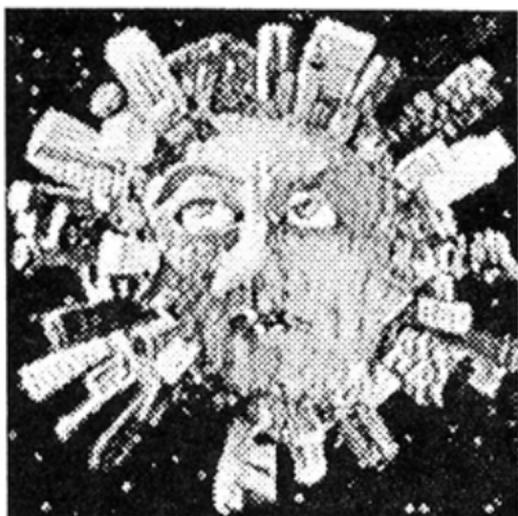


GREEN ANIMATION



Study Guide by Cynthia L Rusnak

GREEN ANIMATION is...

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Handle with Care | |
| 3:25 Minutes | page 4 |
| 2. Islands in the Sky | |
| 2:45 Minutes | 5 |
| 3. Checkout Chick | |
| 1:30 Minutes | 6 |
| 4. Hobby | |
| 1 Minute | 6 |
| 5. Fred and the Apple World | |
| 2:30 Minutes | 7 |
| 6. The Solution | |
| 45 Seconds | 8 |
| 7. Exhibit A | |
| 2 Minutes | 9 |
| 8. Enlightenment | |
| 3 Minutes | 10 |
| 9. Equilibrium | |
| 3 Minutes | 11 |
| 10. Balance and Harmony | |
| 2:20 Minutes | 12 |
| 11. The Escape | |
| 3:12 Minutes | 13 |

Synopsis

Green: the color of grass, leaves, treetops...a term used to describe anything that is environmentally friendly. Animate: to make alive or lively, to make appear to move. GREEN ANIMATION!

What an ideal way to bring alive the sensitive issues concerning our environment. The film collection put together in GREEN ANIMATION does just that. It brings to the forefront, through the use of animated pictures and materials, the importance of considering recycling and reutilizing products, and reducing the negative impacts we have on our planet Earth.

GREEN ANIMATION is a collection of eleven wordless films, running anywhere from 30 seconds to 3 minutes in length, suitable for grades five to twelve. The films can be used individually — to focus on a particular topic, in combination — to compare alternate ways to analyze a problem, or as a whole — to open or conclude a unit on current environmental issues. The use of animation provides an entertaining medium to present some very serious concerns.

General Objectives

1. To recognize the need to reduce waste, reuse manufactured products and recycle items to make new products.
2. To increase awareness of individual responsibility in preserving our natural resources and working to keep our planet livable.
3. To expand the awareness of the many ways human beings make an impact on the environment.
4. To increase the ability of consumers to find balance in their actions. What are the positive and negative consequences of a particular action?
5. To stimulate interest in learning, reading and writing about environmental issues.
6. To increase the awareness of the video production technique of animation. How does the use of action, coloring, music and art medium influence the message presented in each film?

Before Viewing

1. Have students list what they feel to be the most pressing environmental issue. Why? Allow them to offer solutions to the problems.
2. Discuss the concept of animation. Have students give examples of animation. How does it differ from other means of production? Why use animation? What are the pros and cons of its use?
3. Prior to viewing each film, read the title of the film and ask for predictions from the students on what they think the film is about. As the film is viewed, ask them to make notes about the topic focused upon, and how the use of medium, color, music and action influences the presentation of the topic. How do the students feel after viewing each film?

1. HANDLE WITH CARE

The Earth is received as a gift and upon being opened and awakened, life begins to take root. But with the advent of civilization, houses are built, towns develop into cities, traffic increases and nature is beaten further and further back. The Earth is mined and drilled. Oil trickles out of her mouth. Only when the Earth is choking to death does the alarm sound. With the application of first aid and some tender loving care, Earth is restored to health to be presented as a beautiful gift once again to succeeding generations.

After Viewing Discuss:

- How do you feel when you receive a gift? How do you keep the gift so you can enjoy it for a long time? How do you feel about others using your gift? List some guidelines to remember when using another's gift or belongings.
- What are some ways we can administer first aid to our planet Earth?
- What state of health do you think the planet Earth is in? (examples: slightly ill, on death bed, etc.) Why?

