



ICE AGE: THE MELTDOWN

Teaching resource: Key Stage 1 & 2

Year: 2007 | Certificate: U | Duration: 90 minutes | Genre: Animation/adventure

This study guide suggests cross-curricular activities based on the film *Ice Age: The Meltdown* directed by Carlos Saldanha. The suggested activities are designed to support teaching and learning in accordance with the national curriculum at key stages 1 & 2. The subjects covered include literacy, cine-literacy, geography, science, music and creative arts.

Synopsis and overview of the story

Ice Age: The Meltdown is the sequel to the 2003 hit Ice Age. The film stars a trio of prehistoric animals that have formed themselves into an unusual family.

Ice Age the Meltdown is set some time after the Ice Age prequel at a time when natural warming of the planet is causing the animal's icy habitat to melt. In the opening scenes the creatures are seen to be thrilled at the melting of ice which is turning the valley in which they live into a fun-filled water world.

Manny, Sid, and Diego quickly learn that the warming climate has one major drawback: A huge glacial dam holding off oceans of water is about to break, threatening the entire valley. The only chance of survival lies at the other end of the valley. It is a difficult task to persuade their fellow valley dwellers of the imminent danger but eventually, with perseverance, they manage to talk the crowds around and a mass evacuation commences.

The film follows our three heroes as they embark on a mission across an ever-changing, increasingly dangerous landscape towards their salvation

Along the journey we learn of Manny's paternal urges to start a family, but nobody has seen another mammoth for a long time; Manny thinks he may be the last one. That is, until he miraculously finds Ellie, the only female mammoth left in the world. But, as luck would have it the two can't stand each other – and Ellie somehow thinks she's a possum!

Ellie comes with some excess baggage in the form of her two possum "brothers"...Crash and Eddie, a couple of daredevil pranksters and cocky, loud-mouthed troublemakers, all of whom tag along with our trio on the road to safety.

The film reaches a crescendo in the penultimate scene when the bond between our unusual friends is tested to the limits as they become caught up in the gushing floods. The Characters show strength, commitment and sacrifice as they help one another out of increasingly dangerous situations and finally make it to dry land. To the surprise of everyone, not least Manny and Ellie a herd of woolly mammoths appear on the horizon of their new valley. Ellie and Manny are faced with a seemingly impossible choice, their own, small mismatch family of odd-bods or a full herd of their own kind.

Before the screening

Here are some questions to think about before the film:

1. Ice Age: The Meltdown is an animated film, what do you know about animation?
2. What other animated films have you seen?
3. From the title what do you think the film is about?
4. Does it sound like a happy or sad film? Why?

*Animation

Definition of Animation; *The process of photographing drawings or objects a frame at a time; by changing a drawing or moving an object slightly before each frame is taken, the illusion of motion is realized. To bring to life
(source: Oxford English Dictionary)

Animation has been around for a long time. There are lots of different ways to animate pictures, but they all rely on the same idea; showing moving images quickly one after the other. The human eye cleverly tricks the person into thinking they are actually seeing a moving image. Animations are made all over the world and have become a very popular genre of filmmaking.

After the screening

Ice Age: The Meltdown is a lighthearted and fun family film, but it does carry some more serious messages about the environment, global warming and animal extinction.

Think of another animated film that you have seen recently. Can you find a serious or important message in it? Do you think all films have a message?
Is animation a good medium for conveying important or serious messages or do you think documentary or live action would be better? Why?

Make your own storyboard. Choose an important event or scene that happens in the film, and draw what happens in pictures on to your own storyboard.

Create a new character that could appear in the film. Decide if your character is friendly or if they are an enemy to Manny, Sid and Diego. Make a list of how your character might sound, move, talk, and what it likes and dislikes. Work with a partner/small group to discuss how you can make them more realistic. Use a mix of paints, pencils and a collage affect to add colour to your character.

The curriculum

ICE AGE THE MELTDOWN is a useful tool for teaching many areas of the curriculum, including literacy, geography, science, music and arts at both key stages 1 and 2.

Literacy at KS1

Narrative:

Y2 - Unit 4: Extended stories/Significant authors

Y3 - Unit 3: Adventure and mystery

The Story:

ICE AGE THE MELTDOWN is a great adventure story. The characters go on a quest to escape the oncoming flood and help all the other animals to safety.

Based on what the children remember from the film work as a class to create a list of the key events that make up the most important aspects of the story. Convert this list into a story board with 6-8 simple pictures.

