Certificate PG
Running Time: 96 minutes
Website: www.disney.co.uk/DisneyMovies/cars/

Lightning McQueen is a hotshot rookie-racing car who begins a cross-country journey to the big Piston Cup Championship in California to compete against two seasoned pros. During his journey, McQueen finds himself unexpectedly detoured in the sleepy Route 66 town of Radiator Springs where he discovers that life is about the journey, not the finish line. McQueen gets to know the town's offbeat characters - including Sally - a snazzy 2002 Porsche, Doc Hudson - a 1951 Hudson Hornet with a mysterious past, and Mater - a rusty but trusty tow truck, who help him realise that there are more important things than trophies, fame and sponsorship.

Film Fact

The tyres of Lightning McQueen are manufactured by Lightyear, which is a reference to the real tyres manufacturer Goodyear, and the character Buzz Lightyear from Disney/Pixar's previous 'Toy Story' films.

Pre-viewing activity

1. All the vehicles in Cars are designed based on real cars, for example, Ramone is a 1959 Impala and Sarge is a 1942 Second World War Willy's Army Jeep. Choose a car and design a new character for Cars based on the car you have chosen.

Post-viewing activities

1. Use the internet or travel brochures to find real images of Route 66 to see where the animators found their inspiration for the film's settings. Why does it make such a good setting for a film?

2. Find out where the animators got their ideas for how the characters would look by searching real car images in magazines, books and the internet.

The Cat Returns

Certificate U
Running Time: 75 minutes
Website: http://disney.go.com/disneyvideos/animatedfilms/studioghibli/flash.html

Haru, a schoolgirl bored by her ordinary routine, saves the life of an unusual cat, and suddenly her world is transformed beyond anything she ever imagined. The Cat King rewards her good deed with a flurry of presents, including a very shocking proposal of marriage to his son! Haru embarks on an unexpected journey to the Kingdom of Cats, where her eyes are opened to a whole other world and her destiny is uncertain. To change her fate she'll need to learn to believe in herself and learn to appreciate her everyday life.

Film Fact

The Cat Returns took three years to complete. The film started when Studio Ghibli received a proposal from a Japanese theme park to make a twenty-minute animation starring cats. It was originally going to be a short straight-to-DVD project, but the studio were so impressed with the storyboard, and especially the main character, Haru, that the film was given a theatrical release.

Pre-viewing activity

1. Some of the main characters in The Cat Returns are talking cats. Can you think of any more animated films, which contain speaking cats?

Post-viewing activities

1. Draw your own cartoon cat and write a profile for the character.

2. The locations in the film include the Kingdom of Cats and Haru's world. How have the animators shown the difference between these two worlds? Compare the styles of buildings, types of transport, decorative features etc.

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Finding Nemo

Certificate U
Running time: 100 minutes
Website: www.disney.co.uk/DisneyMovies/nemo/

Marlin (a clown fish) is a widower who only has his son Nemo left of his family after a predator attack. Years later, on Nemo's first day of school, he's captured by a scuba diver and taken to live in a dentist office's fish tank. Marlin and his new absent-minded friend Dory set off across the ocean to find Nemo, while Nemo and his tank mates scheme on how to get out of the tank before he becomes the dentist's niece's new pet.

Film Fact

In the film Finding Nemo, the artists made the marine animals look more human by changing the shape of their faces and bodies.

Pre-viewing activity

1. Choose an underwater creature and give it more human features to look like a cartoon character.

Post-viewing activities

1. Trace around a picture of the outline of Nemo's face and photocopy it a few times. Add different eyes and mouths on each picture to show the different facial expressions of Nemo blinking, winking, smiling or frowning.

2. Draw a simple picture of some seaweed. Trace over the seaweed moving the top of the plant slightly. Repeat several times moving each stem slightly in each picture. Attach together to make a flipbook to show the movement of seaweed under the water.

