

The White Wolf [*Le loup blanc*] Lesson Ideas

Questions

- When and where is this film set?
- Who are the main characters?
- What role do the parents play in the story?
- We see the rabbit being killed but not the wolf. Why not?
- We didn't see any other villagers. Why do you think this is?
- Why do the boys treat the wolf's head with such respect?

Activities

Please note: It is suggested that this film is suitable for secondary students S1 – S6. Though an animated film, this is not a sentimentalised account of man's relationship to wildlife and teachers must review the content of the film in advance to ensure that they are comfortable working with this screen narrative in class.

These educational activities to be found below the film are intended as suggestions for the type of activities that might be used with a variety of different age groups. These activities should be adapted by the teacher to the age and experience of their specific class.

Pre-Watching Activities

Writing and Reading

- Write a short piece of text/prose/poetry about any experience with a live animal as opposed to a stuffed animal or well-known cartoon character. Read it aloud. Discuss the range of positive and negative experiences from within the group.

Speaking and Listening

- Talk about animals and how people see them – some as pets and some as food – especially rabbits and horses. Talk about rural life in France. Talk about how meat comes to our table. Talk about how likely it would be to feel safe with a wild animal. Prepare them for the fact they will see people who live in the country supplying themselves with food ready for the winter.
- Talk about animation, the different types of animation, what they expect from an animated film, and how animals are portrayed in films from different countries.

- Prepare a vocabulary list for family, some body parts, some food; 'je n'aime/je n'aime pas'; it would be useful if children had researched French food or recipes in ICT

Watching Activities

Visuals

- Warn the class that they are about to see an animation that does not conform to the Disney tradition of sentimentalised animation.
- Watch film until moment where boys go to bed.
- Ask children to think about who?/where?/when?/what? (qui?/où?/quand?/qu'est ce qui se passe?) either in pairs, or in groups with each group focusing on one area and creating a presentation for the rest of the class.
- Ask pupils in English if the structure of the story (three wishes) reminds them of anything. Ask what they think might happen next.
- Ask children to discuss in pairs what they think might happen next in the film. Discuss with whole class. Try to have as much of conversation as possible in French, using mime, vocabulary already attained and phrases from your prompt sheet.

Analysing

- With this style of animation is difficult to ascertain subtle nuances in facial expression. How did the filmmakers evoke emotion? Watch different styles of animation and compare how the artists emulate emotion through facial expression/movement/speech/sound colour.
- Working as a class carry out a full grid analysis on the film (Similarities, Surprises, Patterns and Puzzles) to try and determine the different themes and meanings of the film.
- Explore and brainstorm answers to some of the following questions:

Cinematography, Editing and Production Design

- What do the close-up shots tell us? List them and note why they are there.
- What are the major differences between filming this style of animation to filming a live action film?
- Can you remember the colours of the village?
- What was unusual about the choice of colours for the forest?
- Which main areas does the action take place?
- The boys walk out of frame in the forest and the camera stays fixed on the forest. Why do you think they did this?

- When Arthur and the wolf first meet, what does it tell us about Arthur when he walks back home without talking?
- Does the wolf look scary? Why has the film maker decided to portray him in this way?
- For us to react to the emotions of the characters, the film maker uses actions and movement. Can you identify any of these moments?
- How does the film maker show us how scared the rabbit and Arthur are when they see the wolf?

Character

- Who were the main characters?
- What role did the parents play in the story?
- Why were they surprised when Leo was angry with his father?
- What was their reaction when Arthur was late?
- How did Arthur treat his younger brother?
- We didn't see any other villagers. Why do you think this was?
- The boys were upset after the wolf died. What did it say about them that they treated the wolf's head with such respect?

Narrative Structure

- What sort of story is this?
- What are the key events?
- Over what time period was this story?
- What time of year do you think it was?
- Was it a satisfying end or do you feel there was another part to come?

Setting

- The film gave an impression of country life in France. Were there any clues as to which period in time it was?
- What was the inside of the house like?
- What was the brothers' bedroom like?
- How was the forest portrayed and how did this contribute to the mood of the film?

Genre

- What sort of story is this?
- What sort of genre is it?
- Does it fit into any genre you know or is it a new experience?

Symbolism

- Consider the name of Arthur - do you think he might have been trying to be like King Arthur?
- The burying of the head is a special honour to the fallen, especially as the head is viewed as a delicacy and it was to go to his brother.

- After the wolf has been killed, Leo runs out and the camera lingers on the head of his play horse. What do you think this tells us?
- The eyes of the rabbit and the wolf become crosses after they die.

Inference

- What does the film tell us about the difference of the parents and the children?
- What does Arthur mean when he talks about finding more rabbit heads?
- Why did the young girl so readily press the buttons on her phone?
- How do we know Leo looks up to his elder brother?

Follow-up and cross-curricular activities

Speaking and listening

- Ask children to name fairy tales that include wolves ('Little Red Riding Hood', 'Three Little Pigs'). Tell children these tales also appear in French. What was different about this story and the usual way wolves are portrayed?
- How are wolves normally portrayed in fairy tales and fables? It was a hard film to watch because of the animals' deaths – how did it make them feel?
- Discuss the three available endings. Ask the children to work in groups to create alternative endings for 'Le loup blanc'. Would they have changed anything in the story? If so, what would it be and how would it change the story?
- After looking at the film and working on it, look at re-structuring the story. How would the story change if they change only two things from the following:
 - The character of Arthur
 - The character of Leo
 - The character or story of the family
 - The setting
 - The nature of the wolf
 - The soundtrack
 - The order of events
 - The start
 - The ending
- Use 'je n'aime/je n'aime pas' to talk about children's food preferences. Talk about French recipes and foods common in France that we do not eat - or knowingly eat - in Scotland. Ask children to create their own recipes (delicious or revolting).
- Learn or listen to the song 'Alouette, gentille alouette' (recordings and lyrics available on www.mamalisa.com). Explain song is about plucking a skylark for the pot. Allow children to take turns in leading the song by choosing body parts for each verse. Ask all children to mime along with song by pointing to relevant part of own body.

- Ask children to draw their own fantasy or real animal and label it in French or ask groups to play 'Consequences' (drawing head, folding paper over and passing to next person to draw body, etc), giving instructions in French ('Dessinez la tête, le corps, les jambes, les pieds'). Ask groups to show and describe their creation to class in French.

Cultural Differences

- France is a much less densely populated country and is more rural than the UK. You might show an extract from the film *Etre et avoir* (available via a search on www.toutlecine.com; scroll down to videos; play Bande annonce 1). Explain that the clip shows a rural French school with only a handful of pupils. Compare with children's experience in the UK.
- For many years the majority of the population of France lived in the countryside. Many of them would have used wild animals to eat to survive. Being given the head was viewed as a special treat and was viewed as the tastiest bit. Talk about French food. Children may have researched French food/recipes in ICT and found a list of things French people eat that are not common in English cuisine (rabbit, horse, various birds, snails, frogs).
- Talk about the foods that represent the UK abroad. Are these stereotypes accurate?

Writing and Reading

- Write a synopsis of the film.
- Write an article for the paper taking a view on the wolves in the local area.
- Write a letter to an MP/environment group/national newspaper demanding that the wolves be saved/controlled/re-introduced.
- Compose a lament.
- Write an elegy.

PHSE

- Look at loss. How did the boys react to it?