Using this storyboard for structure have a go at retelling the story in small groups. Take it in turns to speak with each person talking for about a minute, move around the group until you reach the end of the story. If you notice someone forgets something or gets confused don't interrupt, just carry on from where the last person left off. Refer to the storyboard as a reminder but add in lots of details and descriptive language to make it interesting and exciting to listen to.

Use this series of key events to create your own adventure story. Change the setting and characters to make it your own, include a new twist or a different ending.

The characters:

One of the main characters in the story is Manny the Woolly mammoth. Think about his relationship with Ellie and how this changes throughout the story. Do you think Manny cares about Ellie? Why? How do their feelings for each other change during the story.

Imagine you are Manny, write a series of diary entries describing your feelings throughout the journey and after the danger of the flood is over. Add in a couple to describe what happens after the ending of the film.

Citizenship and Geography at KS1 & KS2

Citizenship (Y1-6) - Unit 3: Animals and Us / Unit 02: Choices

Geography (Y4) - Unit 8: Improving the environment

(Y 3) - Unit 7, Section 2: Where are hot and cold places located on a world map?

The following activities can be extended or simplified to suit children of all ages.

Animals, us and our changing world

The animals in the film are affected by Climate Change as the Ice around them begins to melt. This change was a result of natural occurrences that really happened around 10,000 years ago. Nowadays the areas of our planet covered with ice are going through similar changes. This is causing problems for the animals that live there, such as Polar Bears and Penguins.

Other parts of the world are going through changes too. As a class watch the ONE PLANET FUTURE short film provided by WWF at your ICE AGE Screenings (also available to view online at http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=t2A24Osp_2s).

The film shows us how climate change is affecting people and animals all over the world. Discuss how this makes you feel.

The film also mentions ways that animals and their habitats are protected throughout the world, by groups like WWF as well as others. Visit the WWF website to find out what work they are carrying out to help protect animals and people from the dangers of climate change. What other organisations are also carrying out similar work?

Create a class display to show how animals in different parts of the world are being affected by climate change but also what is being done to help them; include information on nature reserves, and forests or oceans that are protected by laws against hunting, fishing, logging or building.

Research ways you and your school could get involved in the fight against climate change. Create some class rules to improve recycling and reduce energy use. Once you've put these into practice develop a campaign to persuade the rest of the school to join in. Write a presentation for assembly, create eye-catching and persuasive posters and set up a suggestions box or discussion forum for people to share their own ideas or opinions.

Friendship, understanding and working together

In the film we see a group of animal friends facing the challenges of the destruction of their known world. At first the animals seem to have no cares as they enjoy playing in the melting waters, but soon they have to move quickly to escape being hurt as the floods become more dangerous. The group is an unlikely one as these animals would normally not co-exist or live in harmony in the wild. However, we see their best qualities working together to solve the problems.

Think of ways the animals co-operate and help one another when faced with a problem. Can you relate these ideas to your own life? for example, have you helped a friend in need, or can you recall being helped by someone wise when you had a problem to overcome.

Science & Geography at KS2

Science unit 4B: Habitats

Section 3: Different animals in different habitats

Section 9: Protecting habitats

Science unit 5B: Life cycles

Section 8: What is reproduction for?

Geography

Y3 - Unit 7: Weather around the world

Y3/6 - Unit 16: What's in the news?

Y 4 - Unit 8: Improving the environment

Animals and their habitats

In the film we see a large and varied group of animals sharing one habitat. In reality it such a variety of animals would never be found in one place, instead different types of animals are found in different habitats. Why do you think this is? If all animals wanted to live in the same small part of the world what problems would this cause?

The animals that we meet in the film are creatures that once lived on planet earth but have now become extinct. What do you know about extinction? Can you think of any other animals that have become extinct?

Identify an animal alive today that is currently under threat of extinction. Can you find out why it is under threat? What action is being taken to protect this animal? Find out if there are any laws against hunting or special breeding programmes in place to protect the animal. Create a fact-sheet to show others how the animal is threatened and what can be done to protect it. Make an eye catching poster to alert others to this animal's struggles.

Polar Bear case study

Polar bears currently face extinction because of changes to their natural habitat; the polar ice caps. The polar ice caps may be harsh and freezing environments but they are ideal living places for the polar bear.

What do you already know about polar bears and why they are suited to this particular habitat? Can you find out any ways that the polar bear has adapted or evolved to fit into this habitat?

Could a polar bear survive in a different environment? Why?

Create a classroom display or news board to show the current plight of Polar Bears. Collect articles from newspapers, magazines and websites that explain the problems they are facing. Include maps and pictures of the Polar bear's habitat, mark places where changes have already started to take place. Add weather reports and symbols to show how the environment changes from season to season and from year to year.

