

Exploring Literary Devices and Terms Through NFB Animated Films

Study Guide



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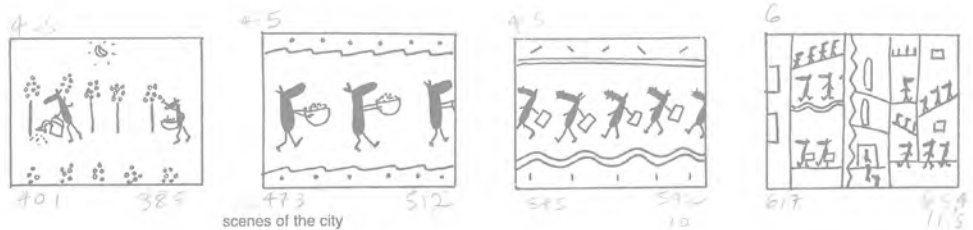
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Introduction

Designed by the NFB Education team, this resource consists of several activities and more than 40 definitions of literary terms used across the curriculum but especially relevant to English-Language Arts, Drama, Creative Writing, Photography, and Film Studies courses. Each definition is accompanied by an NFB production, and we've created film clips (chapters) in which you'll find the term demonstrated.

Media literacy is now integral to Language Arts studies in every province in Canada. Print text and visual media are both foundational, symbiotic aspects of public discourse and artistic creation, feeding each other, inspiring and co-creating new forms of Language Arts, while simultaneously strengthening established media forms. Film and video are essential to this discourse and creation, and teaching media literacy should be seen for what it is: a natural (and increasingly important) extension to existing Language Arts curriculum.

Marshall McLuhan said, "A new technology tends to take as its content the old technology."¹ Visual media often incorporate written text into their content, and literary devices are used in and replicated in all forms of media. Visual media, especially film, offer possibilities not found in printed text. Light, sound and stylistic techniques can be seen as augmentations and extensions of print text that enhance the print medium, so film may be the ideal medium for teaching and learning Language Arts.

Animation is a great way to introduce students to ideas and concepts presented in Language Arts classes and to engage them in closely examining those ideas and concepts. This group of select NFB films will help illustrate the meaning of key literary terms, codes and conventions in the context of visual media, particularly animation, as educators deconstruct the use of these literary devices within the films.



The Great Malaise

¹ McLuhan, M. *Lectures and Interviews*, by Marshall McLuhan. Edited by Stephanie McLuhan and David Staines. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. P. 61

Recommended Age Levels

The glossary is designed for use in high school, and most films are recommended for ages 12+. Some of the films may only be appropriate for ages 14+ and are labelled with advisories.

The films used in this guide are intended for various ages and have accompanying age suggestions, but it is *highly recommended* that educators watch the films in full prior to showing them to students. Some material can be unsettling, especially to more sensitive students. In addition, cultural norms vary between communities, and age ranges may not be enough to guide teachers' decisions. Each educator should judge whether the film's content meets the standards of the community.

Please refer to NFB Education's [Safe Spaces for Dialogue and Discussion](#) guide on sensitive content.

School Subjects

- English-Language Arts
- Media Literacy
- Media Studies
- Film and Film Arts
- Photography
- Visual Arts
- Design



The Great Malaise

Summative Guiding Questions

1	How important are literary devices in a text?	3	What are some of the ways a written text expresses thoughts and feelings that <i>cannot be expressed</i> in film?
2	How can knowing which literary devices are being used help one to appreciate what the author is trying to say?	4	What are some of the ways a <i>film</i> expresses thoughts and feelings that cannot be expressed in written text?

Learning Objectives

Students will learn that texts do not just come in print form: films are also texts, which may use some of the same codes and conventions of literature, but also contain direct visual language. By its very nature, film is multimodal and offers certain possibilities such as music, framing and lighting to create mood, and these codes complement literary devices.

- Understand the codes and conventions of film and animation.
- Understand how literary devices are used in all media.
- Understand the possibilities of film.
- Examine the relationship between film and text.
- Explore the language of animation.
- Explore the use of humour in media.
- Examine the power of film.
- Explore visual language and composition.

Using This Guide in the Classroom

Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with common literary terms.
- Become familiar with visual interpretations of literary terms used in film.
- Understand how the possibilities of the film medium versus the print medium change the way literary devices are used.

Pre-assessment Activity

Before commencing the unit and sharing the glossary, educators should ask students what they already know about animation and literary terms and devices.

We suggest that you choose three to five literary terms or devices for one 45–75-minute class. Write the selected terms on the whiteboard (e.g., metaphor, hyperbole, flashback, irony).



24 idées / seconde - Dessin sur acétates
Photo credit: Caroline Hayeur



24 idées / seconde - Animation sous la caméra
Photo credit: Caroline Hayeur

Option 1:

Traditional Class (Frontal Teaching)

1

Write five common literary terms (e.g., allegory, flashback, rhyme, metaphor and irony, or any other terms you may have taught in the past) on the whiteboard and explain them, *without* giving examples.

2

Give students a handout containing the Guiding Questions (see below) and go over the questions with the class to ensure they understand what's expected.

3

Class watches a film clip demonstrating one of the five literary terms. Students fill out their answers on the handout while watching the clip.

4

When all students have completed the handout, choose students to share their answers. Students then explain which of the five literary terms or devices was used in the clip and *justify* their opinion.

5

Give the correct answer and explain why it is correct.

6

If there is enough time, watch film from the *beginning* to gain a better understanding of the use of the term or device in the film.

Repeat this procedure with all the terms that you have selected.

Option 2:

Group Work

Materials: Index cards with definitions.

Part 1.

- 1 Divide your class into groups of three or four.
- 2 Write the *definitions* of five literary terms on white index cards, and write the names of each of these *terms without their definitions* on another coloured card, for a total of 10 cards.
- 3 Make enough sets of cards for your class so that each group has these 10 cards.
- 4 Have your students work in groups to try to match the words to the definitions.
- 5 Once all the groups have made their choices, put the definitions on the whiteboard so they can see how many they got correct.
- 6 Discuss the students' choices and have them explain their reasoning.



