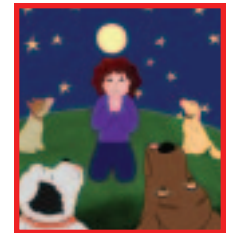


# ADAPTING BOOKS TO ANIMATED FILMS



Every author has a mental image of the characters and settings in their book. The author describes and shares these images with readers through words, which create a mood, evoke emotions and describe sounds, smells and textures. The animators take these same words and translate them into their own graphic images. The animators then work with actors, sound engineers, special effects designers, music composers, musicians and camera people to add layers to the graphical images in order to give life to the author's words. This process of moving words to animated film is never exact as no two people will see and understand the same thing exactly the same way. Here are some activities to help your students understand why the movie is almost exactly like the book, or completely different.

## Some suggested books and their associated animated films for these activities:

1. *The Sweater*
2. *Snow Cat*
3. *Pies*
4. *I Want a Dog*
5. *The Dingles*
6. Any selection from the *Talespinners* series
7. *The Cremation of Sam McGee*
8. *Blackberry Subway Jam*
9. *The Boy and the Snow Goose*
10. *Has Anybody Seen My Umbrella?*

## Activities

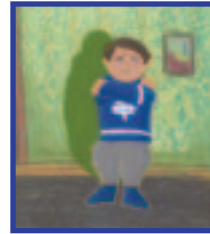
1. Give half of the class a copy of a passage from a book that became an animated film, where a person, place or thing is described. Ask these students to turn this text into a graphical image. This can be done by drawing on paper or making a puppet; with a draw or paint program on computer or with a digital camera. Have the other half of the class watch the same passage in the animated film version, where the person, place or thing is represented graphically. Ask these students to write a text that describes this person, place or thing. Finally, have the two groups meet and in pairs or small groups compare their work. Have them answer the following questions:
  - Do you see similarities between the original text and the student-created graphic?
  - How do you explain any significant differences between what the text and the graphic represent?
2. Ask the students to think about reading a book: Do they imagine what each character might sound like? What about accents, vocal tones that show emotions, low or high pitched voices, the pace of the dialogue?
  - In ***The Sweater***, would the story have seemed less "real" if the narrator did not have a French accent?
3. An animator has many different animation styles to choose from when deciding to re-create a book on film. These various styles can create moods or define settings and characters as effectively as words in a written text.
  - Why does the surrealistic animation style of the allegorical tale of Elsie and the cat in ***Snow Cat*** work so well?
  - Why is this same animation style not used for the scenes of the grandmother knitting the sweater?
  - Would this surrealistic animation style have worked in ***The Sweater*** or ***Pies***?

# THE SWEATER - 1

He Shoots, He Scores!

Create Your Own Multimedia Kit

By Pat Pickering



## The Sweater

(10:21)

Directed and animated by

**Sheldon Cohen**

Story written by

**Roch Carrier**

Narration

**Roch Carrier**

Produced by

**David Verrall, Marrin Canell**

Executive Producer

**Derek Lamb**

---

Learning through reading receives great emphasis in education. The challenge is to pique students' interest so that they want to read. Teachers can devise lessons that will encourage even the most indifferent learner. Here are some ideas.

We chose the film **The Sweater** based on the short story by Canadian author Roch Carrier. Our target audience was primary/intermediate classes and French immersion. We were able to find teachers who had used the film in the classroom. Through discussions with them, we carefully chose materials that would help us to "score our goal" and create an interesting multimedia kit.

Together with the two books (*The Hockey Sweater* and *Le Chandail*), we added the National Film Board's French and English film adaptations. We bought a Montréal Canadiens hockey jersey, a puck and a second-hand pair of ice skates and put them all in a nylon hockey bag.

The teacher's guide was probably the most difficult and time-consuming part of the kit to produce. We discovered that the NFB had a teacher's guide for **Le Chandail** (in *Une langue qui se voit!* - Volume I). Sue Richards, a French-language monitor in the district, translated this guide into English. We added some additional suggestions for classroom activities. We put these together in a three-ring binder – et voila! – the kit was complete.