Literacy and citizenship at KS2

Citizenship (Y 3-6)

Unit 01: Taking part - developing skills of communication and participation

Literacy

Year 5 Narrative

Unit 6: Dramatic conventions

Year 4/6 Non-fiction

Year 4 unit 1 + Y5 unit 2: Recounts: newspapers/magazines

Year 4 unit 4: Persuasive texts

Climate Change and the media

(can be taught as an extension to Polar Bear activity or separately)

Collect recent written news coverage about the subject of Climate Change throughout the world, including key animal habitats.

Compare articles on the same subject with one another; do they make different claims?

Using different coloured pens underline examples of fact and examples of opinion within the article. Has the author tried to confuse fact and opinion to make their argument more persuasive?

Do you notice any differences or similarities between the types of language used?

Compare these newspaper articles with other reports on the same subject such as screen and radio reports. Which is most powerful? Why?

Share the reports and information you have sourced with the rest of your class. As a group discuss your opinions on the subject of climate change and the impact this is having on people and animals around the world. How real and serious do you think the threat is? Are we doing enough to prepare for the future? Who should be leading the way; children? Teachers? Politicians? What more could your school do to make a difference?

Choose a subject that comes out of your discussion in which there is a difference of opinion within the class. Stage a class debate in which representatives of two opposing sides put across their own point of view in a persuasive manner. Each group should prepare and present a report that includes both fact and personal opinion to make a persuasive case and win the support of the rest of the class.

Turn your classroom into a reporting station. Create radio broadcasts, a newspaper or even a TV station to report on issues (relating to climate change) and incidents within your school. Interview staff and pupils to create reports that explore the full story.

Design and technology at KS1

Unit 3C: Moving monsters

This unit helps to develop children's understanding of control through investigating simple pneumatic systems and designing and making a model of a monster that has moving parts controlled by pneumatics.

Use the monsters and beasts that appear in ICE AGE THE MELTDOWN as inspiration to design and create a prehistoric beast. Use simple pneumatic systems to bring this beast to life by giving it a moving tail, legs that walk or an opening and closing jaw.

Unit 1A: Moving pictures

In this unit, children develop an understanding of simple mechanisms through designing and making moving pictures. These can be based on characters or scenes from stories and could be designed for use in storytelling activities. Children develop their understanding of how movement can be created by investigating everyday products and making simple levers and sliders from given examples.

Use scenes and characters from the film as the starting point for this activity. To link with literacy use the moving pictures in conjunction with the retelling the story activity suggested above.

Unit 4B: Storybooks

This unit develops the popular activity of making greetings cards and the moving picture made in key stage 1. Children research the content of the book and design and make a book that is finished to a high standard, with pages that incorporate moving parts, including linkages and levers.

Use scenes and characters from the film as the starting point for this activity.

Art and design at key stage 2

Unit 4C: Journeys

In this unit children explore how signs, symbols and metaphors can be used to communicate ideas and meanings about a journey. They produce a mixed-media work, combining drawing, painting, collage and print-making techniques. They learn about artists, craftspeople and designers who communicate their ideas through signs and symbols.

Explore prehistoric cave drawings that depict journeys from the time in which ICE AGE THE MELTDOWN is set. These feature in the first ICE AGE movie which is available on DVD, or you can watch the relevant clip online here:

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=zbJSOIJdTWQ&feature=related>

Use the journey undertaken by the characters in the film as the inspiration for exploring this scheme of work.

Music at KS1 & 2

Unit 2: Sounds interesting - Exploring sounds

Unit 9: Animal magic - Exploring descriptive sounds

Use your voice, instruments and other materials to create sounds that describe the movement and personality of each of the characters animals in the film. Compare Manny the slow and sometimes grumpy Mammoth with Sid who is more scatty and unpredictable.

Consider how music was used in the film to enhance and capture mood. Try to remember the sounds and music used at the end of the film during the high drama flood scene.

Use instruments to create your own dramatic music to capture the sounds of a huge flood and the feelings of those caught up in the event. Perform your piece to the rest of the class.

Next try creating music to describe a different part of the film, can your classmates tell which scene you have chosen?

General creative activities for KS1 & 2

Painting

Think about the icy landscapes in the film. Try to remember the ways in which the watery surfaces reflected light and colour from the sun and sky to create a cool but still colourful landscape. Have a go at painting your own icy environment using bold colours diluted with lots of white to give a softer reflective feel. Think carefully about which colours look and feel cold.

Model making

Collect junk from around your classroom to create a model of one of the scenes or characters from the film. Think carefully about the things you use, can you make it entirely from things that would ordinarily be thrown in the bin?