Part 2.

Using the same five literary terms for the same groups:

- 1 Write the terms on the whiteboard.
- 2 Class watches a clip representing one of the selected literary terms as students answer the Guiding Questions on their handout.
- 3 Break the students into groups and have them discuss and come up with their group's answers.
- 4 Ask a representative from each group to share their answers, and ask for reasons and/or evidence that led to their answers.
- 5 Allow for discussion if there are any challenges from other groups.
- 6 Now share the correct answers and discuss any further questions students might have.
- 7 Repeat for each of the four remaining terms.

Extension: Have groups write a short script using any of the five literary terms they studied.

Option 3:

Using This Guide Online (Zoom)

- 1 Convert the Guiding Questions into a PDF file and share it remotely with your class.
- 2 Create a slideshow (Google Sheets or PowerPoint) with four or five common literary terms and their definitions, with the final slide containing the Guiding Questions.
- 3 In Zoom or a similar interface, start the class by asking students if they have ever heard any of the terms and have them explain their understanding of the terms.
- 4 Use the “share screen” option to share your slides with your students and go over each word and its definition.
- 5 Ask students to read the Guiding Questions, and go over the questions with them to ensure they understand.
- 6 Class watches the first clip; then move to breakout rooms to answer the questions (ask if they need to watch the clip more than once).
- 7 Visit breakout rooms to help and make sure students are on task. Inform them that one spokesperson will share the group’s answers, so they should decide who that student is.

8 Once you've visited all the groups, return to full class.

9 Each group's spokesperson shares their answer and *justifies* their choice.

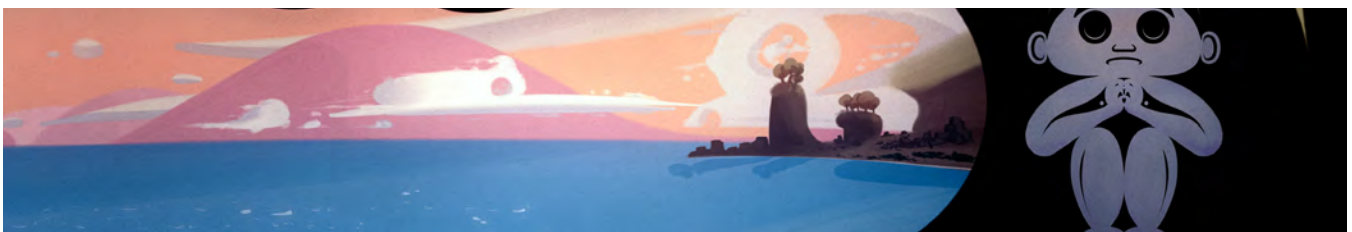
10 When all groups have shared, explain which are the possible answers and why.

11 If there is enough time, watch the film from the *beginning* to gain a better understanding of the effect of the literary device used.

At the end of the glossary there's a series of activities for different groups of students. Educators can choose to do some or all of the activities, depending on time and needs.

Guiding Questions:

- From the literary terms or devices we discussed, which ones were used in the clip?
- Identify the exact point in the clip where the term or device was used (what happened before and after).
- What evidence do you have to justify your answer?
- Is there more than one example of a literary term or device being used in the clip? If so, identify the other examples.
- In your opinion, in what way did the use of this term or device improve the film? Judge its effects on the story.
- Describe how this term or device is similar to one of the others (for example, compare *allegory* to *metaphor*). How are they different?
- Have you seen examples of the term or device used in other texts (stories, books, animation, fiction films)? Explain.
- Did your understanding of the definition of the literary term or device change after watching the clip? Explain how.



The Mountain of Sgaana

Glossary – Literary Terms and Devices with NFB Animated Examples

ALLEGORY:

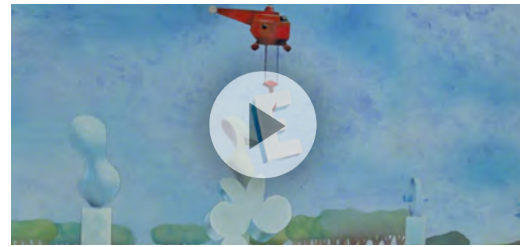
A text in which the narrative, a character, or a location represents a larger, more complex idea.

Animated film: [“E”](#)

Directed by: Bretislav Pojar and Francine Desbiens

Duration: 6 min

Ages: 12+



Clip: 0:35 - 4:42

Animated film: [Neighbours](#)

Directed by: Norman McLaren

Duration: 8 min

Ages: 14+

Warning: Violence



ALLUSION:

An indirect reference to something else.

Animated film: [Blind Vaysha](#)

Directed by: Theodore Ushev

Duration: 8 min

Ages: 14+



Clip: 3:15 - 5:45

ANACHRONISM:

When something is deliberately placed out of time, making it seem out of place for effect or contrast.

Animated film: [Sleeping Betty](#)

Directed by: Claude Cloutier

Duration: 9 min

Ages: 10+



Clip: 2:12 - 2:20

ASIDE:

A character breaks from the scene and directly addresses the audience. Other characters are not aware of this interaction.

Animated film: [My Financial Career](#)

Directed by: Gerald Potterton

Duration: 6 min

Ages: 12+



Clip: 0:00 - 0:50

BALLAD:

A story in the form of a poem or song.

Animated film: [Blackfly](#)

Directed by: Christopher Hinton

Duration: 5 min

Ages: All



Clip: 0:20 - 3:52

COLLOQUIALISM:

Use of slang or everyday language (e.g., “cuz” instead of “because”), often to convey the world of the characters or the setting.

Animated film: [The Great List of Everything: The Swimsuit](#)

Directed by: Iris Boudreau and Francis Papillon

Duration: 2 min

Ages: 12+

Warnings: Cartoon nudity



Clip: 0:00 - 0:55

DARK COMEDY:

A text or genre that uses comedic effects to explore serious topics. Often involves death or violence presented in an amusing manner due to circumstances and/or irony.

