Teacher’s Resource: The Lost Thing

Second Level P5-7
Curriculum for Excellence links: Literacy, English, and Expressive Arts

Created by Gill Paton

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discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk

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Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery. This resource provides you with a film synopsis, things to help prepare your class for seeing the film, follow up activities and useful references. We hope that you and your pupils have fun and enjoy learning with this resource.

They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals. Each resources aims to:

- support and extend working with film in the classroom
- help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit
- develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21st Century Literacy/moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/resources or via the Discovery Film Festival area on GLOW, which can be found within the Dundee 21st Century Literacy Group.

Teacher's Note:

_The Lost Thing_ is based on the book by Shaun Tan but, like _Lost and Found_ and _The Gruffalo_, this beautifully made film expands the original story in a wonderfully imaginative way.

Included in Shaun Tan's many awards is a well-deserved Oscar in 2011 for _The Lost Thing_. Find out more about him and his books at www.shauntan.net/books.html

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01 / discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk
Synopsis

The Lost Thing
Dir. Shaun Tan
Australia 2010 / 15m

The Lost Thing is a humorous story about a boy who discovers a bizarre-looking creature while out collecting bottle-tops on a beach.

Having guessed that it is lost, he tries to find out who owns it or where it belongs, but the problem is met with indifference by everyone else, who barely notice its presence.

Each person he comes across is unhelpful in their own way; strangers, friends, parents are all unwilling to entertain this uninvited interruption to their day-to-day life.

In spite of his better judgement, the boy feels sorry for this hapless creature, and attempts to find out where it belongs.

Before your visit to the cinema

Activity 1. Read or view with the texts – book / film

Either read through the book, published by Hodder Children's Books ISBN-10: 0734411383 or watch the trailer at www.thelostthing.com

Although each is a slightly different experience, discussions could centre on the style of animation, what might happen (trailer), what might be different in the film (book)
After your visit to the cinema

Activity 1.

As with the best stories, *The Lost Thing* leaves plenty to the viewer’s imagination.

- Where did the lost thing come from?
- What was it?
- Where did the boy leave it?

Discuss possible answers in groups or as a class.

*When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others’ contributions and use these to build on thinking. LIT 2-02a*

*I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to literal, inferential, evaluative and other types of questions, and by asking different kinds of questions of my own. LIT 2-07a*

*I can convey information, describe events, explain processes or combine ideas in different ways. LIT 2-28a*

Activity 2.

The boy’s parents are not keen on the Lost Thing.

Ask pupils if they can remember their specific objections that they had. (e.g. The mother worried that its feet would be filthy and the father worried about ‘strange diseases.’)

Discuss – would their parents have the same worries if they took it home?

Ask pupils to plan out an imaginary conversation with their own parent, trying to explain about the lost thing. These could either be written out as dialogue or performed if time allowed.

*I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. LIT 2-15a*

*I am learning to use language and style in a way which engages and/or influences my reader. ENG 2-27a*

*Having explored the elements which writers use in different genres, I can use what I learn to create stories, poems and plays with an interesting and appropriate structure, interesting characters and/or settings which come to life. ENG 2-31a*
Activity 3.

The animation has a particular style – pencil drawings on a collage background. The collage background often has words that appear random but actually comment on the story.

Ask pupils to write a short opinion on a topic (might be something to do with the film or something topical.)

Give them a variety of newspapers to look through and ask them to cut out words and images that are loosely connected with their topic. Use these to create a collage background for their text.

Throughout the writing process, I can check that my writing makes sense and meets its purpose. LIT 2-23a

I am learning to use language and style in a way which engages and/or influences my reader. ENG 2-27a

I consider the impact that layout and presentation will have and can combine lettering, graphics and other features to engage my reader. LIT 2-24a

Activity 4

The lost thing is a peculiar beast. How does it work?

• What do all the bits' do?
• Ask pupils to study the drawing and make an attempt to copy it.
• Ask pupils to annotate drawing, explaining what each bit does.

Extension

Explore Tan’s other drawings from The Lost Thing, which you can find at his website: www.shauntan.net

Once on the site, click on ‘Picture Books’, then on What Miscellaneous Abnormality Is That? The same sort of activity could be carried out for other ‘lost things’.

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text and use supporting detail. LIT 2-16a

I can respond to the work of artists and designers by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others’ work. EXA 2-07a
Activity 5.

Shaun Tan is a very interesting illustrator who explains his inspirations and techniques well.

As a class, compile a list of questions about Tan, then carry out the necessary research to answer them. (a possible homework activity).

The best sites are:

www.thelostthing.com/

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaun_Tan


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Evaluating this resource

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate. We welcome film reviews, letters from pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback; email them to discovery@dca.org.uk or post them to Discovery Film Festival, DCA, 152 Nethergate, DD1 4DY.

Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels. Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival and participating venues's website. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included.

If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please email sarah.derrick@dca.org.uk.

06 / discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk