



From Fact to Fiction

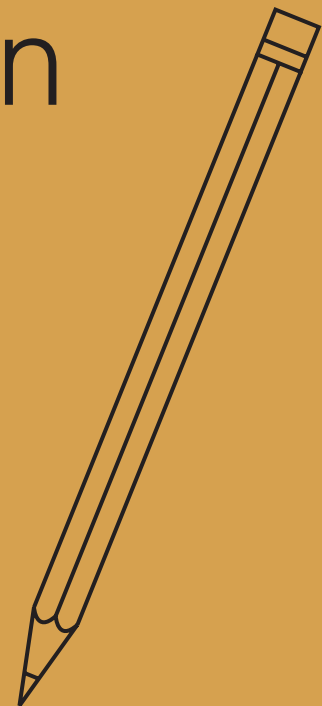
STUDY GUIDE

Content written by **Alyse Hebert**.

Designed by **Camille Gwise, Jay Tiong, Soph Schultz
Rocha, Keith Zwölfer**

All SFFILM Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy. SFFILM Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials.

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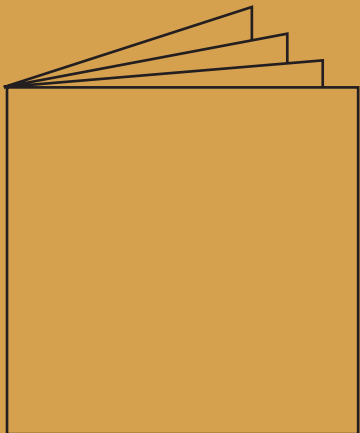
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About the Films

This striking collection of shorts explore the imaginative and thought-provoking range that film as a medium can showcase. Topics traverse youth activism in Hawai'i, intergenerational family bonds with a sprinkle of magic, a spider with a lunar dream, and an eternal Indigenous tale. It features narrative, documentary, and animated films using rotoscope, cut out animation, and autobiography to create a delightful assortment of some of the best that SFFILM Festival has to offer.

Recommended Grades: 6–12

Teaching the Films

This shorts program shows an eclectic range of stories that include discussing family values and dynamic relationships, advocating for what is fair, and not giving up on one's dreams. From paper to screen, these fictional and nonfictional stories capture innovative filmmaking techniques that are inspiring to see. A screening of this film complements a curriculum in English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Art/Media.

Suggested Subjects

- **Activism**
- **African American Studies**
- **Art/Media**
- **Asian American Studies**
- **English Language Arts**
- **Latin American Studies**
- **Mental Health**
- **Native American and Indigenous Studies**
- **Peer/Youth Issues**
- **Political Science**
- **Social Studies**
- **Spanish**
- **Women/Gender Studies**



Pre-Viewing Topics

The following themes discussed in these films include:

- **Advocacy**
- **Family values**
- **Family traditions**
- **Cultural heritage**
- **Slavery**
- **Life and death**
- **Goal setting**

1. Have your students brainstorm some of these themes so they can draw from their own past experiences and lessons learned as they watch these films.

Discussion Questions



Blood, Sweat & Sparkles: The Young Activists Guide to Ending Period Poverty

(Faviola Leyva, Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz, Joel Serin-Christ, USA, 6 min)

Social change isn't easy, but for middle schoolers fighting to end period poverty across Hawai'i, it's bloody worth it.

1. Did you have a favorite part in this film? If so, what was your favorite part?
2. Have you heard of stories like these before where students identified a problem and tried to fix the issue statewide? If so, what other stories have you heard?
3. These students were influenced by Queen Lili'uokalani, who advocated for Hawaiian rights and culture. Who inspires you the most? And why?
4. Does advocacy work interest you like it does for Riez and Alana, the protagonists in this film? If so, what kind of advocacy work interests you the most?
5. How does the use of animation help tell the story that Riez and Alana are telling?



El Moño

(Luis Fernando Puente & Lizde Arias, USA, 9 min)

Andrea learns of generational family magic that helps her find lost objects in unexpected ways.

1. Andrea's mom teaches her daughter what her grandmother used to do to find lost items. What do you do when you are not able to find something?
2. The filmmaker created a vague ending. What do you think happened after Andrea took off her sock?
3. What will happen if Andrea uses her grandmother's way of finding things too often?
4. What do you notice about the music used in this film? How often is music being played? And do you think it enhances the story?



I Am Home

(Kymon Greyhorse, USA, 3 min)

A retelling of the eternal tale of the ties that binds us all together.