Animated film: [Why Me?](#)

Directed by: Janet Perlman and Derek Lamb

Duration: 9 min

Ages: 12+

Warnings: Mature content – an impending death

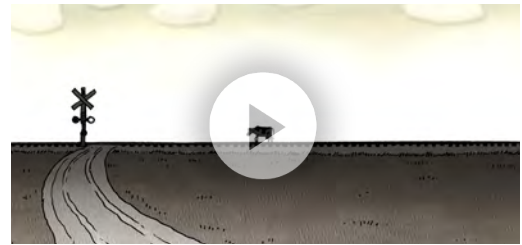


Clip: 0:24 - 8:47

DRAMATIC IRONY:

A situation where the audience knows something that the characters in the story do not.

Animated film: [Runaway](#)
Directed by: Cordell Barker
Duration: 9 min
Ages: 12+
Warnings: Cartoon nudity



Clip: 0:09 - 1:15

DYSTOPIAN FICTION:

A story set in a future world where things have gone terribly wrong; a cautionary tale that often refers to a current situation with a “what if” quality, exaggerating what might happen if society continues along this path.

Animated film: [Impossible Figures and other stories I](#)
Directed by: Marta Pajek
Duration: 16 min
Ages: 14+
Warnings: Mature content and some nudity

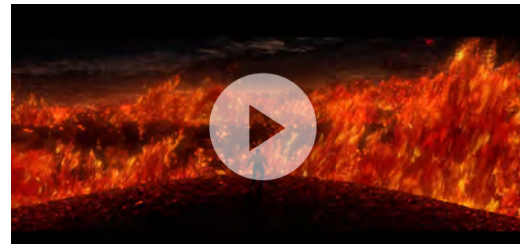


Clip: 2:10 - 3:53

EPIC:

A long story with many characters and situations. Usually involves larger-than-life characters, often heroic, who engage in complex tasks against evil characters or forces.

Animated film: [The Lost Town of Switez](#)
Directed by: Kamil Polak
Duration: 20 min
Ages: 14+
Warnings: War and stylized violence



Clip: 10:45 - 12:16

EUPHEMISM:

A milder term or expression used to soften a serious event or circumstance. For example, when a family pet dies, parents might say the pet “went to the farm” or “was put down.”

Animated film: [The Street](#)
Directed by: Caroline Leaf
Duration: 10 min
Ages: 12+



Clip: 0:00 - 1:30

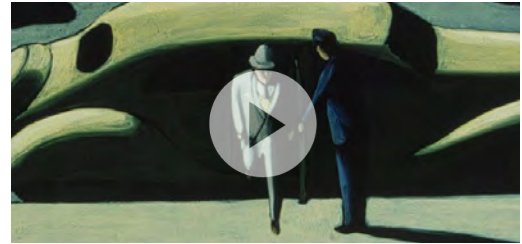
FANTASY:

A text in which the settings and characters are impossible or improbable and magic reigns. Often involves mythical creatures and heroic tropes.

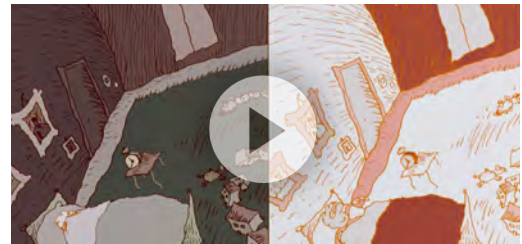
Animated film: [L'homme sans ombre](#)
Directed by: Georges Schwizgebel
Duration: 9 min
Ages: 12+

Could also refer to the thoughts or wishes of a character.

Animated film: [The Boy Who Saw the Iceberg](#)
Directed by: Paul Driessen
Duration: 9 min
Ages: 12+
Warnings: Scene of knife-throwing



Clip: 3:36 - 5:16



Clip: 0:30 - 2:18

FARCE:

A crude comedy with ridiculous situations and characters, improbable coincidences and confusion, often involving physical humour and slapstick.

Animated film: [The Great Toy Robbery](#)
Directed by: Jeff Hale
Duration: 6 min
Ages: 14+
Warnings: Nudity and gun violence



Clip: 1:00 - 6:00

FLASHBACK:

Depiction of events that took place before the narrative's current timeline. Flashbacks are commonly memories of characters or past events that are relevant to the story.

Animated film: [4 North A](#)
Directed by: Jordan Canning and Howie Shia
Duration: 10 min
Ages: 14+
Warnings: Mature content



Clip: 4:00 - 4:55

FORESHADOWING:

A sign or omen that tells of an event to come. It is not obvious, and in a good story you don't recognize foreshadowing until *after* the event takes place.

Animated film: [Sunday](#)
Directed by: Patrick Doyon
Duration: 9 min
Ages: 8+

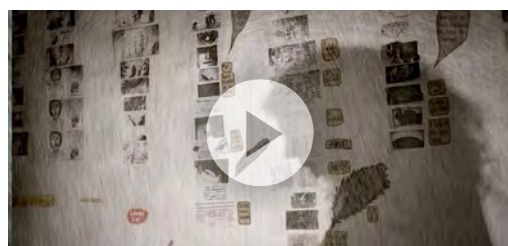
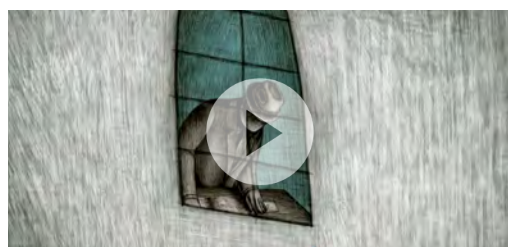


Clip: 0:25 - 1:18

FRAME STORY:

In film or literature, when the beginning and ending of a story take place before the MAIN story being told. Sometimes a narrator or one of the characters tells the story (a story within a story).

