

Happily N'Ever After - Study Notes



FILM SYNOPSIS

Once upon a time in Fairy Tale Land, all is well: Cinderella's at the ball, Rapunzel's letting her hair down and sleeping beauty's about to get a big smooch.

But just as it's all headed for Happily Ever After, there's a slight hitch – the wise wizard who keeps the scales of good and evil in balance goes on holiday and his two assistants, Munk and Mambo, slip up and let Cinderella's wicked Stepmother, Frieda, get hold of his magical staff. Her goal: nothing less than to take over Fairy Tale Land, let the bad guys win and turn the endings of all the stories to 'Happily N'Ever After'.

Now Cinderella (Ella to her friends) is playing in a whole new ball game. Instead of waiting for her handsome prince to find her, she's got to wake up from her romantic dream and, find a way to stop Frieda and restore the balance of good and evil. With her best friend Rick at her side and unlikely army of dwarves, fairies, Munk and Mambo to back her up, Ella leaps into action. Can she save the day and find true love where she least expects it?

<http://www.happilyneverafterthefilm.com/>

You can watch and pause (for class activities) the film trailer at:

http://www.apple.com/trailers/lions_gate/happilyneverafter/

Certificate: PG

Teachers' Notes

Suitable for KS2: LITERACY

- Identify, discuss and collect story themes, main and recurring characters Describe and sequence events in different ways; discuss and evaluate characters
- Plan main points of story and sequence in different ways
- Develop character descriptions and include dialogue
- Write sequels to traditional stories
- Discuss features of traditional tales
- Explore different versions of stories
- Research fiction genres
- Write own versions of traditional tales

The Future Looks Grimm

Before the film read a range of Grimm fairy tales with the class. Many familiar fairy tale characters (centrally, Cinderella) appear in Happily N'Ever After but this film turns the fairy tale genre on its head.

- What are the key themes and plot features in traditional fairy tales? (e.g. heroes, damsels in distress, good vs evil, romance, magic etc.)
- Can you identify these themes in the fairy tales you read?

After watching the film:

- Which of these themes were present in Happily N'Ever After?
- How many traditional characters did you recognise in the film?
- In what ways had the characters changed from the original stories you have read?
- What other unexpected things did you notice that are not usually in a fairy tale?

TASKS

The Balance of Good and Evil

Before watching the film

Look at the characters in the film poster.

Within the poster compare:

- Costumes
- Colour
- Lighting
- Action, pose and expression

Which characters do you think are good and which are evil? What is it about their appearance that makes you think that?

Thinking about costume, colour, light etc. ask pupils what else can they tell about the characters' personalities just by looking at them.

With your knowledge of fairy tales, can you predict what will happen in the story? What role do you think each character on the poster will play?

After watching the film

Watch the trailer. Recap on how characters are presented through:

- Costumes
- Colour
- Lighting
- Action, pose and expression
- Dialogue (what they say, and how they say it)

Ask pupils to draw the characters and categorise them as either good or evil. Can they express this with colour, costume, action etc. in their drawings?

Brainstorm other words to describe the characters' personalities and their place in the story. Which characters surprised you in the film?

Think back to your predictions about character and plot. Did any characters surprise you with their behaviour?

Storyboarding

Watch the trailer again pausing at different moments to discuss the way the animators frame the action.

Can you recognise these shot types in the trailer?

- long shots (often used to establish the location for a scene)
- medium shots (often used when two or three characters are interacting so we can see their reactions)
- close-ups (often used to show characters' emotions in detail)
- extreme close-ups (used sometimes to focus in on a character's emotions in a dramatic way)
- low angle (when someone is seen from below looking up, to make them look intimidating or powerful)
- high angle (when someone is seen from above looking down, to make them appear small and vulnerable)

Ask pupils to storyboard their favourite fairy tale, applying these shot types.

For a helpful resource on Storyboarding visit www.filmeducation.org

Fairy Tale Endings Aren't What They Used To Be

For a longer writing task, ask pupils to choose their favourite traditional fairy story and write an alternative version. They can put a humorous twist on the characters, plot and ending.

- Look back at the themes of traditional fairy tales and the stereotypical characters.*
- Perhaps the typical hero in your chosen story could be cowardly.*
- Maybe the damsel in distress could be the brave hero.*
- Perhaps your fairy tale could end Happily N'Ever After!*