Taking the kit out to a couple of schools for a trial run proved very successful. A junior high French immersion teacher let some of her students wear the hockey sweater and skates while presenting the story to their peers. (Don't worry, the skates had blade guards.) Then the class watched the film. The students said they enjoyed it.

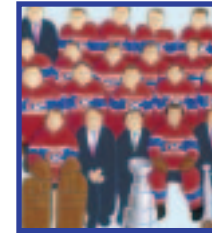
An elementary teacher brought some extra hockey sweaters from home for her students to wear during the introductory discussion about the author's life in rural Québec in the 1940s, while she herself wore the sweater from the kit. After viewing the film, many of the students wanted to read the book out loud and in a group. The enthusiastic response to the project was very satisfying.

We would like to thank the teachers who so kindly worked with us on this project: Leddy Stokes, Burnaby North Secondary School; Barb Everitt, Morley Elementary School; and, of course, their students. We also thank Jeff Clarke for his photography.



# THE SWEATER - 2

By Maureen Baron



## The Sweater

(10:21)

Directed and animated by

**Sheldon Cohen**

Story written by

**Roch Carrier**

Narration

**Roch Carrier**

Produced by

**David Verrall, Marrin Canell**

Executive Producer

**Derek Lamb**

Lesson for senior elementary

It's Monday and you thought you were just showing a video – for 10 minutes. By the end of the week, you've built learning activities around the film and linked it to almost every subject area. In other words, you have integrated one video into the entire curriculum! Here's how.



## LANGUAGE ARTS

### Research

- Find and record biographical and anecdotal information on a hero.
- How and where did hockey begin? Who wrote the rules?
- How old is the National Hockey League?
- How was it organized in 1942 vs. today?
- Why was there such a rivalry between Montreal and Toronto?
- What team do you support? What is its history?
- Are there any rivalries today? Why do they exist?

### Public Speaking

- Do an oral report on a hero.

### Reading

- Read a biography or autobiography of your hero.

### Writing

- Write about an experience where you had to do something that embarrassed you.
- Write a recipe for a hero, either in fantasy or reality.
- Write a letter ordering something by surface mail.
- Fill out a mail-order form.
- Pretend you are the parish priest. Write a letter to Mrs. Carrier explaining why you had to punish her son.
- Describe a period in your life when you felt you were different from the other kids.
- Pretend you are Roch, and write a letter to Mr. Eaton explaining why you don't want the Maple Leaf sweater and why you must have the Canadiens sweater instead.

## MATH

- Inflation: how much is a hockey sweater today? In 1942?
- Postage: compare the cost of mailing a sweater then and now.
- How is the cost determined?
- How much would it cost to mail things of different weights to various destinations?
- Determine the final and true cost of an item vs. advertised price — taxes, shipping and handling charges, postage.
- Taxes are a percentage of the cost of an item. Calculate the taxes on various articles (e.g. GST, PST, HST).

# THE SWEATER - 2

By Maureen Baron



cont.

## MORALS AND VALUES

(Guidance, Health, Life Skills, Family Studies)

Discuss and/or write about:

- Persecution vs. discrimination — making assumptions about someone because of the clothes they wear or their general appearance.
- Good sportsmanship
- Jumping to conclusions (why the referee really sends Roch off the ice).
- Being a fair referee
- Family relationships — mother/son; who buys the children's clothes?
- Why did the mother "win" the argument over wearing the sweater?
- Why are certain types of clothing so important to people? Relate this to currently advertised items — the fad clothing, the cool clothes, the must-have brands.

## SCIENCE

- Moths and wool — what happens?
- Study the life cycle of a moth.

## ECOLOGY

Study the gypsy moth

- Why is it an environmental problem?
- How can the problem be solved?

## MEDIA LITERACY

Have the students read the story from a book.

- Compare the experience with watching the video. Which format did they prefer? What were the strengths of each medium?
- Did you picture the boy the same way the animator did? How did the students picture Roch?