Animated film: [Uncle Thomas: Accounting for the Days](#)
Directed by: Regina Pessoa
Duration: 13 min
Ages: 14+
Warnings: Mature content



GOTHIC:

A gloomy, isolated setting with supernatural elements and unknown terror that overshadows characters.

Animated film: [Kali the Little Vampire](#)
Directed by: Regina Pessoa
Duration: 9 min
Ages: 12+
Warnings: Some disturbing images

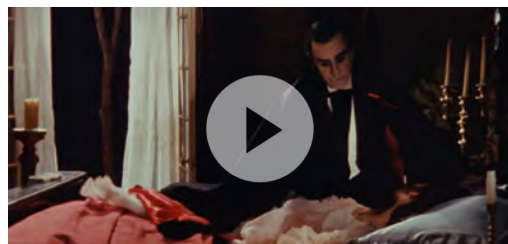


Clip: 1:17 - 2:04

GOTHIC ROMANCE:

Same qualities as Gothic but usually involving mystery, the supernatural, a damsel in distress or a love story with one or more lovers.

Animated film: [Ashes of Doom](#)
Directed by: Grant Munro and Don Arioli
Duration: 1 min
Ages: 14+
Warnings: Excessive smoking

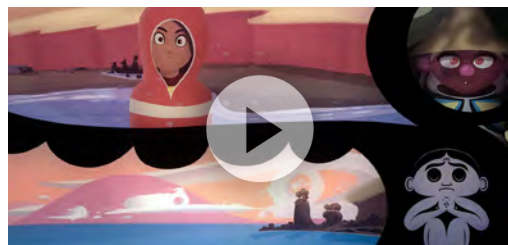


Clip: 1:00 - 2:00

HERO'S STORY:

Common in mythology and folklore, it is the story of a hero's journey through several stages, as they go on an adventure and return significantly changed from the experience.

Animated film: [The Mountain of SGaana](#)
Directed by: Christopher Auchter
Duration: 10 min
Ages: All



HISTORICAL DRAMA:

A text that is steeped in true history but whose characters are fictional. Characters sometimes have brushes with real historical figures but do not affect history themselves.

Animated film: [Memory of Exile](#)
Directed by: Michael Fukushima
Duration: 18 min
Ages: 12+
Warnings: Mature content



HUMOUR:

The use of laughter and amusement.

Animation: [The Big Snit](#)
Directed by: Richard Condie
Duration: 9 min
Ages: 12+



Clip: 0:52 - 3:40

HYPERBOLE:

Extreme exaggeration for the purpose of getting a message across and/or for humour.

Animated film: [Sleeping Betty](#)

Directed by: Claude Cloutier

Duration: 9 min

Ages: All



Clip: 1:00 - 1:30

JUXTAPOSITION:

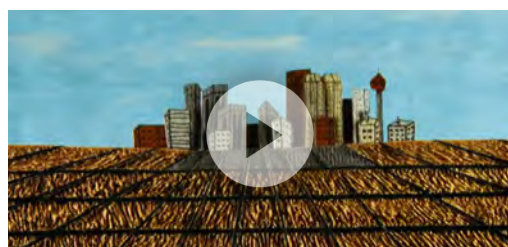
When two contrasting characters, objects, settings or time periods are placed together or side-by-side to stress their differences.

Animated film: [A Prairie Story](#)

Directed by: Anne Koizumi

Duration: 1 min

Ages: All



Clip: 0:10 - 1:19

LAMPOON:

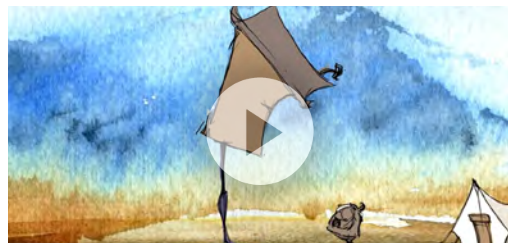
To make fun of by exaggerating physical features or behaviours of a person or situation. Can be political in nature.

Animated film: [Nunavut Animation Lab: Bear Facts](#)

Directed by: Jonathan Wright

Duration: 4 min

Ages: All



Clip: 0:30 - 2:50

METAPHOR:

A technique or figure of speech where one thing is referred to in an abstract way to mean something else.

Animated film: [Winds of Spring](#)

Directed by: Keyu Chen

Duration: 6 min

Ages: All



Clip: 0:58 - 2:21

MYSTERY:

A genre that deals with crime or strange occurrences and in which the ending reveals what actually happened. Or a device within any text to add suspense to the story.

Animated film: [Mystery of the Secret Room](#)

Directed by: Wanda Nolan

Duration: 5 min

Ages: 14+

Warning: Mature content



Clip: 1:07 - 2:10

OXYMORON:

Two words that seemingly contradict each other's meaning (e.g., "instant classic": "classic" means "stands the test of time").

PARODY:

A comical imitation of an existing text, often using hyperbole to ridicule the actors, style or genre. The closer the parody is to the original, the more effective the parody.

Animated film: [The Bronswik Affair](#)

Directed by: Robert Awad and André Leduc

Duration: 24 min

Ages: 12+

Warning: Mature content



PATHETIC FALLACY:

When aspects of nature, such as weather, are used to depict an emotion. Examples might include rain or snow connoting sadness or a storm symbolizing change or conflict.

