



# Shorts 6: Family Films

## STUDY GUIDE

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All SFFILM Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy.

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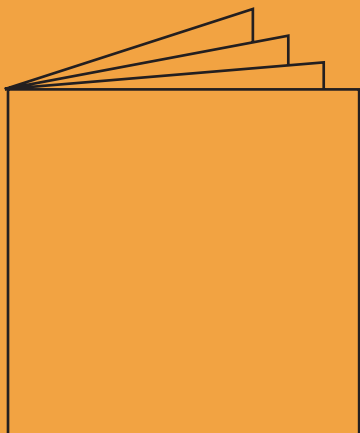






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## About the Film

This diverse collection of stories is sure to please the smallest members of your family, along with the young at heart and everyone in-between. Featuring a deeply moving documentary exploring race in America, a delicately animated adaptation of a Hans Christian Anderson classic, and a vertically-challenged dinosaur longing to give his best friend a comforting embrace.

Recommended Grades:

**K-6**

Total Running Time:

**72 min**

## Teaching the Film

Connection to ourselves and our communities are at the heart of these family films. Join us as we wonder: What makes us unique? How are we defined in our own lives and to others? Peeling back the layers of ourselves and our surroundings can let us know how things work and what is important. These family films will inspire you to look beyond the surface to find elements of love, wonder, and support in an ever changing world.

## Subject Areas

- **African American Studies**
- **Arts/Media**
- **Dance/Performing Arts**
- **English Language Arts**
- **History**
- **Peer/Youth Issues**



# Series Discussion

1. Which film in this series was your favorite? Why?
2. Which film in this series was your least favorite? Why?
3. Which film in this series do you think was the most challenging to make? Why?
4. The films incorporate a wide range of storytelling styles, from documentary to animation to narrative fiction.
  - Which film's style was most interesting to you?
  - What techniques did it use that set it apart from other films?
5. Which film made you want to be part of it? Why?
  - Which character would you want to be?
  - How would you change the film to end with your own ending?
6. Which film touched your heart and made you think?
  - What part made you feel connected to it?
  - Do the characters or situation remind you of anything?
7. Which character would you take out of one short and insert into another short?
  - What would they see, do, or say?
  - How would you change the film?
8. What was your least favorite film? Why? Be specific: was it too sad, too slow?
  - As a director, what would you change?
  - As an editor, what would you take out of the film?
  - As a writer, what would you write into the film to make it more likeable in your opinion?
9. Which character would you want to sit next to in class? Why? What do they think they would bring in their lunchbox for lunch?
10. What words would you use to describe this series as a whole? What common themes can you find? Do you think these films were interesting to watch together? Did any seem out of place?
11. Did you enjoy the Family Films series? What more do you want to know about these films? What questions do you have about how they were made?



# Discussion Questions & Activities

## A Concerto is a Conversation

Ben Proudfoot & Kris Bowers, USA, 13 min

This beautiful film tells the tale of how a Grandfather's bravery changed his life and his grandson's life forever. The two share their history, as well as their dedication to hard work and taking chances so that new possibilities were created for them.

1. What instruments can you hear?
2. Why do you think the composer wants to know more about his Grandfather's life? What question would you ask Mr. Bowers?
3. Why is being a black composer important? Why was music important to his Grandfather?
4. "People are constantly throwing you things to stop you in life" - Grandpa. What does this mean? Has there ever been a time when you felt like this happened to you? Or did you help someone else at some point who felt stuck? Explain.
5. Why do you think the concerto piece is called A Younger Self?

## Intermission

Simon de Glanville, USA, 4 min

Intermission is a short film that gives you a break from all of the noise and rush of the world. We watch Intermission and see the world happening when we stand still to look and listen to life out loud. What is happening all around us when we are too busy to stop and observe?

1. What does the word "Intermission" mean? Why do you think the title of the film is Intermission?
2. What things do you hear in the film?
3. What do you notice about the animal's movements? Are they quick and frantic, or slow and calm?

## Tulip

Andrea Love & Phoebe Wahl, USA, 9 min

In this animated tale, Tulip, searches for her independence. in a forest full of creatures and fairies that help her navigate the big world outside her home when she accidentally goes missing. They teach her that sometimes help is delivered in surprising ways when you ask for it.

1. Tulip is a tiny character who lives in a big world. She sleeps in a tiny box on the windowsill and uses a washcloth for a blanket. What things around your home could you use to take care of Tulip?
2. What were challenges for Tulip?
3. What animals did Tulip watch outside flying around? How did that make her feel to see them fly?
4. What characters does Tulip meet outside the window? Who helps Tulip escape? How does Tulip help another character, and how does that character repay her?
5. Was Tulip happy to return home? How do you know?

