

Focus on Animation: My Filmmaking Class

Unit Guide for the Theme

Citizens of the World

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Overall Objective

Help students to develop their notions of citizenship (including global citizenship) and to increase their awareness of a pluralistic society.

Grade Level

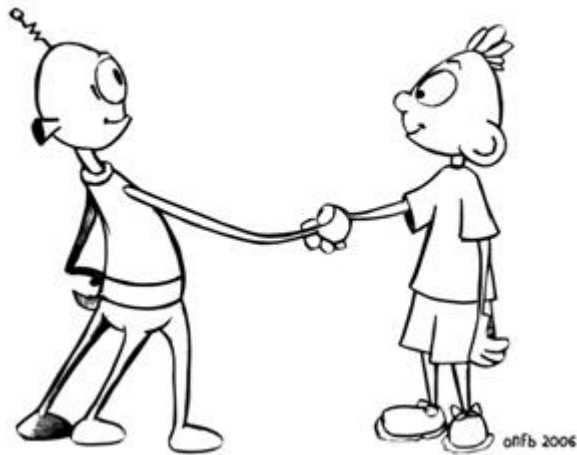
Students aged 9 to 12

Content Areas

Languages
Social Sciences
Arts and Culture

Films Used in this Unit

Black Soul (9 min 47 s)
Jonas and Lisa (9 min 11 s)
Baroque'n Roll (4 min 29 s)
My Child, My Land (4 min 5 s)
Roses Sing on New Snow (7 min 4 s)



NB: The films can be viewed online free of charge at www.nfb.ca/focusonanimation, in the My Film Class section.

Materials

Computer, Internet connection, videocassette player, TV set, sheets from a white conference flip chart, markers, art materials, and atlas or map of the world.

Summary

This unit will raise awareness of the problems of poverty, prejudice, slavery, racism, war and landmines. Though the issues tackled are extremely serious, the students will have an opportunity to see how they, as young citizens, can contribute to building a fairer, more caring and more peaceful world.

The unit comprises four activities associated with the theme Citizens of the World, as well as a closure activity.

Introduction Activity

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Explain that throughout the activities, the focus will be on people around the world learning to live together with respect, in a spirit of solidarity. Students will also explore the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and how it guarantees equality for all Canadians.

Facilitate a discussion on the theme, by means of the following questions:

- (To the teacher) In your own family, does everyone share the same ideas about religion, family rules, studying and other issues? What do you think is the cause for agreements and disagreements?
- In your class, do all students share the same ideas about religion, study, class rules and other issues?
- How can we explain the conflicts that arise from differences of opinion? What do you do to settle those conflicts?
- What basic human rights do all Canadians have? Are there people who do not have the same rights? Why?
- What do you know about the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*?

After the discussion, ask each student to list five rights they consider most important in enabling Canadians to live together harmoniously. Divide the students into small groups and ask them to compare their lists and write a single list for the team. Help the students understand that it is natural for people to have different ideas, but that they still need to arrive at a consensus.

ACTIVITY 1: Rock'n roll friendships

Approximate duration: 1 hour

Step 1: Show the first few minutes of *Baroque'n Roll*, up to where the young Indian greets the group of young people. Ask the students to guess how the film continues, expressing their views using mime. Divide them into teams of four, and ask them to assign each of the following roles to team members: one student plays the role of the young Indian, while the others play the youths in the gang. After the mime, gather their first impressions:

- How does the young Indian behave when he meets the youths for the first time?
- How do the youths welcome him?

Continue the film so that the students see what really happens. Then discuss it, using the following questions:

- How does the young Indian react to the youths' provocation? Why do the youths act that way towards him?

Step 2: Continue the film until the moment one of the youths falls through the ice. Have the students form groups again, and assign the same task. This time, the young Indian should be played by a different member of the team. Then ask:

- What prompts the young Indian to help the youth who falls in the water? How do the youths react to his attitude?

Step 3: Continue the film until the young Indian's boot jams in the railway track. Again using mime, the students should try to guess how the story continues. When the film is stopped, they should discuss whether their hypotheses are accurate.

Step 4: Continue the film until the end. The students should then perform one last mime. First, ask those playing the part of the young Indian what they felt. Then, put the same question to the students playing the other youths in the group. In their opinion, which role was more difficult to play? Why?

