

Class level

Third class upwards

Learning objectives

The child will be enabled to:

- recognise how the story is told in films

Methodologies

Group work

Resources

- Television, VCR, DVD player
- Film activity sheet: *Character record*

Time

40-minute class session

Curriculum links

English: Developing cognitive abilities through language – Writing: *Genre of writing, storytelling*

Visual arts: Drawing – Drawings of characters

Drama: Exploring and making drama – Character role-playing, interviewing characters

SPHE: Myself and the wider world – Media education: *Exploring storylines from books and films*

Suggested films

ET, A Bug's Life, The Secret Garden

Film portfolio

Samples of stories, character profiles, drawings



Introduction

Discuss:

- What's your favourite story (or fairy tale)?
- Why do you like this story most of all?
- Who is your favourite character?
- Is there a character in the story who does something wrong?



Development

The animated film, *A Bug's Life* originated with the story about the Ant and the Grasshopper in Aesop's Fables. This story is only about fifteen lines long in the book. Isn't it amazing that the animators were able to make such a wonderful feature-length film from such a short story?

Explain to the children that most stories have a similar structure: they have a beginning, middle, and end. They usually have good and bad characters, just like fairy tales. Films are stories too, except that the story is told through moving images instead of the written word.

Discuss the storyline of a film you have recently watched.

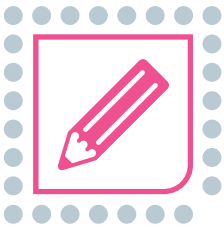
Note for teacher: Below is an example of the story structure of *ET*. Try to map the structure using any of the films previously suggested.

We meet the characters. Mother, Eliot, Gertie, Michael.

Something goes wrong. Eliot finds ET and tries to keep him a secret.

The story tells how the “goodie” (hero or heroine) tries to solve the problem. Mike and his brother save ET from the scientists and escape to the forest to contact ET’s family.

The problem is usually solved at the end. ET’s spaceship lands and brings ET home.



Activity

Problem-solving

In *ET*, Eliot faces many problems: for example,

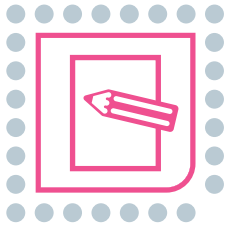
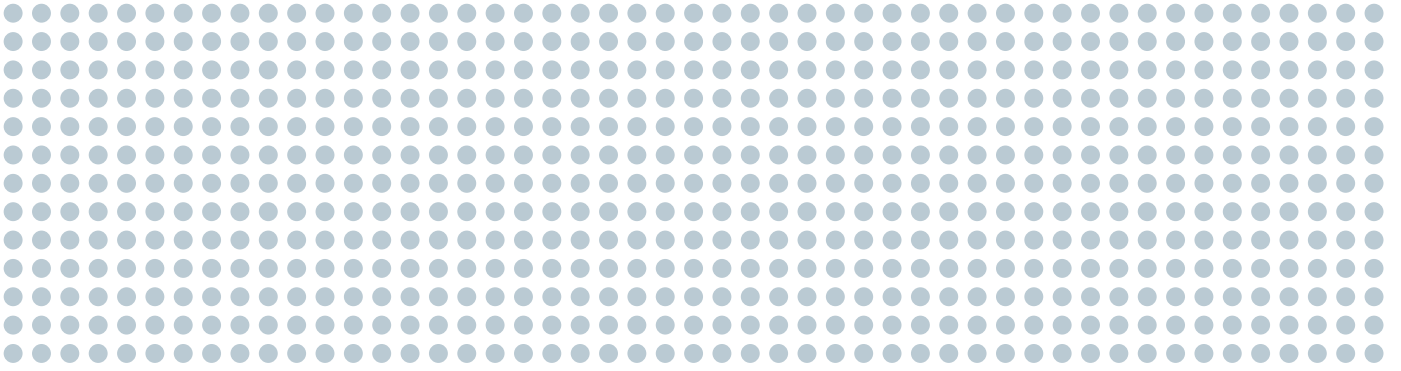
- How does he hide ET from his mother?
- Where does he hide ET?

Most problems are usually solved before the end of the story.

- Does this happen in *ET*?
- What other problems arose in *ET*?

or

Explore the story and storylines by asking the children to choose a story they know, either from a book they have read, a class reader, or a film. In groups, they discuss and explore their selected story and fill in the structure of the story, like the *ET* example above.



Further extension work

English / Visual arts / Drama: Character profiles

In mainstream films there are generally two types of characters: “goodies” and “baddies.” Identify a character from a story or film as a “baddie” or a “goodie.”

Describe this character: how they look, sound, move, their personality.

Why do we like or dislike the character?

Give other examples of “baddies” from books or films: for example, Hopper is the “baddie” in *A Bug’s Life*.

- Role-playing character.
- In pairs, interview a character from the story.
- Draw or paint a “Wanted” poster or passport photograph of the character.
- Write a list of baddies and goodies on postcards; the children choose a card, role-playing the goodie meeting the baddie.
- Compare two “goodies” and two “baddies.”



Film activity sheet

Choose a character from the film and complete the activity sheet “Character record” on the opposite page.

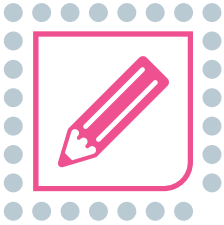
English / ICT: Film synopsis and reviews

- Use the internet as a research tool to find any web sites on your film of choice.
- Usually the film company has a web site with information on new films.

This web site gives information on all the Disney films: www.disney.go.com

This web site gives a synopsis of the latest releases and gives links to web sites for each film. Alternatively, you can research film reviews by means of the internet also and compare these reviews with your own point of view on the film you have watched: www.allkids.co.uk

This web site is a parents’ guide to children’s films and provides reviews of most of the films: www.filmvalues.com



Activity

Select a character from a film.

Name:

Date:

Film activity sheet: Character record

What is the name of your character?
.....
.....

Is the character a human, an animal, animated, or something else?
.....
.....

How old do you think they are?
.....
.....

Describe the appearance of the character.
.....
.....

Is the character good or wicked?
.....
.....

Describe some of the things the character does.
.....
.....

Make a drawing of the character using a selection of your favourite drawing materials.
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www.fis.ie