2. ISLANDS IN THE SKY

A trip through the universe reveals an assortment of strangely inhabited planets. The creatures are isolated and vulnerable on their separate planets. Most of the animal-like creatures plan ahead successfully, while the machine-like creatures use up all their resources and die. When we zoom in on planet Earth, it falls over and becomes the dot under a huge question mark. Will we exhaust our natural resources before we learn to live within our planet's means?

After Viewing Discuss:

- As an inhabitant of another imaginary planet in the universe, what lessons could you learn through your observations of Earth?
- If you could predict the future of the planet, what would your predictions be? Are there changes necessary to make these predictions come true? Are there any indications that these changes are being made?
- In your travels through the universe, you come across the 'perfect planet.' Who lives there? Describe the planet and its inhabitants.

3. CHECKOUT CHICK

The viewer is taken on a trip to the supermarket. At the checkout line, each purchase is rung up on the register by the 'checkout chick.' At the same time the viewer is given a glimpse of the effects each purchase has on the environment — through the processing and manufacturing of the item. An example used is toilet paper. We see trees being cut down to make paper, and then sewage pouring into the ocean, and fish dying from the pollution. An aerosol spray can is followed by images of chain saws, power plants, and people choking on the fumes. And a package of hamburgers brings on scenes of forests being clear-cut to make way for cattle.

After Viewing Discuss:

- What are the consequences for people and the environment if we want to stop using a particular product? Consider convenience, economics, people's habits and tastes.
- How can the harmful effects of using a product be minimized? Are there alternative products to use? Are there alternative methods of processing and manufacturing that can be used?
- Were you aware of the connection between the destruction of the rainforests and the hamburgers that are served by some of our largest fast food restaurant chains? How can we help?

4. HOBBY

As the sun rises over a booming cityscape, a captain of industry proudly surveys his industrial domain and skyrocketing profits and takes off in his private jet for some deep sea fishing. But what is wrong with this perfect picture? The big catch turns out to be a skeleton!

After Viewing Discuss:

- What is a hobby? How do you like to spend your free time? How does your family like to spend its vacations? Should everyone be able to enjoy the planet's unspoiled places equally? How do some people's hobbies affect others? What impact do some hobbies have on the environment?
- Consider the impact of specific hobbies such as bug collecting, stamp collecting, beekeeping, woodworking, hiking, fishing, jet skiing and powerboating etc.?

5. FRED AND THE APPLE WORLD

Fred is a hungry man, and luckily he's got a tree nearby, loaded with ripe fruit. He plucks the tasty 'apple earth' from the tree and begins munching away. Fred grows larger and larger. He appears to have an insatiable appetite. He consumes the tree and then starts right in on the world he is perched atop of, until nothing remains but a core. As luck would have it, after devouring the core, Fred finds a lone seed. But after a moment's hesitation, he pops it in his mouth, sealing his fate. Realizing his mistake, he has a childish tantrum and consumes himself.

After Viewing Discuss:

- List some needs and wants. How do these differ? Can needs become wants, and vice versa?
- Did Fred have a need? When did that need become a want?
- What are consumers? Producers? What did Fred do to show characteristics of both?
- Could Fred have saved himself and the world? How?
- Can this world's economy keep on growing fatter?

6. THE SOLUTION

Desperate times call for desperate measures! The world is coming to an end, and everyone must evacuate! To save civilization, people must leave and must do it immediately! With cooperation, everyone is evacuated safely before the earth is annihilated. Surprise! Who gave the command? None other than one of earth's distressed creatures....a rabbit!

After Viewing Discuss:

- Pretend you are an endangered animal, a tree, or a fish in a polluted lake. How do you view your world and the other things that live in it? What would your solution to the problem be?
- If you were told the world was ending, what would you do? Is leaving the only solution? Is there any other place where human beings could dwell?
- Can existing situations be changed to avoid the desire to leave a polluted planet? How? What can you do as an individual to change these situations?
- What responsibilities do we have for other animals and plants?

7. EXHIBIT A

The viewer is given a glimpse of a possible future in which people walk the streets wearing oxygen masks. A family strolls along through the brown atmosphere of a very polluted planet. They venture into a museum and enter the most protected gallery, where they can remove their masks and stand in awe of a living tree.