## To: Gerard

Taylor Meacham, USA, 8 min

A sweet old guy dedicates his life to doing a boring job, but loves to spice up his day with his favorite distraction: performing magic tricks. When he meets a young girl and shares his love for performing magic, unexpected events occur and the real magic is shown in their enduring friendship.

1. What is Gerard's job? Is it exciting? Does he make it exciting and how?
2. How does Gerard feel about magic? Who is Gerard's hero?
3. How does Gerard make "magic" of his own? How do you know he has practiced his tricks?
4. How did Gerard's kindness change Jule's future?





# Discussion Questions & Activities

## Broken Bird

Rachel Harrison, USA, 10 min

A young girl is facing a big event in her life as she approaches adulthood, and she wonders what all of the other people in her family expect of her. She watches them define what makes them unique and different, and wonders what makes her beautiful, strong, and important.

1. When you think of the title, Broken Bird, what do you think the film/story could be about? Write a 4 sentence summary of what you think happens.
2. What language is the girl reading/singing?
3. Does she like her hair? How can you tell?
4. Why does her Dad start singing in the restaurant and in the car?
5. How is the relationship between her Mom and her, and how is it different than the relationship between her Dad and her? How do you know?
6. Why do you think she straightened her hair, and then decided to change it to her natural beautiful curly style? Do you think that made her feel more like herself?
7. Write the ending to the film as you see it. What happens next?

## Kapaemahu

Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer & Joe Wilson, USA, 8 min

Brought to life with lush animation and narrated through an ancient Hawaiian dialect, a tale unfolds of four mysterious stones on Waikiki Beach, their healing powers, and the spirits living within them..

1. What sounds do you hear at the beginning of the movie?
2. How did the visitors get to the island? How were the visitors different from the people who already lived on the island?
3. What were the special powers of the Kapaemahu visitors? What special power of theirs would YOU want to have?
4. How did Hawaiians show respect for the Kapaemahu?
5. What happened to the sacred stones? Describe the ending: where are the stones? What about the setting? Does it seem sacred and loved in that setting?
6. If you could put them in another setting, what would it look like, or where would it be on the island and why?
7. Draw a picture of the new place where they would be, and write why you think these stones should end up there.
8. Draw a comic strip of the story. Fold a paper in  $\frac{1}{2}$ , top to bottom. Then unfold it and fold it in  $\frac{1}{2}$  from side to side 2 times. When you unfold the paper you should have 8 sections to draw your illustration of the story.



# Discussion Questions & Activities

## **Tiny T-Rex and the Impossible Hug**

Galen Fott, USA, 9 min

Think about the title...why is it hard for a T-Rex to hug? Tiny T-rex shows that no matter how little you may be, the mightiest thing in the world is a heart that wants to help others and a mind that won't give up.

1. What does T-rex want to do to help Pointy feel better?
2. What are 3+ things YOU do to help your friends when they are sad?
3. Who does Tiny T-rex ask for advice in the story? What do they tell tiny T-rex will be helpful? What does his Mom advise? What does his brother and sister say is helpful?
4. What advice would you give to Tiny? Could you design something to help Tiny deliver his hug? Draw a picture of your design.
5. In the end, was he successful? Why do you think so?

## **The Magical Forest and The Things**

Dave Russo, USA, 4 min

This film is a tale of ecology, environment and community, with laugh out loud moments told through the words of a parent and child. This "taking-turns" story evolves with humor and reflection and teaches the lesson of conservation of natural resources and taking care of each other.

1. What types of things/animals/creatures/plants do you think you would see in a magical forest?
2. Who is telling the story in the film? What made you laugh in the story?
3. Why did the people and animals have to move? What happened to the place when the trees were gone?
4. What is sustainability? What is conservation? How do these relate to the story?

5. Why do you think they blamed the Giant? Was it the Giant's fault?
6. What can you do to help the earth?
7. What is repurposing? How would repurposing resources in the story have helped the community? What can you reuse, recycle, and repurpose in your home or classroom to conserve resources?

## **Us Again**

Zach Parrish, USA, 7 min

An elderly man and his young-at-heart wife rekindle their zest for life through dance on the rainy streets of New York City. This latest Disney short incorporates a vibrant funky score and the choreography of award-winning dance duo Keone and Mari Madrid.

