

film education

STUDY GUIDE

www.filmeducation.org

TEACHERS' NOTES

This Film Education study guide has been designed for teachers working with primary children.

The pack is divided into two sections:

Part One – has a range of cross-curricular activities linked directly to the film 'The Lion King'. Some activities are designed for work in advance of seeing the film, using the film synopsis included at the back of the pack. Other activities are designed to be used as follow-up after seeing the film.

Part Two – is linked specifically to the animals in 'The Lion King'. The tasks have been designed to allow teachers to develop them to suit their own needs.

Film Synopsis

Set against the majestic backdrop of Africa, 'The Lion King' is the powerful, allegorical story of a young lion cub named Simba and his heroic journey to claim his destined role as king of the jungle. As a carefree cub, Simba 'just can't wait to be king' and spends his days frolicking with his pal, Nala. His father King Mufasa, the revered ruler of Pride Rock and the lands that surround it, teaches him about the 'circle of life' – the delicate balance of nature which bonds all animals together – and cautions him to prepare for the day when the sun will rise on his leadership. Mufasa's evil brother, Scar, hopes that day will never arrive and schemes to do away with Mufasa and Simba so that he can assume the throne for his own tyrannical purposes. He and his hyena henchmen Shenzi, Banzai and Ed, lure Simba into the path of a wildebeest stampede in which Mufasa is killed trying to save his son.

Scar convinces Simba that he is responsible for his father's death and urges him to run far away from the Pride Lands and never return. A frightened and guilt-ridden Simba flees into exile where he is befriended by a wacky warthog named Pumbaa and his freewheeling meerkat companion, Timon. Under the dubious guidance of this odd couple, Simba adopts their 'Hakuna Matata' (no worries) attitude towards life, living on a diet of bugs and taking things one day at a time. Simba matures into adulthood and is able to put his past behind him until a beautiful young lioness, who turns out to be his childhood friend Nala, arrives on the scene. She tells him of the hard times and suffering that have come to the Pride Lands under Scar's reign and beseeches him to take his place as the king. With the help of Rafiki, the wise shaman baboon, Simba realises that his father's spirit lives on in him and that he must accept the responsibility of his destined role. In a climactic battle with his Uncle and an army of hyenas, Simba attempts to reclaim his rightful place in the 'circle of life'.



PART ONE

Circle of Life

'We are all connected in the great circle of life'

The Circle of Life is a key theme in 'The Lion King'. Below are the lyrics of the song 'Circle of Life' which opens the film.

Circle of Life

From the day we arrive on the planet
And blinking, step into the sun
There's more to see than can ever be seen
More to do than can ever be done
There's far too much to take in here
More to find than can ever be found
But the sun rolling high
Through the sapphire sky
Keeps great and small on the endless round

CHORUS

It's the circle of life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
Till we find our place
On the path unwinding
In the circle
The circle of life



English Activities

To talk about

A circle of life may mean many different things for all of us. It might make us think about the whole cycle of life from birth through to death and all the events that happen to us in that time. It might make us think about our connections with past and future generations, life across the ages, life across different cultures and family life. The circle of life may include some happy and some sad times. In a whole lifetime there will no doubt be a mixture of good and bad things that happen.

- ☉ What does the idea of the circle of life make you think about?

To talk about

'The Lion King' opens to the sound of 'The Circle of Life' with the dawn of a new day. As the sun rises over Africa the countryside changes in the new light and we see the animals gathering for a celebration at Pride Rock. Mufasa, the Lion King, is a powerful and respected ruler and a proud and gentle father. The excitement grows as the new baby lion cub is held up high by Rafiki, the wise old baboon. The animals show their respect by bowing to the newborn prince.