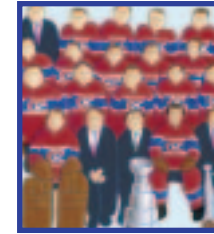
## GEOGRAPHY

- Which provinces/cities/towns have NHL hockey teams?
- Why do these places have teams? For example, why Vancouver and not Victoria? Why Montreal and Toronto but not Halifax?



# THE SWEATER - 2

By Maureen Baron



cont.

## HISTORY

*Study small-town Quebec in the 1940s, including the importance of the church and its influence on daily life.*

## CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

- What size hole would make the sweater unwearable to Roch and to his mother?
- Where would such a hole have to be located on the sweater?
- How long would it take how many moths to create such a hole?
- Under what conditions would the moths succeed?

## ART

*Create a team logo*

- What symbols are needed?
- Why are certain symbols chosen and others rejected?
- What message does the logo send?

## MUSIC

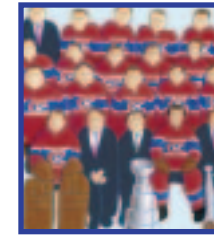
- Listen to some French-Canadian folk tunes, especially for their rhythm.
- Why is the organ the musical instrument used in churches?

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- Create a class Web site dedicated to **The Sweater** where the students can present their work. Verify the copyright regarding the use of images, text and material from both the print and video versions of the story. If necessary, ask the rights holders for permission to use or link to, the material for the class Web site.

# THE SWEATER - 3

Literary Sociograms  
By Phyllis Schwartz



Directed and animated by

**Sheldon Cohen**

Story written by

**Roch Carrier**

Narration

**Roch Carrier**

Produced by

**David Verrall, Marrin Canell**

Executive Producer

**Derek Lamb**

Sociologists use sociograms to study relationships between people in groups and communities. A sociogram describes the relationships between people, things and events in a visual way through diagramming.

This process, when applied to literature, can help students visualize, graphically, the relationships within a film, poem or story, for example the connections between characters, events, background and other literary elements.

Students used this process to diagram relationships in Roch Carrier's short story *The Hockey Sweater*, which was adapted to the screen by Sheldon Cohen in the NFB film *The Sweater*.



After viewing the film, students were asked to list memorable characters, events and symbols. Students identified the Canadiens sweater, the Maple Leafs sweater, the curé (parish priest) and the hockey rink.

Once students identified these significant elements, they were asked to represent them in two-dimensional form by placing these elements strategically on the page and using symbols to represent ideas or values. For example, students were asked, "Where is the sweater best placed on the page? Above, below or next to the church?"

After they laid the items out, students were to connect these items using three types of connecting arrows and to name each arrow. A one-way arrow (→) represents an influence that goes from one party to another; a two-way arrow (↔) identifies an influence that affects both parties; a boomerang arrow (↔→) shows that a party recognizes or reacts to the actions or thoughts of another party, though he or she does not take an active part in that action or thought.

*In the case of **The Sweater**, students connected the following elements:*

- *Roch is influenced or driven by Maurice Richard (→).*
- *The priest sends Roch to the church (→).*
- *Mother and son share a family connection (↔) (Note: Students noticed an absence of two-way relationships in this story; this provided an opportunity to discuss the significance of few two-way relationships.)*
- *Roch goes to church and asks for 1000 moths.*
- *Maurice Richard approves of this revenge plan (↔→).*

*In using sociograms, these general questions guide students:*

- *Why are items placed where they are placed?*
- *Why did you choose that type of arrow to connect these items?*
- *What word or phrase names the relationship identified by the arrow?*
- *What/who receives the most one-way arrows?*
- *Who/what sends the most one-way arrows?*
- *Are there regions forming on your paper? Name them.*
- *Are there time zones forming on your sociogram? Name them.*

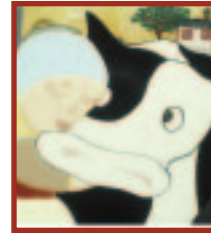
*You can also have students use colour or texture to represent significant regions. Status can be indicated by using the upper and lower portions of the page.*