Flushed Away

Certificate U
Running Time: TBC
Website: www.flushedaway.com

Roddy is a posh 'society mouse' who lives the life of a beloved pet in a posh Kensington flat. When a sewer rat named Syd comes spewing out of the sink and decides he's hit the jackpot, Roddy schemes to get rid of the pest by luring him into the 'whirlpool.' Syd may be an ignorant slob, but he's no fool, so it is Roddy who winds up being flushed away into the bustling sewer world of Ratropolis. In the sewer Roddy meets Rita, an enterprising scavenger who works the sewers in her faithful boat, the Jammy Dodger. Roddy wants to get out of the sewer; Rita wants to be paid for her trouble; and, speaking of trouble, the villainous Toad - who royally despises all rodents equally, making no distinction between mice and rats - wants them iced ... literally. The Toad dispatches his two hapless hench-rats, Spike and Whitey, to get the job done. When they fail, the Toad has no choice but to send to France for his cousin - that dreaded mercenary, Le Frog.

Film Facts

Aardman are well known for their stop-motion clay characters such as Wallace and Gromit and Creature Comforts. This film is Aardman's first film which does not include 'claymation' characters as the film has been entirely created using computers.

Pre-viewing activity

1. Aardman Animations who are well known for their stop-motion, clay characters, created the characters in Flushed Away. Use the internet to find out more about Aardman and make a list of their most famous characters.

Post-viewing activities

1. The animators designed the city of Ratropolis to reflect the landmarks of the City of London. Make a list of the London landmarks that you saw in the film.

2. Ratropolis has been created by 'junk' that the animals have found in the sewer. Create your own Ratropolis using collected pieces of junk such as cardboard boxes, empty packets etc.

3. Draw a storyboard sequence that shows Roddy being flushed away. Begin by drawing the toilet bowl and photocopying it five times. Then add Roddy in different 'flushing' positions to each picture and draw how the water splashes around him as the toilet flushes.

film education

Garfield 2

Certificate U
Running Time: 78 minutes
Website: http://microsites2.foxinternational.com/uk/garfield2/

Jon Arbuckle travels to the United Kingdom, and he brings his cat, Garfield, along for the trip. A case of mistaken cat identity finds Garfield ruling over a castle, but his reign is soon jeopardised by the nefarious Lord Dargis, who has designs on the estate.

Film Facts

Garfield has been the star of his own cartoon strip for over twenty-five years. Creator Jim Davis decided it was finally time to make Garfield into a real star with his first movie, Garfield: The Movie. Garfield is back in his second movie, Garfield 2. The character of Garfield was entirely computer generated but real animals played the other animal characters and their mouths were then changed using computer-generated imagery.

Pre-viewing activities

1. Collect Garfield comic strips from newspapers or the internet to see how Garfield's character comes to life through a cartoon storyboard.

2. Draw your own Garfield comic strip.

Post-viewing activity

1. Find a picture of an animal and make a slit under the mouth. Draw the bottom of the animal's mouth on a piece of card to place through the slit to make the animal talk.

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Home on the Range

Certificate U
Running time: 76 minutes
Website: http://disney.go.com/disneyvideos/animatedfilms/homeontherange/main.html

When an eviction notice shows up at the gates of the Patch of Heaven dairy farm, three cows take it upon themselves to prevent their home from being taken away. To do so, they'll need to collect the ransom on Alameda Slim, a cattle rustler with a yodel that can't be beat ... or ignored.

Film Fact

The film 'Home on the Range' is set in the Wild West with dusty terrain and frontier towns.

Pre-viewing activity

1. Find pictures of animated farmyard animals that have been in other animated films.

Post-viewing activity

1. Think about the sound effects that were used in the film. Use musical instruments or find objects to re-create some of the sounds.

Ice Age: The Meltdown

Certificate U
Running time: 81 minutes
Website: www.iceage2.co.uk

The Ice Age is coming to an end, and the animals are delighting in their new world: a melting paradise of water parks, geysers and tar pits. But when Manny, Sid and Diego discover that the miles of melted ice will flood their valley, they must warn everyone and somehow figure out a way to escape the coming deluge.