To do

- ☉ As a class or in small groups talk about what you remember about this ceremony in the Pride Lands – the setting, the colours, the music and sounds, the movement of the animals, the sense of excitement and atmosphere. (Remember the flight of the birds, the ants on the branch, the running zebras and trundling elephants.)
- ☉ Do you see any links between this ceremony in the animal world and the ceremonies that we have in the human world?
- ☉ What are your favourite ceremonies? (These could be religious or not. Any kind of gathering together which has a sense of ritual, ceremony and tradition).
- ☉ Drama activity. Talk about family rituals which are set around a meal time (e.g. grace before, or after the meal; making a toast; singing a song such as 'Happy Birthday' on a special occasion). In small groups discuss, devise, and perform a short, invented family meal time which includes at least three interesting rituals with which all the participants are familiar.
- ☉ Come together as a class to decide on the focus for a class ceremony/ritual. It may be that you wish to focus on the celebration of a newborn child as in the 'The Lion King'. Decisions should be made about setting, people involved, length of ceremony, use of words, music, rhythm and dance.



- ☀ Work in small groups on tasks in preparation for the agreed ceremony. Perhaps you can imagine making food or gifts for presentation at the ceremony or work on a ritual dance/movement or music ritual. It is important to agree on a set of rules for the actual ceremony, so that each group makes its presentation in turn and there is an agreed greeting, gesture or response for the group. During the ceremony the class teacher or another teacher may wish to work 'in role' as the master of ceremonies or the central authority figure.
- ☀ Come together to discuss the running order of the ceremony and confirm the basic rules. Try out the ceremony and then discuss how the ideas can be built on and improved. It may be useful at this point to work again on the music/rhythm/movement input to enhance the sense of ceremony and celebration, as in 'The Lion King'.

History Activities

To do

In 'The Lion King' we follow the unwinding path of Simba's circle of life. Many important things happen to Simba. Below you will see a list of a few of the key events in Simba's life. They are listed in the wrong order. Work with a partner to try and put them in the right order.

- ☀ Simba meets Pumbaa the warthog and Timon the meerkat.
- ☀ Simba, the newborn cub, is lifted up before all the animals.
- ☀ Rafiki, the wise old baboon, leads Simba to a pool where he sees a reflection of his dead father who reminds him of his duty to 'Remember who you are.'
- ☀ Simba enjoys spending time with his father Mufasa.
- ☀ Simba, Nala, Timon and Pumbaa return to save the Pride Lands.
- ☀ The two cubs, Simba and Nala go to explore in the dangerous elephant graveyard.
- ☀ The Pride Lands flourish again. A newborn cub is held up. It is Simba and Nala's son.
- ☀ Simba is saved from the wildebeest stampede by his father Mufasa. Mufasa dies.
- ☀ Simba blames himself and flees from the Pride Lands.
- ☀ Nala finds Simba again and they fall in love. She tells him of his responsibility to the Pride Lands.
- ☀ Simba and his supporters do battle against Scar and the hyenas.

Come together as a class and check that you all agree on the correct order of events.



Technology Activities

To do

- ⊗ Again, in partners or in groups of four, use the events on page 5 and other events that you remember from Simba's life, to create your own board game.

You will need:

- ⊗ A very large square or rectangle of white or cream paper or card (about 1m x 1m – you could join together smaller pieces to make this).
- ⊗ Some bright thick and thin felt pens, one die and a counter for each player.
- ⊗ Draw a path of about 40 squares and number them 1-40. This path should follow a circular shape as it is the unwinding path of the circle of life, and represents the journey of the story of 'The Lion King'. The object of the game is to throw the die and get from beginning to end. Along the way some good and some bad things happen to you, depending on which square you land on. Ten or twenty squares represent an event on the journey and will have a few words or instructions for players to follow. These may be illustrated in a way which reminds players of the event (for example: for a square which represents a battle, the square itself may be drawn in the shape of a sword. The instructions may read 'The battle begins. Throw the die. You have to throw an even number before you can leave this place'.

When you are planning your game use words, pictures and detours to make the route more exciting. Have fun!

To do

Think about your own circle of life. Even though a lot of things will have already happened to you in your life, there is still a lot more of the path to unwind. Design your own path unwinding in the circle of life. Fill in a few events that have happened to you so far in your life and then add a few future hopes, wishes or dreams for the future of your own circle of life.



AFRICA

The film 'The Lion King' captures the beauty and colour of Africa. Before the film was made the filmmakers visited Africa to photograph and sketch the landscapes.

English Activities

To talk about

Discuss the huge variety of colours which are used in the film to create the splendour of the African landscape.