*Sociograms are ideal for small-group discussions. Students can use the software Inspiration to draw the diagrams on computer; they can use acetates with an overhead projector; they can also use a camera to share their work.*



# PIES

Pies - A Plan & a Controversy  
Annie Kranenburg



## Pies

(12:14)

Design, animation, direction

**Sheldon Cohen**

Scripting

**Sheldon Cohen**

Produced by

**Caroline Leaf**

Executive Producers

**David Verrall**

**Doug Macdonald**

---

This film was used as part of a unit on PEACE under the Universal Curriculum themes of "Family of Mankind" and "Peaceful Cooperation." *Pies* would be invaluable with a variety of other themes.



## BEFORE VIEWING

*NOTE: Vocabulary such as peace, racism, prejudice, cultural differences should already be familiar to the students.*

1. With the class, brainstorm words you associate with pies. This can be done using the software Inspiration with a data projector.
2. Briefly describe the film. Example:  
This film is about a Polish woman and a German woman who are having a hard time getting along as neighbours. After a CLASH, one of them takes REVENGE in what seems to be a kind gesture.

Ask the students to notice the following while watching the film:

- a) The cultural differences between the two women.
- b) How the revenge was disguised. (Discuss the concept of revenge, with examples from the class.)
- c) How the clash was resolved — if it was.

## AFTER VIEWING

### A. Whole Class

Ask for some immediate thoughts and feelings about the film.

Here are some comments students gave:

- It was funny!
- Taught people to like them for their insides.
- As a cartoon it's real, even though it's strong in its language and actions.

### B. Small Groups

Form groups of 4 or 5. Students should take the roles of Recorder, Reporter, Chairperson, Encourager and Checker. To discuss:

1. What was important to each character? Do you think one of them is "better" than the other?

# PIES

Pies - A Plan & a Controversy  
Annie Kranenburg



cont.

2. What were your feelings about...
  - a) the German woman in the beginning? At the end?
  - b) the Polish woman in the beginning? At the end?
3. What was the connection that drew these two people to one other? Have you had a similar experience with someone you didn't like at first, but then something happened and suddenly you connected? Share this experience with your group.
4. Do you think the CLASH is resolved? Explain.
5. Is there a moral in this film? Summarize it in a sentence, as a motto or as an image. Save the images and scan them into the computer. This can be a page on the class Web site.
6. Some people think this film should be banned in schools. Do you agree? Explain your opinion.

*Here are some reasons my Grade 5 students gave for and against showing Pies:*

#### **Reasons to show *Pies***

- It teaches a lesson in a funny but strong way. It helps us learn about prejudice and how to deal with picky neighbours.
- It helps us think about how to solve problems without fighting or taking revenge.
- It tells us that people are different, but if we're nice to them, this might bring out a nice side in them.
- It shows differences in two cultures — German and Polish. It shows realistic differences: clothing, accents, behaviour. The differences are exaggerated in order to get the point across.
- We can learn to be good friends and not judge people by their looks. It teaches us to like others for what's inside.

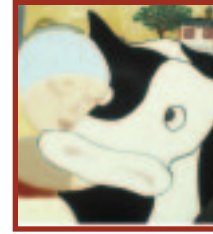
#### **Reasons not to show *Pies***

- Some kids might make fun of the cultures and their differences.
- It was rude when the ladies were throwing the cowpies at each other. Also what was put in the pie was gross.
- Because the film exaggerates the characteristics of these two nationalities, some people might be offended (especially if they are Polish or German).
- The story might be misunderstood and told inaccurately to others, such as parents.



# PIES

Pies - A Plan & a Controversy  
By Annie Kranenburg



**cont.**

**C.** After the small-group discussions, the whole class meets again.

1. Reporters from the small groups share their answers. Individuals are given opportunities to respond.
2. List student answers about supporting and not supporting the showing of Pies.
3. Evaluate the film. Who should see it? How can it be used?

My Grade 5 class decided that children in kindergarten through Grade 3 should not see this film because they may take it too seriously and imitate what was shown. They suggested that it be shown to Grades 4 through 7 and to high school students.