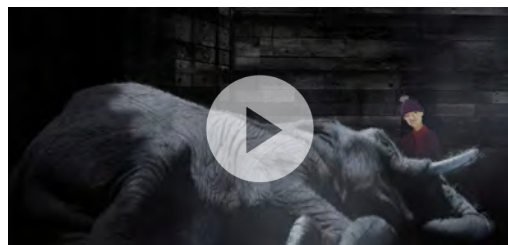
Animated film: [Balakrishna](#)

Directed by: Colin MacKenzie and Aparna Kapur

Duration: 15 min

Ages: 12+

Warning: Mature content (conceptual death of an elephant might upset sensitive viewers)

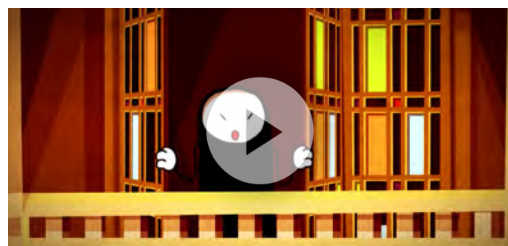


Clip: 11:00 - 11:49

POETRY:

A text in which the expression of feelings is more important than the story. Poems use distinctive styles and rhythms to carry the reader or listener into the artist's world and/or emotions.

Animated film: [Window Horses](#)
Directed by: Ann Marie Fleming
Duration: 1 h 28 min
Ages: 12+



Clip: 54:50 - 55:35

PERSONIFICATION:

Giving human characteristics or behaviours to inanimate objects or animals.

Animated film: [Animal Behaviour](#)
Directed by: Alison Snowden and David Fine
Duration: 14 min
Ages: 14+
Warning: Mature content



Clip: 0:48 - 1:25

REPETITION:

The repetition of certain words, phrases or images to clarify or emphasize an idea or message.

Animated film: [The Cat Came Back](#)
Directed by: Cordell Barker
Duration: 7 min
Ages: All

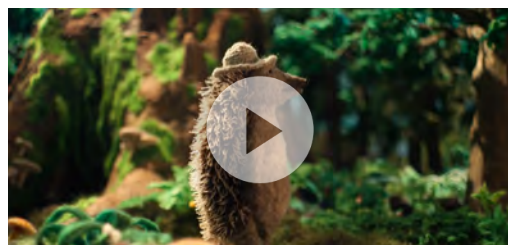


Clip: 0:34 - 3:46

RHYME:

A pattern of speech, written or spoken, with similar sounds at the end of phrases. This is done to create a musical tone in spoken speech, and music can easily be added to turn it into song.

Animated film: [Hedgehog's Home](#)
Directed by: Eva Cvijanović
Duration: 10 min
Ages: 8+



ROMANCE:

A story about love whose characters are grander and larger than life. Usually involves separation or other troubles. Can be serious or comical (“romcom”).

Animated film: [Canada Vignettes: Log Driver's Waltz](#)

Directed by: John Weldon

Duration: 3 min

Ages: All



Clip: 1:00 - 3:27

SATIRE:

The use of humour and/or exaggeration to ridicule political, institutional or social absurdity. Although exaggerated, satire can be a direct reference or thinly disguised version of real people and/or events.

Animated film: [TV Sale](#)

Directed by: Ernie Schmidt

Duration: 10 min

Ages: 14+

Warning: Depictions of drug abuse, animated gun violence, death and blood



Clip: 5:46 - 6:40

SCIENCE FICTION:

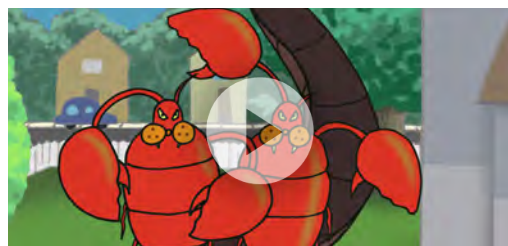
A futuristic story often involving the existence of advanced technology that's improbable but not impossible.

Animated film: [Invasion of the Space Lobsters](#)

Directed by: Janet Perlman

Duration: 6 min

Ages: All



SITUATIONAL IRONY:

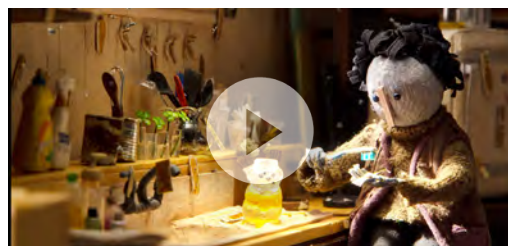
A situation in which the outcome is the opposite of the expected results.

Animated film: [Zeb's Spider](#)

Directed by: Alicia Eisen and Sophie Jarvis

Duration: 10 min

Ages: 12+

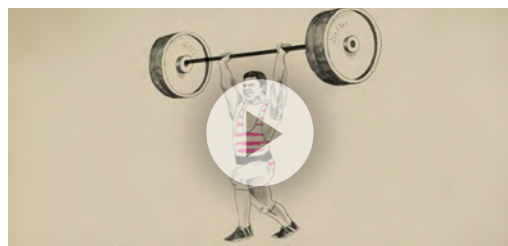


Animated film: [The Great Malaise](#)

Directed by: Catherine Lepage

Duration: 5 min

Ages: 14+



SLAPSTICK:

A form of humour that involves physical violence but where no one really gets hurt.

Film (not animated): [Buster Keaton Rides Again](#)

Directed by: John Spotton

Duration: 55 min

Ages: 14+



Clip: 16:08 - 18:04

SURREAL:

Having dreamlike qualities; unreal or confusing.

Animated film: [Turbine](#)

Directed by: Alex Boya

Duration: 8 min

Ages: 12+



Clip: 1:51 - 2:44

SYMBOLISM:

Signs, images or ideas that help readers understand the complex ideas they represent.

Animated film: [No Fish Where to Go](#)

Directed by: Nicola Lemay and Janice Nadeau

Duration: 12 min

Ages: 12+

Warnings: War-related gun violence



Clip: 6:10 - 9:34

TRAGEDY:

The opposite of comedy. The protagonist experiences loss, grief or death.

Animated film: [My Yiddish Papi](#)

Directed by: Éléonore Goldberg

Duration: 7 min

Ages: 12+



TRAGIC HERO:

A character who begins as a hero but whose flaws lead to their downfall.