To do

- ☛ On a large piece of paper, either as a class or in small groups, make a list of particular scenes in the film where the colours and images of Africa were very striking and memorable.
- ☛ Do you remember the two contrasting worlds of the flourishing Pride Lands during the reign of Mufasa and the elephant graveyard where the hyenas live? Think about the different atmospheres of these two worlds and then make a record of these differences using the two charts below and on page 8.

The Pride Lands during the reign of Mufasa
Colours:
Type of events that happen here:
Type of characters who live here:
Use of weather/light/the elements:
Use of sound/music:
Moods/emotions this place makes you think of:
Any other pictures in your mind:



The Elephant Graveyard

Colours:

Type of events that happen here:

Type of characters who live here:

Use of weather/light/the elements:

Use of sound/music:

Moods/emotions this place makes you think of:

Any other pictures in your mind:

Geography Activities

To do

Find a map of the whole continent of Africa in an atlas.

Below are some scrambled names of African countries. Can you unscramble them and find them on the map of Africa? (see page 17 for answers)

I G A B A M

N O O M A C R E

C O C O R O M

N Y E K A

I R L A E G A

P O T E H I A I

W O S T A B A N

D A N G A U



As you will have seen in 'The Lion King', Africa has a most varied and fascinating wildlife population. The names of many African animals will be familiar to you. See how many you can find in the 'wordsearch' below. They may run horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

Animal Word Search

baboon	M	W	A	R	T	H	O	G	P
elephant	A	Z	O	T	L	S	G	E	R
gazelle	P	E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T
giraffe	C	B	N	I	T	R	Z	V	Z
hyena	H	R	U	O	O	K	E	L	T
lion	B	A	B	O	O	N	L	M	I
warthog	C	H	I	D	C	P	L	E	N
zebra	P	N	J	U	H	Y	E	N	A
	M	R	G	I	R	A	F	F	E



THE HERO'S JOURNEY

English Activities

To talk about

'The Lion King' is the first Disney film to be based on original material as opposed to being an adaptation of a fairytale for instance. Seventeen people were involved in writing 'The Lion King'. Although the plot is not based on an old tale, it does have echoes of other types of story. Many old stories are about the journey of the hero. In 'The Lion King', Simba is the hero and the story is told of his journey back to save the Pride Lands, to defeat his wicked Uncle Scar and take up his position as the rightful king.

To do

- ☛ Choose an animal of your own to be the hero of your story. Think about what type of character this animal will be and what sort of adventures they will have. When you are planning your story there are a few things you may like to think about:
 - In 'The Lion King' no humans are involved. You may like to try the same thing with your story. Think about the different relationships and emotions of the animals in their society.
 - The father/son relationship is particularly important in 'The Lion King'. Mufasa tries to make his son Simba aware of the difficulties of growing up and taking on responsibility. He gives Simba advice, such as 'There's more to being a king than getting your way all the time', and 'Being brave doesn't mean going looking for trouble'. Think about advice that your animal hero may be given by members of his/her family.
 - When you are planning your story think about the route of the journey within the whole circle of life.



PART TWO

Animals of the African Savanna

Eating Habits and Lifestyle

Savanna is the name given to grassland in the tropical parts of the world. Here it is hot all year round with a rainy season and a dry season. When it has not rained for a long time, the grass becomes very dry and can burn quickly if set alight by sparks of lightning. But the grass is quick to grow again. All the animals mentioned on the poster and in the film live in the African savanna. You can see the savanna marked on the map below.



Here is a list of words linked to the eating patterns of the animals in the savanna. In pairs, have the class try to make their own definitions of them.

Make Your Own Definitions For These Words	
Carnivore	Scavenger
Herbivore	Graze
Omnivore	Browse
Prey	Predator

Now, either the definitions can be checked in the dictionary or against the teacher's list.

In groups, discuss the words and create lists or picture charts of carnivores, herbivores or omnivores.