1. What is shown in the film to represent how the narrator is getting used to change and modern times?
2. The narrator is making connections between people and mother nature. What kind of connections did you notice?
3. What do you think the meaning is when the narrator is running through the forest?
4. Why does the filmmaker use close-up shots throughout the film?



Labor of Love

(Richard O'Connor, USA, 3 min)

Mary shares memories of her grandmother, a formerly enslaved, life-saving midwife in North Carolina.

1. What did you learn about slavery in the United States based on Mary's story (the protagonist)?
2. Why do you think Mary practiced midwifery (delivering babies) for as long as she did?
3. How does this film compare with what you have learned about slavery in school?
4. What kind of themes stood out to you the most from this film?



Nǎi Nai & Wài Pó (Grandma & Grandma)

(Sean Wang, USA, 17 min)

Director **Sean Wang**'s ode to his two colorful grandmas is a captivating and bittersweet reflection of life.

1. Themes such as life, death, and happiness recur throughout this film. How does the music match these themes?
2. How are these grandmothers different or the same as your grandparents (or family members)?
3. Sean, the filmmaker, interviews his grandmothers about their past. What would you like to ask your grandparents (or family members) about their lives?
4. If you were making a film about your family, what kind of story would you want to tell?



Now I'm in the Kitchen

(Yana Pan, USA, 5 min)

Filmmaker **Yana Pan** reflects on her mother and her independence while cooking her mom's favorite dish.

1. Regret is a recurring theme in this story. Why do you think the narrator regrets not cooking with her mom?
2. How do you define feminism? And does cooking come to mind when you think of feminism?
3. Why do you think it was important for the mom to teach her daughter about being independent and financially independent?
4. At the end of the film, the animation morphs from objects in the kitchen and turns into flowers. Do you think this means anything? If so, what do you think it means?



Rest Stop

(Crystal Kayiza, USA, 12 min)

A young Ugandan-American girl embarks on a soul-stirring bus ride with her immigrant mother.

1. Throughout this film, Meyi's family reminds her that she has family and to not chase after a man. Why do you think she is reminded that she has a family?
2. The man's identity is hidden at the beginning of the film (we only hear his voice and see his hands and the side of his face). Why is his identity hidden?
3. When Meyi's children travel with her across the country, how do you think they feel?
4. How do the low-angle shots and close-up shots help in telling this story?



Swing to the Moon

(Marie Bordessoule, Chloé Lauzu, Adriana Bouissié, Vincent Levrero, Nadine De Boer, Solenne Moreau and Elisa Drique, France, 6 min)

Living in the forest, a spider will do anything to reach her lunar dream.



Still Waters

(Aurora Brachman, USA, 12 min)

A daughter's quest for answers about her mother's past unearths a memory with a lasting impact.

1. Do you think the choice in visuals (close up scenes of mother and daughter, and scenes of them spending time at the beach together) are effective for what the mother and daughter discuss throughout this film?
2. Did editing analog film and digital film together affect how the story was told?
3. Why does the filmmaker use close-up shots of a fire burning and waves crashing in this film?
4. This film talks about a difficult subject. What techniques did the filmmaker use to make this subject approachable?



Activities

Director's Eye Activity: Re-creating a film from a favorite film in this series.

- Items used: Storyboard template
1. Have the students pick their favorite film from this series.
 2. Ask them, if they were directing this film, how would it look? And ask them to storyboard the beginning of the film. What would the first 5 shots look like?

Costume History Activity: How clothing carries meaning throughout generations.

- Items used: Paint swatches, paper (or word document if students are using computers)
1. In both films **I Am Home** and **Rest Stop**, the protagonists wore clothing that represented their culture. Have students discuss in a group what stood out to them the most in these films about the characters' clothing.
 2. Ask the students to think about a piece of clothing that is meaningful to them (this can be from their own wardrobe or something a family member or friend owns). Ask: What does this piece of clothing symbolize? And how would you want to show it in a film?
 3. Next, have students choose paint swatches to visualize the color scheme in their films and how the clothing/costume would fit into their idea. Have the students return to their groups and discuss with each other the clothing and color choices they made.

Beyond the Classroom

- [5-week art program for teens at MoAD](#)
- [Article from the California Academy of Sciences about flying spiders](#)
- [Spider facts episode from NPR podcast, Short Wave](#)

For more examples of animation:

- [Animation styles from the Exploratorium](#)
- [Stop-motion animator, Kevin Parry](#)



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).



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 language of the medium. 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. Many 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.

MEDIA LITERACY 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?



California Media Literacy Standards

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)

3rd Grade Standards

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.

4th Grade Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B

Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.A

Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.B

Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

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.4.2.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.

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.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.