End the discussion by moving into broader issues with the following questions:

- What is the director trying to show in this film?
- Can you think of instances where young people behaved in a prejudiced way towards someone from a different cultural community?
- What message is the film's director trying to put across?
- What impact does the film's soundtrack have on the story? How does the absence of dialogue change how you perceive the situation?

ACTIVITY 2: Flowers for Maylin

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Before screening the film, ask the students to draw a rose using a regular pencil. Then have them compare their roses, indicating what features of the drawings are similar or different.

Step 1: Play *Roses Sing on New Snow*, until the governor asks Maylin's father: "Who has prepared the meal?" Ask the students to predict what Maylin's father will answer. Have them consider the issue in greater depth, by means of the following questions:

- If you were in Maylin's place, how would you feel when you heard that answer? What would your own father have said?
- What makes Maylin's father act that way? What about her brothers?
- In your opinion, what are the moral qualities behind Maylin's behaviour?

Step 2: Continue the film. Gather the students' impressions about how the film ends, focusing on Maylin's feelings and her new situation.

Step 3: Display the students' drawings in the classroom. Help the students connect their drawings with the film's message, by asking:

- Why does Maylin draw a flower in the film?
- What can you learn from the flower she draws? What can you learn from the flowers you have drawn?
- Can you describe any unfairness experienced by girls and women in Canada or elsewhere in the world?
- What can we do to stop such things from happening?
- What is the film's director trying to show?
- How is the film's message universal?

ACTIVITY 3: When everything blows up!

Approximate duration: 90 minutes

Step 1: Ask the students what the word *war* means to them, and write their answers on a large sheet of paper. Explain that the film they are about to see involves landmines, a painful issue. Show *My Child, My Land*. Then ask the class for their reactions.

Step 2: Divide the class into teams of four. Ask each team to compare the two families by setting up a grid with two columns (one family per column) and to enter information on their housing,

food, security, and family size. To help the teams provide more details about the families' lives, ask:

- In what country does each family live? Which images provide details about the country?
- In what kind of house and environment does each of the two families live?
- How does the director portray each family's particular situation? What effect is he seeking?
- What clues does the film provide about what each father does for a living?
- In your opinion, what does the future hold for each of the two families?

Step 3: Screen *Jonas and Lisa*. Ask the students to discuss the intolerable lives of the children in the film, by asking:

- What does the mother seem to be experiencing?
- What is the father's attitude towards the children? What does he seem to be experiencing? What are the factors that led the father to become an alcoholic?
- Why is the father having problems supporting his family?
- What impact do the father's alcoholism-related problems have on his family? How does Jonas react? How does Lisa react?
- How can poverty lead to alcoholism?

Ask the teams to enter their comments on a grid, as they did earlier. Help the students understand what an explosive mix alcohol and poverty make. Conclude the discussion by explaining that poverty exists in every country, though it is more prevalent in southern countries. Ask them if they have any ideas about why that disparity exists.

Step 4: Have the students divide into the same teams of four, and ask them to identify similarities and differences in the lives of the children in the two films – *My Child, My Land* and *Jonas and Lisa*. Ask:

- What do the children in the two films have in common? How are they different?
- To what extent are their basic needs being met? What about their rights?
- What can you do about situations like these?

Suggest that the students prepare a list of the kinds of action they could take, and choose one measure they will take with their fellow team members. For example, they could prepare a letter or petition condemning landmines, or organize a collection for an organization with a social mission.

ACTIVITY 4: "I have a dream..."

Approximate duration: 90 minutes

Step 1: Ask what object from their own culture students would choose to describe themselves to people who knew nothing about them. Tell them that in *Black Soul* they will see an object that is very important to a young boy and his grandmother: an *akua'ba* figure, which is carried in Ghana to promote fertility and to ensure healthy and beautiful children. Suggest that they keep their attention on the figure throughout the film.

Step 2: Show *Black Soul*. Gather first impressions by asking:

- How does the grandmother feel? How does the young boy feel?
- When the grandmother tells her grandson the story, what is she trying to accomplish?
- What images capture your imagination? What do they teach you about the history of the peoples in the film?
- What do you know about the music in the soundtrack?

Step 3: Suggest that the students prepare a timeline showing the events in the film. This will help them reconstitute significant events in Black history.