After Viewing Discuss:

- What are museums used for in our country? Does the prospect presented in this film seem real? Can you envision going to a museum when you are older to see some of the things that are currently part of your everyday environment? What things? Are the effects of the disappearance of these things good or bad?
- Discuss endangered species, including animals and plants. Research ways in which people are working to save endangered species. How are changes made to help endangered species? (Consider legislation, education, and economic factors.) Research the importance of habitat protection in the effort to save various species.

8. ENLIGHTENMENT

(forgive the Russian typo in the video!)

An overview of a forested area focuses on its inherent beauty and harmony. The bees, birds, rabbits and squirrels form a happy and thriving community amongst the trees. The viewer hears and then sees a diligent woodpecker searching for food. The stillness is broken by the sound of a chain saw. Trees come crashing down. Birds take flight. The woodpecker, desperately searching for a new tree, begins pecking on the head of the logger. At last the bird knocks some sense into him, transforming him into a tree in the process. In the end there's a new forest of tree people to provide habitat for the animals.

After Viewing Discuss:

- Discuss how the forest community changes when humans enter into it. How can humans 'fit' into the community with minimal disturbance?
- Take a 'hearing' hike. Record the different sounds heard. After the hike, come up with a list of 'natural' sounds and 'man-made' sounds.
- Discuss noise pollution. What is the impact of noise on the environment? Consider the effect of noise on animals, plants, and humans.
- Experiments have shown that plants respond differently to various types of music and different decibel levels. Conduct an experiment in your classroom based on these findings. Discuss the results.
- Consider the impact of deforestation on animal habitats and food supplies.
- Research the food chain of the woodpecker. How does tree removal effect this food chain? What can be done to decrease the negative effects?
- Research a bird that is part of your local environment. Build a birdhouse for that species. Observe the birds' behavior throughout the year.

9. EQUILIBRIUM

At the start of this film, 'man' is literally in balance with nature. Then he finds ingenious ways to harvest natural resources to satisfy his personal needs and wants. First he satisfies his need for fuel and building materials, tipping the scales ever so slightly in his direction. Then as he learns how to turn natural resources into large profits, he consumes more and more tilting the scales way off balance. The resources are now beyond his reach. This causes him to reassess the situation. He begins to reinvest in nature, cuts back on consumption, and slowly brings the scales back to their original state of equilibrium.

After Viewing Discuss:

- What are tangible and intangible goods? List examples of each. How does our planet provide for both?
- How can the environment benefit from the money we reinvest in nature? List specific examples of using money to do this.
- Research the effects of reinvesting in the environment. Consider local and international options. Examples include purchasing a tree for a local park, adopting a manatee, buying an acre of rainforest or debt-for-nature swaps between developed and developing countries. What specifically does the money pay for?
- Analyze the consequences of failing to reinvest in the environment.

10. BALANCE AND HARMONY

The concept of "Balance and Harmony" was derived from the Chinese philosophy of Taoism. Taoism supposes that the whole universe is composed of two opposite but complementary forces, "yin" and "yang." In order to balance our environment, we need to bring these two forces into harmony. At the opening of the film, the viewer sees the Chinese character for tree. The characters sprout like trees across the landscape. The serenity of the lush mountain landscape is interrupted by chainsaws as the 'trees' are converted into houses. During a huge thunderstorm the river turns brown with topsoil as it hurtles down the mountain. But it leaves behind a few branches. Next morning a young girl gathers the tree seedlings and struggles up the mountain where her friends help her plant them. Ecological balance and harmony are restored.

After Viewing Discuss:

- What do you suppose the symbol in the film stood for? Why?
- Research Chinese symbols. Can you find the symbol that was used in this film? Research the Chinese written language. How do the Chinese learn to write? What implements are used? How does the written Chinese language differ from ours? Make a symbol to represent your name. Why did you chose this symbol?
- Discuss tree removal and its impact on soil erosion. How can these effects be minimized?
- Research Taoism. Summarize the philosophy - what are its basic tenets? Is this philosophy compatible with environmental awareness? How can the tenets of Taoism be used to address environmental problems such as pollution, depletion of resources, etc.?
- Design a cartoon using a symbol you are familiar with. Why did you pick that symbol? How does the symbol assist you in getting the meaning of your cartoon across to other people?

11. THE ESCAPE

A television addict is seen dozing off in his chair as he watches images of a beautiful natural landscape. His stupor is interrupted by a knock at the door. When he opens it he finds himself in the same beautiful landscape. Happily he bounds off through glorious scenery, free at last. But then he stoops to pick a flower and sneezes. The force of his sneeze snaps the illusion and we see that our couch potato is trapped in the television he was watching. Click. The television goes off!

