



Most of the films that we see in the cinema or on television tell us stories. The work that you will do on the film 'White Fang' will look at the ways in which feature films tell a story.

Before we look at the film in detail, you will need to make some notes. Do not lose these as we will be coming back to them later.

Answer the following questions:

1. When you were told that you were going to see a film called 'White Fang', what type of film did you think you were going to see?
2. Did your teacher say anything about the film before you went to see it? How did they describe the film?
3. Had you heard anything about the film before? What had you heard?
4. One of the main characters in the film

is a wolf. What does this suggest to you? What type of animal is a wolf? Pleasant or unpleasant? What do you think the importance of the wolf would be in the story?

WATCHING FILMS

When you watch a film, does it sometimes remind you of other films you have seen? Maybe the stories develop in the same way, or cover the same ideas. The characters may seem very like ones you have seen before. When or where the story of the film takes place, or the whole atmosphere of the film may make you connect it with others you have seen.

THRILLER ROMANCE SCIENCE FICTION HORROR FANTASY

Write down what you expect from each type of film under the following headings:

STORY • CHARACTERS • TIME AND PLACE • COSTUMES • SET DESIGNS

When you watch 'White Fang' you will be able to look out for clues that will tell you what type (genre) of film it is.

WHAT WAS IT ABOUT?

Now that you have seen 'White Fang', let us think what the story was about, what it was trying to tell us? Below are 8 statements about the film. Rearrange these statements into what you think are the best descriptions of what the film was about. It might be that you think some of them should not be included. The decision is yours.

1. The film was about the way people become friends.
2. The film was about being kind to animals.
3. The film gave us lots of information about wolves.
4. The film wasn't about anything, it was just good fun.
5. The film was about people facing up to hardships.
6. The film was a picture of life during the Gold Rush.
7. The film said life in the wild was more interesting and valuable than life in the city.
8. The film showed that all some people think about is money.

When you have answered the questions and made your list of what you think the film was about, write down what you remember of the story of the film, that is, what happened in the film.

When you have written what you remember of the story. compare it to someone else's story. How many things have you both remembered? Are there some things that you have forgotten?

What it has not done is give you details about how the story is told through film. Also, your ideas about what the film was about will have been given to you by the way that the filmed story was told.



NARRATIVE - THE STORY

Turning ideas and the different events into film needs careful planning. Think about one part of the film you recalled. You are actually going to try to reconstruct that part of the film shot by shot. For this we can use a storyboard.

On your storyboards draw the action of that sequence as closely as you can remember it. Try to remember the different types of shots and angles used in the sequence - close-up, long shot, etc. How did the camera shots affect the mood of your sequence? Does a close-up shot make you feel more involved with what is happening? What characters are in your sequence? How are they behaving? Is there music to create atmosphere?

Imagine you are the director. Would you have filmed it differently? Storyboard your version. Compare storyboards. What difference do you think your version would have made to the film?

THE FILM OF THE BOOK

White Fang has been adapted from a book. The original story was written by an author called Jack London and first appeared in 1903 when it was an instant success. What differences do you think there are in understanding the story as a film rather than as a book?

Write down two lists, one for a book and one for a film, which show how each tells its story. Then try to say how these are different. How do you think these differences affect your understanding of the story?

Is a story easier to understand as a film? What can be done in a written story that cannot be done in a film?

Film makers often take novels and change the stories into films. What do you think attracted the makers of 'White Fang' to film the story?



CHARACTERS

Think about how the characters are represented in the film. How do you recognise whether characters are good or bad? Is it their names, the way they speak, how they look, what kind of clothes they wear, how they behave towards other people?

Write down some words to describe a good character. Write down some words to describe a bad character. Compare what you have written. Think of some characters you have read about in books, or seen on film or television. What makes you think straight away that they are good or bad?

Fill in the character chart below describing the named characters.

NAME	VOICE	CLOTHES	BEHAVIOUR	GOOD/BAD CHANGED
Jack				
Alex				
Beauty				
Grey Beaver				

Working with a partner, pick one of the characters, but do not say who it is. Your partner must ask you questions about the character to find out who it is.

Ask your partner to pick another character. They can pretend that they are that character. You can interview them, asking questions to find out as much as you can about them. As interviewer, you must plan your questions to avoid yes/no answers.

WHAT IS 'WHITE FANG' ABOUT?

A lot of stories are about the struggle between good and evil. Why do you think this is? Does it make them more interesting or true to life? Who do you usually want to win in the end and why?

Do you think 'White Fang' is about the struggle between good and evil? Do those who represent good win in the end? Imagine what would have happened if Jack had not found the gold or if White Fang had not become friendly. Discuss this with a partner. Together, storyboard an alternative ending.

The narrative (story) of most films is based on problems that need to be solved.

What are the problems that we are shown in 'White Fang'? How important, for example is gold? How important are the hardships that Jack and Alex face? If the problems are solved, there is a 'happy ending' Is this true to life? Do films always have happy endings? What difference does this make to how you feel about the film?

ENJOYING A FILM

When we say that we enjoyed a film we do not just mean that we have found the film funny. A film that we enjoy might also make us feel other things.

What did you think were the most enjoyable parts of 'White Fang'? Make a list and next to each episode in the film that you enjoyed write down which emotion you think it made you feel (it might be humour, fear, etc).

The film will have made you feel these emotions, but how did it do this? Pick two episodes that you enjoyed and try to work out how the director constructed what we saw and heard so as to make us feel what we felt.