Film Facts

When making Ice Age the animators used a long process to create each character. First they used pencil to draw the characters. Then they used clay to produce a 3D model. Next they placed a grid on the surface of the model to allow the computer to record the shape of the model using the intersections of the lines. The computer then generated hundreds of curves to create the character's 3D form. Then a skeleton was built inside the body and fur was created around the body. When a character is being animated lighting has to be taken into account to create natural shadows to make the animation look more realistic.

Pre-viewing activity

1. Using non-fiction books compare illustrations of real Ice Age animals to the film characters. Investigate how the animators changed the original animals to give them their own characteristics for the film.

Post-viewing activities

1. Watch the first Ice Age film to see which new characters have been created for Ice Age: The Meltdown.

2. Draw your own Ice Age character for Ice Age 3 and use this to build a 3D clay model.

The Incredibles

Certificate U
Running Time: 120 minutes
Website: www.disney.co.uk/DisneyMovies/incredibles/intro.html

Bob Parr used to be one of the world's greatest superheroes (known to all as 'Mr. Incredible') saving lives and fighting evil on a daily basis. But now, fifteen years later, Bob and his wife have adopted civilian identities and live normal lives with their three kids. Bob has a job as an insurance claims adjuster fighting boredom and a bulging waistline. Itching to get back into action, Bob gets his chance when a mysterious communication summons him to a remote island for a top-secret assignment.

Film Facts

As with other Pixar productions, the original trailer for this film featured animation made especially for the trailer and not appearing in the final film. It was directed by Brad Bird eighteen months before the release of the movie.

The unusual architecture in the film was based on a distinctive style of 1950s space-age futurism known as Googie, most often seen in coffee shops and bowling alleys of the era. Many of the sets on the island use another 1950s pop style called Tiki architecture.

Pre-viewing activity

1. There have been many superhero films. Use the internet to find more examples.

Post-viewing activities

1. In the film Syndrome's facial features were based on those of the film's director, Brad Bird. Design a new animated superhero using your own facial features for your character's face.

2. The film's credits have a stylised 2-D animation sequence. Compare the credit animation style to the 3D CGI animation in the film to see how similar or different they are.

3. Create a new enemy for The Incredibles to defeat in a sequel.

James and the Giant Peach

Certificate U
Running time: 79 minutes

James Henry Trotters' happy life at the English seaside is rudely ended when a rhinoceros kills his parents and he goes to live with his two horrid aunts, Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker. When James accidentally drops some magic crystals by the old peach tree, strange things start to happen. The peach at the top of the tree begins to grow, and before long it's as big as a house. Then James discovers a secret entranceway into the fruit, and when he crawls inside, he meets a bunch of marvellous oversized friends – Old Green-Grasshopper, Centipede, Ladybug, Miss Spider, and more, who help him with his plans to try and get to New York.

Film Facts

The story of 'James and the Giant Peach' was originally written by Roald Dahl and illustrated by Quentin Blake. To make the film the animators had to make 180 puppets of the characters that were made from a metal skeleton with moving parts such as the eyes, legs and ears. They were given Latex rubber forms that were decorated and dressed in their costumes. They had to make 45 different heads for the character of 'James' as he displays a wide range of emotions.

Pre-viewing activity

1. James and the Giant Peach is not the only Roald Dahl book to be made into a film. Can you think of any others? Use the internet to help you.

Post-viewing activities

1. The character of 'James' has many good and bad things happen to him throughout the film that make him feel different things. These feelings show in his facial expressions. The animators for the film produced different faces for each expression. Draw pictures of James's face showing a range of expressions.

2. Think about the different scenes in the film. Make three lists to work out which scenes were 'live-action', 'stop-motion' and 'computer generated imagery'.