1. In a movie without words, how can you tell how the characters feel? Describe what you think they were feeling and how you saw evidence of that?
2. His knees start movin' and he seems to be taken over by the music. Have you ever had that feeling? What was the song? Write some of the lyrics if there are some, and use 3 words to describe to song. Draw an emoji to express how you feel when you hear that song!
3. Does music transform you back to memories and time? Can you think of a song that helped you make a memory? It could be a happy, silly, sad, or powerful memory of when you heard it. Write 5 sentences about the memory and the music.
4. In the film, the street dancers use umbrellas, and he uses a hat. Have you ever used a prop while dancing to make it more exciting? If not, what would you LIKE to use? If so, what was it, and how did it relate to the song? Did it make you look cool, sassy, tough, or powerful? Draw a picture of the prop you would use, or the one you did.





# What is Animation?

Animation is a process used to create motion pictures through the combination of still images (e.g., digital graphics, photographs of drawings, photographs of objects, etc.) which, when played in sequence, create the illusion of movement. All television cartoons, for example, are animations, and are made up of thousands of still images (drawn by hand or on a computer) that are played sequentially, along with a soundtrack, to tell a story.

## TYPES OF ANIMATION

- Classic animation  
(e.g., Disney's **The Lion King**, most TV cartoons)
- Rotoscope  
(e.g., **Star Wars** lightsabers)
- Flip books
- 3D animation  
(e.g., Pixar's **Toy Story**, **Wall-E**, **Up**)
- Stereoscopic 3D  
(e.g., **Avatar**)
- Cut-out / Silhouette animation  
(e.g., **South Park**)
- Claymation  
(e.g., Nick Park's **Wallace and Gromit**)
- Puppet animation  
(e.g., Tim Burton's **The Nightmare Before Christmas**, **Coraline**)

# History of Animation

The world's most famous animator, Walt Disney, began making short animated cartoons based on children's stories in 1923. In 1928 he introduced Mickey Mouse in the first animated sound cartoon, **Steamboat Willie**, which became an immediate sensation. Throughout the next decade, Disney would add such elements as carefully synchronized music (**The Skeleton Dance**, 1929), Technicolor (**Flowers and Trees**, 1932), and the illusion of depth with his multi-plane camera (**The Old Mill**, 1937), a device that allowed for animated cells to be photographed against a three-dimensional background. Although not the first animated feature, **Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** (1937) was the first to use up-to-the-minute techniques and the first to receive widespread release. The film's success can be attributed in part to Disney's willingness to use animation to create a profound dramatic experience. He strove for photographic realism in films such as **Pinocchio** (1940), **Dumbo** (1941) and **Bambi** (1942). The success of television cartoons led to the virtual disappearance of animated shorts produced for theatrical release. Animated featurelength films, however, flourished, especially after the release of Disney's **The Little Mermaid** (1989), regarded by many as the studio's best animated feature in decades. Other Disney blockbusters followed, including **Beauty and the Beast** (1991), **Aladdin** (1992), **The Lion King** (1994) and **Lilo & Stitch** (2002). The development of computer animation was another great advancement in the form and resulted in feature films of astounding visual sumptuousness. In 1995, **Toy Story** was the first film to use only computer generated imagery (CGI). In 2001 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences added a new Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film. The first recipient of the award was **Shrek** (2001).



# California Media Literacy Standards

## Standards Grades 3–8

### COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2

Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A

Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B

Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.B

Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

## 4th Grade Standards

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.A

Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.B

Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.9: Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.9: Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).





# California Media Literacy Standards (Cont.)

## Grades 6–8

### CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

### RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.A

Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.B

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.C

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.



# Media Literacy Resources: Screening with Meaning

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. Every projected image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the medium, through the language of the device. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Most students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive. Analysis of a media message—or any piece of mass media content—can best be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

1. **Medium:** the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
2. **Author:** the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
3. **Content:** the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
4. **Audience:** the target audience to whom it is delivered
5. **Purpose:** the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active citizens and critical thinkers.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

### MEDIUM

#### All Media Is Constructed.

- What is the message, how is it delivered and in what format?
- What technologies are used to present the message?
- What visual and auditory elements comprise the media content?
- What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?

### AUTHOR

#### All Media Is Constructed by Someone.

- Who is delivering the message?
- Who originally constructed the message?
- What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?

### CONTENT

#### Media Is A Language For Information.

- What is the subject of the media message?
- What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content?
- What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response?
- To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?

### AUDIENCE

#### All Media Messages Reach an Audience.

- Who receives the message?
- For whom is the message intended?
- What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- How might others perceive this message differently? Why?

### PURPOSE

#### All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.

- Why was the message constructed?
- Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How?
- To what extent does the message achieve its purpose?
- What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?