After Viewing Discuss:

- Discuss the pros and cons of television viewing. Consider time spent viewing, types of programming, costs, educational values, etc.
- Compare a television presentation on nature to a trip to a museum, and then to an actual trip to the natural environment. What are the pros and cons of each experience? Are children growing up today getting the same types of 'nature' experiences that their parents had? Or their grandparents? How and why?
- Pick a time frame of approximately one hour of regular network television viewing. Carefully observe the shows and advertisements on the television during that hour. Are environmental issues considered? List any negative and/or positive education going on during that hour. Are there ways to insert environmental awareness messages in the program or programs you viewed? Repeat the hour of viewing for a PBS station and/or a pay cable station.
- As a group, discuss a local environmental issue you can take action on. Become informed, plan strategies and follow through on these plans.
- Analyze a television program that examines an environmental issue. How is the issue presented? Are solutions given to the problem? What can you, as an individual, do to address this problem? Plan to do something to make a positive impact on your environment. Take action.

Extended Activities

1. Select a magazine and/or newspaper article about a specific environmental topic.

- Write a brief synopsis of the information presented.
- Analyze the information presented. Does the article present a balanced outlook of the issue? What are the pros and cons of the issue? Rewrite the article to present a balanced (or unbalanced) view of the topic.
- Design a script for an animated film of the topic. How would you present the issue? What medium would you choose? What music would you use, if any? Draw a picture of the main character in your video.

2. Which of the short films made the biggest impact on you? Why?

- Pretend you are a movie critic for the newspaper. Find a movie review in the paper. After reading it, use it to help you write a review of the film that made the biggest impact on you. Give your film a rating.
- List some solutions to the problem presented in your particular film. Classes can be divided into groups and each group given a film to discuss.
- Organize a formal debate. One team can argue for the need to use the resources presented in a particular film. The other team can argue against such use by pointing out the negative impact that using the product has on the environment.

3. Investigate the World Wildlife Fund (known as the World Wide Fund for Nature in the UK.)

- Besides sponsoring this film making project, what other projects are they involved in? How are they funded? What is the funding used for? Correspond with this group to gain information.
- What other groups exist locally? Nationally? Internationally? What roles do they play in changing attitudes in the environment? Compare these groups and their effectiveness in making a positive impact on the environment.

4. Interview parents and/or grandparents. What changes have they seen in attitudes and opinions about environmental issues? What are they doing that is different from what their parents did when they were children?

(Examples: recycling, using labor-saving appliances, vacations, etc.)

- Write an article concerning your interview.
- Tape record your interview.
- Review several completed interviews. How could these films address the outlook parents and/or grandparents have about their environment? Which film would present the information in the best way?

5. Pick a product that you have recently purchased at the store. How does the use of this product affect the environment? Consider the product itself, its packaging and its manufacturing.

- Draw a picture 'lifeline' of the manufacturing of this product.
- How could you make this product more environmentally friendly? Consider all aspects of the manufacturing of this product.
- Visit a store and compare similar products. Are other brands more environmentally friendly? Make a chart showing what you have found.

6. Organize an art contest and encourage participation from outside the classroom.

- A poster contest can focus on a selected key issue or allow students to select any environmental issue.
- Have a sculpture contest where sculptures are made entirely from recycled materials. Categories can be established and students can enter a particular category.

RELATED BULLFROG VIDEOS

THE WHITE HOLE

This amusing animated film is a wonderful commentary on our throwaway society. Children playing in a schoolyard find a black hole, and think of using it to dispose of garbage, until a white hole appears and spits everything back out at them.

CONCERTO FOR THE EARTH

A celebration of nature, this non-narrated program uses a classic concerto format to illustrate the devastating effect people have had on the ecology of our planet and point the way to a sustainable future.

HOW TO SAVE THE EARTH

This is an international documentary series of six programs focusing on "Green Warriors" - ordinary people who are trying to solve environmental problems.

DECADE OF DESTRUCTION

Adrian Cowell's brilliant documentary series, which aired on PBS' "Frontline," about the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, perhaps this century's worst environmental disaster.

THE LAST SHOW ON EARTH

This film, a visual and musical tour de force, is the story of plant and animal extinction on a global scale and, at the same time, it is a story of hope for the future. Features many celebrities.



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