Animated film: [Getting Started](#)

Directed by: Richard Condie

Duration: 12 min

Ages: All



Clip: 1:18 - 11:20

ZOOMORPHISM:

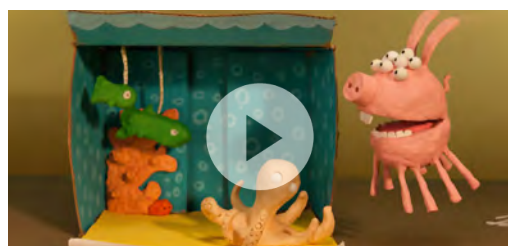
A specific type of metaphor in which animal traits are applied to things that are not animals (people, weather, nature). For example: “the wind roared” or “the woman howled when she hit her finger with the hammer.”

Animated film: [If I Was God...](#)

Directed by: Cordell Barker

Duration: 8 min

Ages: All



Clip: 3:31 - 5:08

Glossary – Selected Film and Animation Terminology with NFB Animated Examples

ANIMATION:

Frame-by-frame creation or capture of drawings, CGI models, puppets or objects, recording incremental changes in the subject. Played back at normal speed (24 or 30 frames per second), the recorded manipulations create the illusion of movement and “give life” to what was previously static art.

NFB production: [StopMoStudio – Stop-Motion Animation](#) Workshop, by NFB Education
Directed by: NFB Education
Duration: 18 min
Ages: All

NFB production: [Animate Everything!](#)
Directed by: Scott Kiborn
Duration: 15 min
Ages: All



Clip: 2:20 - 5:12



Clip: 0:15 - 2:23

CAMERALESS ANIMATION:

Cameraless animation does not use a camera; instead, the artist draws or etches directly onto film stock.

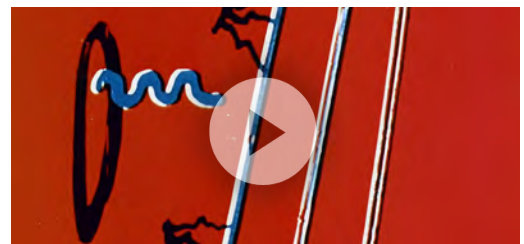
NFB production: [Creative Process: Norman McLaren](#)
Directed by: Donald McWilliams
Duration: 1 h 56 min
Ages: 14+

Warning: Some violence

Animated film: [Boogie-Doodle](#)
Directed by: Norman McLaren
Duration: 3 min
Ages: All



Clip: 20:07 - 22:43



CEL (SHORT FOR CELLULOID):

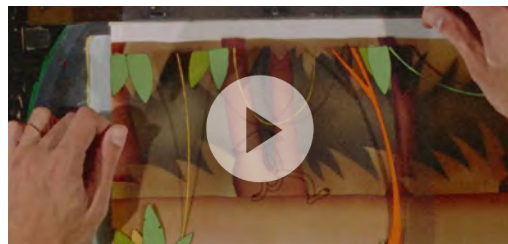
In traditional hand-drawn animation, a single image is drawn or painted on transparent sheets called cels, which are photographed and shot in sequence to create the illusion of movement.

Animation: [Animando](#)

Directed by: Marcos Magalhães

Duration: 12 min

Ages: All



Clip: 2:13 - 3:00

CEL ANIMATION OR HAND-DRAWN ANIMATION:

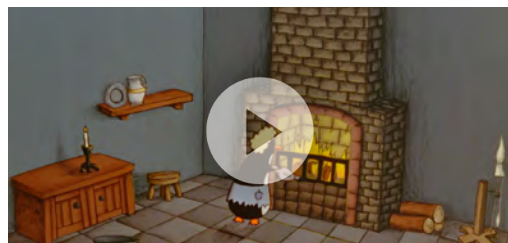
Cel animation refers to the traditional animation technique in which a set of hand drawings is used. In this process, a series of pictures is created, each of which varies slightly to create the illusion of movement.

Animated film: [The Tender Tale of Cinderella Penguin](#)

Directed by: Janet Perlman

Duration: 10 min

Ages: All



Clip: 0:14 - 1:58

CGI ANIMATION:

A subset of the broad field of animation, CGI (computer-generated imagery) animation can be defined as the use of computers to create moving images.

Animated film: [Ryan](#)

Directed by: Chris Landreth

Duration: 13 min

Ages: 14+

Warning: Mature content



Clip: 0:22 - 2:46

CLAY ANIMATION:

Animation created using clay figures that are photographed, moved and photographed again, repeatedly and in a sequence. The separate photographs are put together to create the illusion of movement.

Animated film: [Through My Thick Glasses](#)

Directed by: Piotr Sapegin

Duration: 12 min

Ages: 14+

Warning: Mature content: war, guns, smoking, and cartoon violence



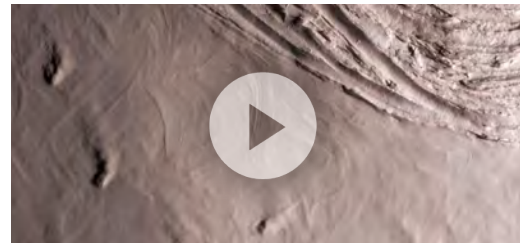
Clip: 0:39 - 1:17

Animated film: [Itch](#)

Directed by: Su-An Ng

Duration: 1 min

Ages: All



CROSSCUTTING:

Switching back and forth between locations/settings to give the impression that the actions in the two locations are taking place at the same time.

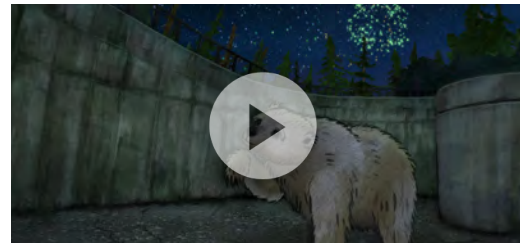
Animated film: [The Zoo](#)

Directed by: Julia Kwan

Duration: 11 min

Ages: 12+

Warning: Sensitive children might be upset by depiction of animals in zoos



Clip: 7:22 - 9:00

FRAME:

A single image within a sequence of film.