Step 4: On a large sheet of paper, write the following excerpt from a well-known speech by Martin Luther King Jr., and explain that King – a very famous American pacifist, civil rights leader and Christian minister – fought all his life for Blacks to have the same rights as Whites. He said: “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but rather by the content of their character.” Tell the students that this famous speech was made before 250,000 people on August 28, 1963, during a march on Washington. Ask them what the words suggest to them, reminding them that they heard the words in the film.

Step 5: End the activity by asking the students to complete the following sentence: “My dream for the future of humanity is....”

Closure Activity

Suggested duration: 1 hour

Suggest that the students create a personal visual arts piece on the theme of peace and to give it a title. The work could be a sculpture, painting, drawing, silkscreen print or other piece. Encourage imagination and creativity. Then, organize an exhibition dedicated to peace, giving all students the opportunity to present their works in a spirit of solidarity and a culture of peace.

Check for Understanding

Ask the students to explain what the themes in this unit mean to them – war, poverty, alcoholism, inequality and racism. Talk about how the actions they suggested during the lessons represent a commitment to peace.

Evaluation

You can conduct a formative evaluation throughout the unit, though only the closure activity comprises evaluation sheets. One of the evaluation sheets is to be completed by the teacher and the other by individuals. Hand out the self-evaluation sheets to the students for completion at the very end of the activity. If you wish, you can arrange an in-class discussion before having the students complete the self-evaluation sheets.

Web Resources

Government of Canada site for the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*:

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/index.html>

Document with information on landmines, in youth-friendly language:

http://dangermines.ca/pdf/LeapManual/YiMA_manual_en.pdf

Page on Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/mlk/king/biography.html>)

Appendix

Teacher's Notes

Introduction: The purpose of the exercise is to make the students aware that society debated the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* at great length before it was passed into law. The *Charter* states that these rights and freedoms are “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” (Section 1, *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*) The fact that the students can discuss their scale of values with respect to rights will help them understand that the *Charter* is an indispensable democratic instrument for a society.

Activity 1: This activity helps student to understand what prejudice is and to find ways of fighting it.

Activity 2: *Roses Sing on New Snow* shows that discrimination against women and girls still exists. Many examples of gender discrimination can be found in Canada, though here they may be less marked than in other countries. The film carries a message of hope: in the end, Maylin does receive the recognition she deserves and becomes one of the best chefs in her country. She achieves equality by setting her strong moral qualities against the injustice she has suffered. Throughout the film, she appears empathic, humanistic, generous and free of any desire for revenge.

Activity 3: Jonas and Lisa's father is in a very difficult position because he can no longer support his family. This makes him vulnerable, and well on the way to becoming an alcoholic. With the chronic poverty in southern countries, many families can simply not achieve an acceptable standard of living, and the inequitable division of resources between rich and poor countries explains why so many families throughout the world are deprived of their basic rights. The students must come to understand that there are things they can do. They can take action to combat the inhumane conditions that many people here and elsewhere live under. By discovering what those measures are, they will develop a sense of solidarity with people exposed to war, poverty, injustice and other hardships.

Activity 4: Explain that every society has objects that represent its culture. The *akua'ba* figure is extremely significant to Africans from Ghana. Canadians also have objects that represent their culture, such as maple syrup and snowshoes.

In *Black Soul*, music plays an important role because it gives the children insight into many aspects of Black history through musical genres that are representative of Black culture, including gospel, gum boot and blues.

CLOSURE ACTIVITY: Creating a collective work on the theme Peace

Teacher's evaluation grid

Name of student: _____ Date: _____

Evaluation criteria for subject-specific competency: Create personal images

Student	
Brings personal ideas to his/her images.	
Uses the visual arts language appropriately.	
Uses specific gestures in creating his/her images (free-hand drawing, tearing, cutting out, etc.)	
Organizes the elements of his/her visual arts production appropriately.	
Identifies the methods used.	
The work reflects the theme of peace.	

Evaluation:

- A Exceeds expectations
- B Meets expectations
- C Experiences some difficulty
- D Experiences great difficulty
- NE Not evaluated

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Title of my work: _____

Instructions: Assess your work and describe your process by completing the following sentences:

I brought personal ideas to my work, in the following way:

I used the visual arts language appropriately (shape, line, colour, texture, volume, and so on):

I used specific gestures in creating my images (free-hand drawing, tearing, cutting out, etc.)

I organized the elements of my work appropriately (for example, finding the balance between empty and full), by:

I can describe what I have learned:

I can explain how my work relates to the theme of peace:

Signature of artist: _____