## IDEAS FOR EXTENSION

- Role-plays on prejudice
- A debate
- Write an article on prejudice or racism for a newsletter or newspaper.
- Write a story illustrating real-life examples of prejudice.
- Create multimedia public service announcements on why prejudice should not be tolerated.

# SNOW CAT



## Snow Cat

(14:37)

Based on the book by

**Dayal Kaur Khalsa**

Narrated by

**Maureen Stapleton**

A film directed by

**Sheldon Cohen**

Produced by

**Sheldon Cohen**

**Kenneth Hirsch**

**Marcy Page**

Story adaptation and  
additional text

**Tim Wynne-Jones**

1. Not every animal makes a good house pet: some are wild and can never be tamed, and others require specific living conditions to survive – such as cold or heat or particular foods, or space. Ask the students to brainstorm lists of animals that would make good house pets for an apartment, a house, or a farm in their part of the country. Once the students have created their lists, invite an expert such as a local veterinarian, or a member of the zoo staff or a professor from the local university to speak to the class about the animals on their lists and their choices for the living environments for these animals.
2. Sometimes the best of intentions actually cause harm. The North Wind told Elsie not to invite Snow Cat into her warm and cozy house because he knew that the warmth would melt Snow Cat and she would die. But Elsie felt bad that Snow Cat was outside and alone in the cold while she was inside. Elsie had to accept that Snow Cat belonged in his environment, outside, and that she belonged in hers, inside. How did Elsie deal with the loss of Snow Cat?
3. An igloo is a type of house built in the north of Canada using the most abundant local building material — snow. Watch the NFB film *How to Build an Igloo* to discover what type of snow is used and how the igloo is actually constructed. The students can then construct their own igloos with sugar cubes and white glue.
4. The North Wind became angry at Elsie because she disobeyed his instructions and invited Snow Cat into the house. He was so angry that he created a severe snow storm and the geese suffered because of his anger. Was this a good way for the North Wind to deal with his anger? What would have been a more positive way to work out his anger?
5. Why do dogs and cats make such good pets, aides and companions for human beings? Brainstorm a list of reasons. The students can be divided into groups with each group responsible for researching and presenting information, on one of the following topics:
  - a. How and when dogs and cats were domesticated
  - b. The number of breeds of dogs and cats and how they developed
  - c. Pet therapy in hospitals and seniors' residences
  - d. Working dogs
    - i. MIRA Foundation
    - ii. Physical aides for handicapped people
    - iii. Herding dogs
    - iv. Drug-sniffing dogs at airports
    - v. Rescue dogs for earthquake victims

Throughout the narration of the story the grandmother is knitting a sweater with an image of a cat on the front. Knitting is not only a way of making warm clothing, it is also a way of expressing creativity and creating tangible memories. Name some of the ways (customs, tangible markers, rites, rituals) that different cultures and religions remember those who have died.



# I WANT A DOG



## I Want a Dog

(10:09)

Based on the book and artwork of  
**Dayal Kaur Khalsa**

Directed by  
**Sheldon Cohen**

Narrated by  
**Marnie McPhail**

Executive Producer  
**David Verrall**

Producer  
**Marcy Page**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Name That Dog

Talk about the various characteristics of dogs: Are they big or small? Do they have long or short hair? Where do they come from? What do they eat? Describe different personality traits. What are certain breeds well known for (good hunters or watch dogs, for example)? Name some different breeds.

#### If at first you don't succeed, try again

May was disappointed when her parents said she could not have a dog. How did she deal with her frustration? Did she give up and forget about getting a dog? When May stuck to her plan and proved to her parents that she was responsible, she eventually got what she wanted. Ask children to write down one thing that they really want, along with steps they could take to reach their goal.

#### Responsibility and Pets

Part of growing up means learning responsibility. May had to learn a few things before she got a dog. Why was it important for her to be prepared? How is getting a pet different from getting a new toy? List what a pet owner needs to do for an animal. Obviously the list will change depending on the kind of pet. And even with dogs, the needs vary with the breed.