JUMP CUTS:

An abrupt cut that is used to indicate the passage of time.

Animated film: [The Weatherman and the Shadowboxer](#)

Directed by: Randall Lloyd Okita

Duration: 9 min

Ages: 14+

Warning: Mature content



Clip: 0:40 - 1:29

OBJECT ANIMATION (AND PUPPET ANIMATION):

Object animation refers to puppet animation, pixillation and various derived techniques. In object animation, lighting, camera movement, lens, depth of field and spatial relationships are not virtual, as they are in cartoons, but real, as they are in films with live actors.

Animated film: [Opening Speech](#)

Directed by: Norman McLaren

Duration: 7 min

Ages: All



PAPER CUT-OUT ANIMATION:

A two-dimensional (2D) animation technique that uses paper cut-outs in various forms on a flat surface, moved frame by frame to create movement.

Animated film: [Big Mouth](#)

Directed by: Andrea Dorfman

Duration: 8 min

Ages: All



Clip: 0:00 - 1:31

PINSCREEN:

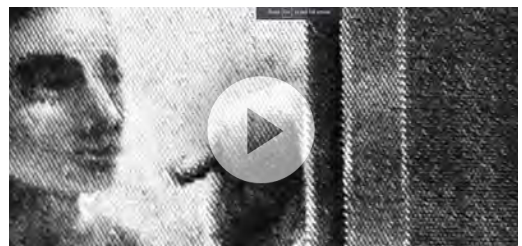
The pinscreen is a vertical screen fitted with retractable pins that, when lit from the side, cast varying shadows depending on their degree of retraction. The results are animated images with the look of engravings or charcoal drawings.

NFB production: [Making Movie History: Jacques Drouin](#)

Directed by: Denys Desjardins

Duration: 5 min

Ages: All



Clip: 1:11 - 3:25

PIXILLATION:

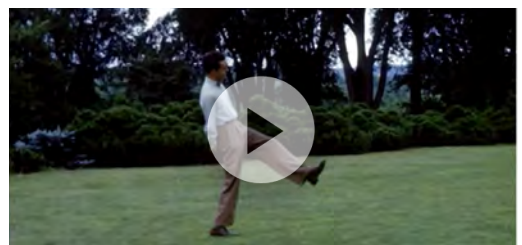
An animation technique that photographs live actors or objects one frame at a time. See “stop-motion animation.”

Animated film: [Two Bagatelles](#)

Directed by: Grant Munro and Norman McLaren

Duration: 2 min

Ages: All



ROTSOPE:

To paint, draw or overlay images onto frames of live-action film, frame by frame.

Animated film: [How People Got Fire](#)

Directed by: Daniel Janke

Duration: 16 min

Ages: 12+



Clip: 1:19 - 3:01

SCENE:

A section of a film that takes place in the same location and at the same time. Once the characters leave that location (or there's a clear passage of time), a *new* scene begins. In the clip you see a sequence of *shots* (the boys heading down the hill to the ice rink, a shot of the referee blowing his whistle, a wide shot of the boys playing hockey on the rink, a series of full shots showing the boys wearing their number 9 hockey jerseys, and a shot of two of the boys bear hugging that transitions into the next scene), which make up one scene.

Animated film: [The Sweater](#)

Directed by: Sheldon Cohen

Duration: 10 min

Ages: 10+



Clip: 2:38 - 3:22

SHOT:

An uncut, unedited sequence of film. There can be many shots in one scene (see above).

Animated film: [Me and My Moulton](#)

Directed by: Torill Kove

Duration: 13 min

Ages: 12+

Warning: Cartoon nudity

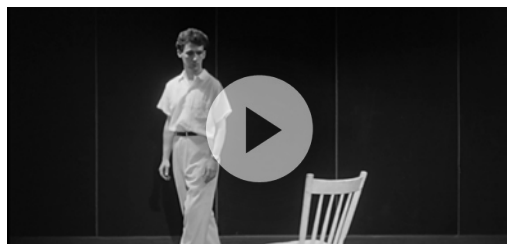


Clip: 0:37 - 0:51

STOP-MOTION ANIMATION:

Creating the illusion of movement in a puppet by incremental “move and stop” frame-by-frame shooting. The recorded changes to the puppet’s poses “give life” to what was previously static art. This technique often uses clay or plasticine characters or puppets. Pixillation is a variation of stop-motion animation and is achieved by photographing the movement of humans one frame at a time.

Animated film: [A Chairy Tale](#)
Directed by: Norman McLaren and Claude Jutra
Duration: 9 min
Ages: All



Clip: 1:54 - 3:20

STORYBOARD:

A tool used by filmmakers to tell their story in a visual format before beginning the actual film. The storyboard looks similar to a comic book or graphic novel, with each frame representing a shot in the film. There are usually notes or annotations containing directions for camera angles, movement, music, narration and/or dialogue. The storyboard helps the director, animators, actors and editors to make the film. Each frame in the storyboard represents one shot.

NFB production: [StopMoStudio - Stop-Motion Animation Workshop](#), by NFB Education
Directed by: NFB Education
Duration: 18 min
Ages: All



Clip: 8:06 - 10:58

UNDER-THE-CAMERA ANIMATION:

An animation technique that uses various materials such as clay, sand, paint and oil, or paper cut-outs on a flat surface, using a rostrum camera set-up or under the camera, moved frame by frame to create movement.

NFB production: [Hand-Crafted Cinema Animation Workshop with Caroline Leaf](#)
Directed by: Eric Roberts
Duration: 35 min
Ages: All



Clip: 1:36 - 8:59

Classroom Activities

Learning Objectives

- Become acquainted with specialized literary terms.
- Introduce codes and conventions of film.
- Create storyboards, flip-book animation and films (optional).

