

Abiogenesis



Abiogenesis is a breathtaking animated science fiction story by Richard Mans. A strange mechanical device lands on a desolate world and uses the planet to undergo a startling transformation, which has profound implications for an entire galaxy.

Writer/director/producer: Richard Mans

Science fiction / 4 minutes / Rated G / 2011

Themes: Creation and evolution
(also exploration, origins, technology)

Key Competency: Using language, symbols and texts

ABOUT THE FILM:

Richard Mans started working on the robot that is the main character in this film when he first started teaching himself 3D animation in 1998. He then developed it further as part of his first 3D animation job, making it into a showpiece for a technology company. A few years later, while he was working on an animation contract for NASA, he was inspired by animations for their Mars Rover missions, but let his imagination run wild as to what the robot would do once it lands on the planet.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS:

Richard Mans freelanced in animation for several years until he had saved enough money from the business to work full time on this short film. *Abiogenesis* is his first short film.

www.abiogenesisfilm.com



EXPLORING CHARACTER

Enquiry Question:
If you could add a character to this film, which type of character would it be, and why?



EXPLORING THEME – CREATION AND EVOLUTION

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + Who do you think made this machine and sent it to the planet?

■ GROUPS:

- + What reasons may have caused them to send this machine to the planet? Do you think this was the first time?
- + Use a circle map to collect any ideas about who you think the creatures were who made the rocket. Think about what they might look like, where they might live or how they might behave. (Possible frame-of-reference question: What information do we use to make these assertions?)

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + Draw a picture of the creature who made and launched this machine.
- + *Write to describe:* Describe the creature that launched this machine into space.

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + Display your pictures of the creatures. Take some time to look at other people's creatures – what things do we notice that are the same or different about them? Think about describing how they look and act, and why you think they might have wanted to do this.

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + How would you describe the planet at the start of the film? What did you expect to happen when the machine crashed?

■ GROUPS:

- + Use a flow map to show the order of events as the desolate planet came to life. Try to show what happens only with pictures and symbols (no text).

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + *Write to recount:* How did the machine change the planet it landed on?

■ GROUPS:

- + What do you think the green liquid was that the machine extracted from the planet?
- + Why do you think that?

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + How do you think this is different to how Earth began?

■ GROUPS:

- + What life do you think will be the first to grow on this planet? Draw a labelled diagram of a life form that you think would be well suited to this planet.



EXPLORING NARRATIVE

Enquiry Question:
How can we add to the story to create new meaning?



EXPLORING KEY COMPETENCIES – USING LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS AND TEXTS

Enquiry Question:
How do we interpret language, symbols and texts to help make meaning in this film?

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + This film is a snapshot in time. We are not sure where this machine has come from, or where it goes to. Why do you think the filmmaker has chosen to do this?
- + What predictions can we make based on this film?

■ GROUPS:

- + As the planet comes to life in this film, what changes can we observe? Use a flow map to show the changes through the film.

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + What do you think the characters will do next? What clues in the story so far make you think that?

■ GROUPS:

- + Use information from the film to begin a multi-flow map. The event should be the machine flying away into space at the end of the film, so what were the causes of that?

■ INDEPENDENT:

- + Complete the multi-flow map showing what the effects are for this planet now the machine has left. What do you predict will happen next on this planet?

When we are showing the key competency of using language, symbols and texts, we understand that knowledge can be shared in a variety of ways, and we are making meaning from the different ways knowledge is expressed. If we are interpreting language, symbols and texts, we can interpret words, images and movements, among other things. We are aware of the choices made in presenting the image and how this affects the meaning of the message.

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + How would this film be different if talking or dialogue were present?
- + What parts of the film do we mostly rely on to help us understand it or make meaning?

■ GROUPS:

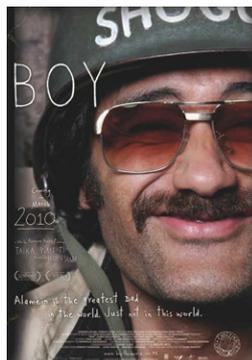
- + Why do you think the filmmaker decided to have no dialogue in the film?
- + What symbols or symbolism did you see in the film? Did you see anything in the film that reminded you of other films or stories?

■ WHOLE CLASS:

- + How do we use other information from prior experiences to help make meaning of symbols and images?

■ GROUPS:

- + Look at some movie posters – how do they use language symbols and pictures to make you want to watch them?



■ INDEPENDENT:

- + Make a poster for *Abiogenesis*, using words, pictures and symbols to advertise the film. It should give clues about the film, without giving away the whole story.