Teacher's list of words

- Carnivore** An animal that eats meat – in other words, other animals. Mongooses and cheetah are carnivores.
- Herbivore** An animal that eats plants, e.g. antelope, giraffe, warthog, etc.
- Omnivore** An animal that eats plants and meat, e.g. baboon, humans, etc.
- Prey** An animal that is killed by another animal for food. Zebras are the prey of lions.
- Predator** An animal that hunts other animals for food. Hyenas are ferocious predators.
- Scavenger** An animal that feeds on the carcasses of animals that have died.
- Graze** Feed on grass.
- Browse** Feed on twigs and leaves.



FURTHER SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Science Activities

Food chains are a way of representing feeding relationships in an ecosystem.

1. Make simple food chains using familiar animals and then go on to make ones with savanna animals using the film 'The Lion King' to help you.

e.g.	grass	rabbit	fox
	grass	zebra	lion
	grass	warthog	cheetah
	seeds	mouse	snake

2. Make a list of all the different parts of plants that animals could possibly eat and find an African savanna animal that eats them.

Stem, bark, flower, buds, leaves, fruit, seeds, roots, bulbs, nectar, sap etc.

e.g.	sunbird	–	nectar
	elephant	–	bark
	wildebeest	–	grass
	giraffe	–	leaves

3. Match the following African savanna animals with their prey. Use arrows to link the two groups.

meat-eaters + omnivores

lion
snake
aardvark
cheetah

prey

termites
zebra
gazelle
mouse



4. Working in small groups, devise columns titled 'herbivore' and 'carnivore'. Each column should describe how the animal finds food, how often it eats, whether or not the animals are ever afraid to look for their food and why, etc.

Reassembling the whole class, give them the information below about typical savanna herbivores and carnivores.

e.g. **zebra:** feeding is a daily routine, grass does not provide as much energy as meat, therefore a zebra needs to eat large quantities, always looking and listening for danger, babies need to be able to walk shortly after birth to keep up with the herd.

lion: hunts and kills every three to four days, rests in between.

How does this help to explain why the lion is often likened to a king?

5. Have the class look at pictures of the following animals and ask them to guess which parts of their bodies help them to feed?

black rhino

zebra

giraffe

warthog

gerenuk antelope

elephant

Still looking at the pictures, point to the parts of the body mentioned below and give the class the following information.