Activity 1: Digging In

Activation Activity

Print out a version of the quiz template below and have students write a short definition and an example for each of the following terms:

1 - Tragic hero	
2 - Metaphor	
3 - Epic	
4 - Scene	

5 - Slapstick	
6 - Mystery	
7 - Gothic Romance	
8 - Foreshadowing	
9 - Parody	

Once the class has completed the quiz, put students in groups of three or four and allow them online access to the glossary section from this study guide. Using the glossary and watching video clips as examples, students will work collaboratively to correct the quiz. Based on the results of the quiz, the teacher will lead a whole-group discussion to help clarify and give examples of all the misunderstood terms within the quiz.



Activity 2: Learning About Animation

In groups of three or four, have students read the following definitions in order and watch the video clips associated with the terms:

“Animation”

[*Animate Everything!*](#)

by [Scott Kiborn](#)

0:15–2:22

[*StopMoStudio – Stop-Motion*](#)

[*Animation Workshop*](#)

0:37–0:51

“Cel”

[*Animando*](#)

by Marcos Magalhães

2:13–3:00

“Shot”

[*Me and My Moulton*](#)

by Torill Kove

2:20–5:12

“Scene”

[*The Sweater*](#)

by [Sheldon Cohen](#)

2:37–3:22

“Stop-motion animation”

[*A Chairy Tale*](#)

by [Norman McLaren, Claude Jutra](#)

1:54–3:20

After completing the above, ask students to do a “3-2-1”:

3

Write **three** things you learned...

2

Two questions you have...

1

One paragraph explaining “how to animate” to a friend.

Bring the class together and have them share answers to questions 2 and 3 and discuss their learning. Then have each group read their “how to animate” paragraph.

Activity 3: Make Your Own Animation and Storyboard

Materials:

- One blank piece of paper for each student;
- Pencils for each student;
- Clay for clay animation (optional).

PART A

Have students return to the [stop-motion animation workshop](#) and follow instructions on how to make a two-page flip book (5:52–8:05). Once completed, they share their animations with others from the class.

NB: Some students might be able to do this activity in under 10 minutes, so it's a good idea to give them the instructions for Part B in case they finish before the rest of the class.

PART B

A	Students can choose to use drawings, expanding on their two-page animation; OR
B	Students can animate an object found in the classroom following the instructions from Animate Everything! ; OR
C	If the materials are available, students can create a clay animation piece, as explained in the stop-motion animation workshop (11:00–15:00).

The storyboard should have at least three scenes and at least 12 shots (frames on the storyboard).

PART C (optional)

Students can make the film from their storyboard by taking pictures with their phones or a digital camera.

**If students are creating animation with pictures, remind them that each second of film requires 10 to 15 pictures, so be sure to do the math! (10 seconds = 100–150 drawings).

Activity 4: All About Literary Terms

Glossary BINGO!

Materials:

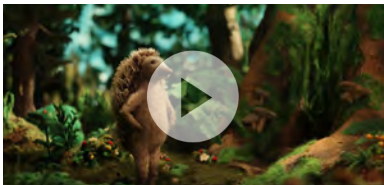
- Paper, hi-lighters, pens/Sharpies.

Have students work in teams of two or three and review the literary terms in the glossary to prepare for the Bingo game.

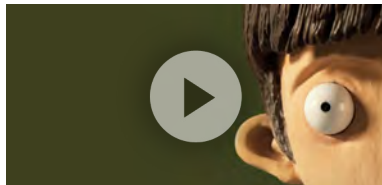
Students fold their paper to create a “Bingo sheet” of eight squares. Each team chooses nine literary terms from the glossary and writes one term in each square.

Bingo Game

The teacher shows the film clips below. When a team recognizes one of the terms on their sheet, they highlight it and write the number of the film in the same square. The first team to get all nine squares shouts BINGO! Teacher then checks answers and confirms the winner.



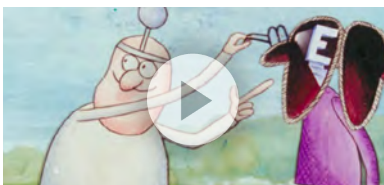
1. *Hedgehog's Home*



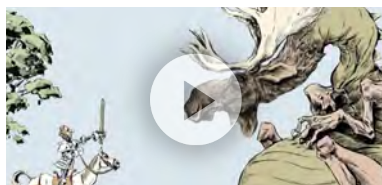
2. *If I Was God...*



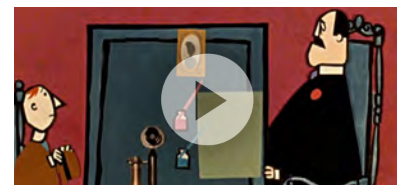
3. *Turbine*



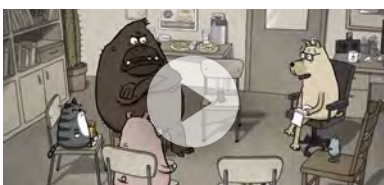
4. *“E”*



5. *Sleeping Betty*



6. *My Financial Career*



7. *Animal Behaviour*



8. *Why Me?*



9. *The Great List of Everything:
The Swimsuit*

Concluding Activity

Write a story or create a storyboard that has examples of at least five of the terms used in the literary terms and devices glossary. It should be at least 500 words in length (teacher can tailor to class level) and should have a clear setting, employ a mood or genre, have at least one named character, a beginning, a middle, and a clear ending. As an extension activity, students can produce and present their films in class.



Macpherson - Filmmaker Martine Chartrand in her studio at the National Film Board
Photo credit: Caroline Hayeur

Credits

This study guide was written by Pierre Doyon, reviewed by Paul Hanson and produced by Anne Koizumi, NFB Learning Program Manager.

About the Author

Pierre Doyon is a high school teacher in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, with over 30 years' experience teaching English-Language Arts and Film in the classroom. He has consulted for the Quebec Ministry of Education and PISA in developing curriculum and assessment tools in an attempt to further media literacy in Canada.

Currently teaching in the English Department at Champlain College Saint-Lambert, Paul Hanson has taught high school, college and university classes across disciplines, across Canada and across the globe. He particularly enjoys the intersections of science and art.