black rhino

flexible upper lip for browsing on bushes

zebra

grazes on the ground

giraffe

long tongue, mobile lips for browsing in the tree tops

warthog

kneels down to feed

gerenuk antelope

stands on hind legs to browse

elephant

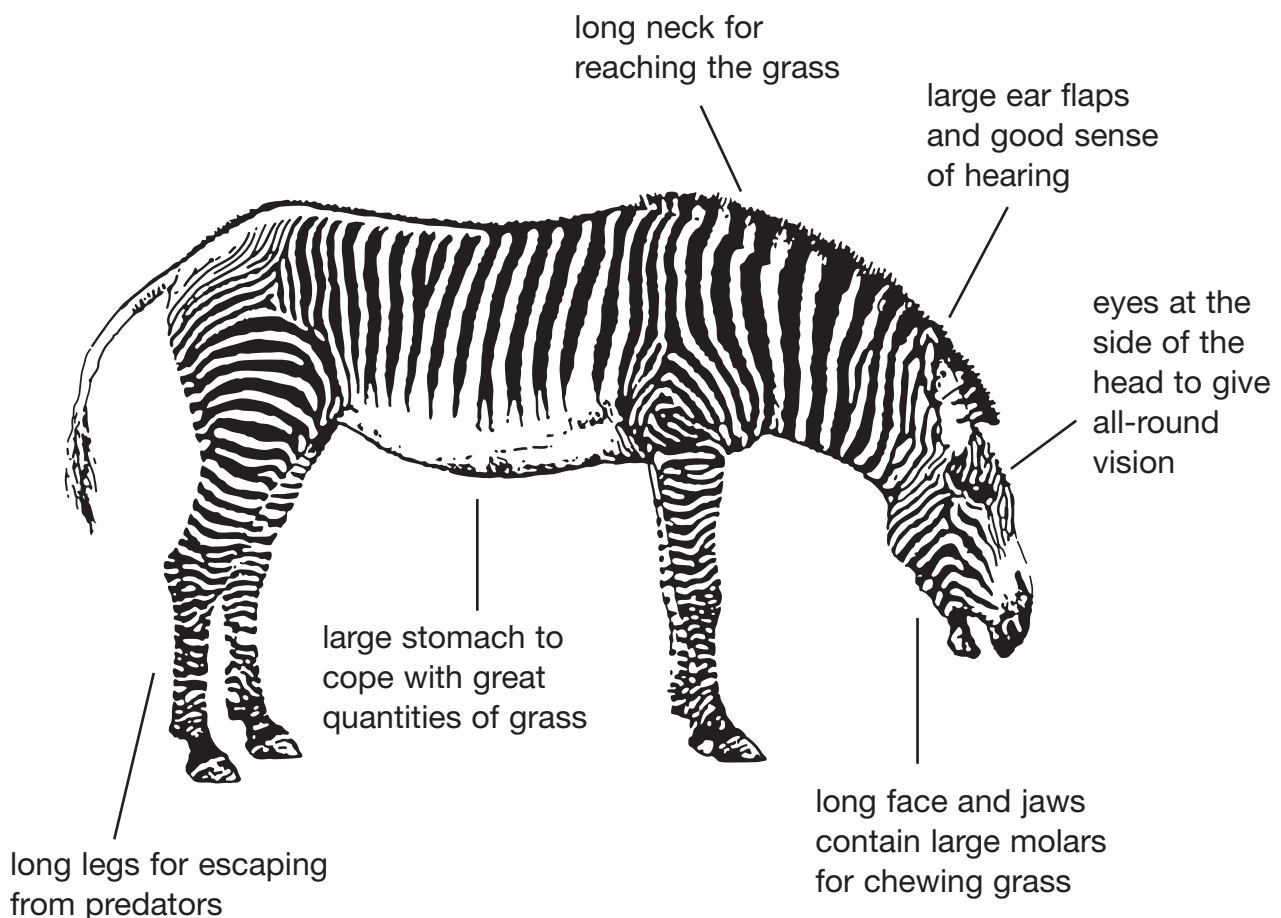
uses trunk to reach (does not have long neck)



6. To do

Look at the labelled picture of the zebra below. Choose another savanna animal, and label in a similar fashion the different parts of its body and how they help it in its life on the savanna. Use the information on page 14 and any other information you can find.

Here is a zebra. The picture portrays the body plan of this large plant-eating mammal and shows how the body parts help it to survive predators and feed itself.



Find out what a zebra's stripes are meant for.



7. (i) Look at the different methods carnivorous animals use to track and kill prey:

- lions** stalk until close and then run, pounce and bite the neck
- cheetah** much longer legs, run fast
- leopards** drag their prey up into trees
- vultures** scavengers, different species have different shaped beaks according to which part of the carcass they feed on
- wild dogs** hunt in a pack and attack the prey from underneath
- puff adder** uses venom from its fangs to kill its prey, swallows it whole

(ii) In groups, have the class discuss and brainstorm a list on how the prey must feel when being tracked down.

English Activities

To do

Write a short poem or story imagining you are a type of prey (use an actual example you have learned about). How do you feel with your predator chasing after you, how do you try and dodge it? Do you escape? Does something save you?

Now try writing a story or poem from the point of view of the hungry predator.



Urgent action needed. How can you help?

There are only about 175 mature Asian lions left in the wild with no room for a bigger population. Without zoos these species will become extinct.

Adopt an Animal

By adopting an animal you can play a part in conserving endangered animals by taking a shared adoption.

For further information visit the London Zoo website:

www.zsl.org/info/support-us/

Vanishing Species

To find out more about how you can help save vanishing species visit the World Wildlife Fund website at:

www.wwf.org.uk

mouse
gazelle
zebra
termites

snake
cheetah
lion
aardvark

Answers from page 13:

*Answers from page 8:
Gambia; Cameroon; Morocco; Kenya; Algeria; Ethiopia; Botswana; Uganda.*





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For over twenty years our charity has been bringing film to teachers and schoolchildren. We produce BAFTA winning and curriculum-based resources, run cutting-edge teacher training events and each year take 430,000 schoolchildren to the cinema free of charge in the world's biggest festival screening programme for young people, National Schools Film Week.

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