



## ***The Ten Lives of Titanic the Cat Teacher Resource***

A great deal of thanks and appreciation goes out to the members of our Teacher Advisory Committee, who volunteer their time to assist in the development of Sprockets teacher resources.

This teacher resource was written by Dede Sinclair.

**TITLE:** *The Ten Lives of Titanic the Cat*

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Norway

**RELEASE YEAR:** 2007

**ORIGINAL LANGUAGE:** Norwegian

**DIRECTOR:** Grethe Boe

**RUNTIME:** 74 Minutes

### **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

- Language: Media Literacy
  - Identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.
  - Reflect on and identify their strengths as media interpreters.
- Reading
  - Read a wide variety of literary texts (e.g., fantasies, mysteries, historical fiction).
- Writing
  - Generate, gather and organize ideas for an intended purpose and audience.
- Visual Arts
  - Explain how artistic choices affect the viewer and support their conclusions with evidence from the work.

**FOCUSING QUESTION:** How are conventions and techniques of film (e.g., camera angles, colour, lighting, sound and special effects) used to help tell this story?

## **SYNOPSIS:**

Liv has just turned twelve and couldn't be more excited about her birthday gift: tickets for the inaugural sail of the Danaworld cruise ship, scheduled to leave in a few days.

But strange incidents start happening to her. She begins seeing things no grown-ups can see: a mysterious, sometimes-disappearing black cat, a secret room in the basement, an old photograph. It seems someone or something from the distant past is trying to communicate with her. When Liv tries to investigate these odd new phenomena, she suddenly develops asthma, preventing her from accessing the most important clues. Moreover, if she falls too ill, she'll miss the cruise!

With no adults believing her story, Liv enlists the help of her friend Thomas to help her get to the bottom of things. The pair is soon hurtled into an adventure that spans nearly one hundred years. Echoes of a famous tragedy ring again: will Liv and Thomas be able to prevent another major cruise-ship disaster?

A masterfully crafted tale of mystery and suspense, *The Ten Lives of Titanic the Cat* balances lessons in history, friendship and determination, all while keeping the audience on the edge of their seats!

**Recommended for grades 4 through 8**

## **AN EDUCATOR'S COMMENTS ON THE FILM:**

"*The Ten Lives of Titanic the Cat* is an excellent text to discover the film grammar of a mystery movie featuring supernatural elements. Junior and intermediate students enjoy books, films and TV series featuring supernatural themes. Excellent discussions can evolve from comparing and contrasting book and film versions of supernatural tales. As well, the story of the Titanic disaster continues to fascinate students, long after the

roaring success of the award-winning American film *Titanic* (PG-13). Boys seem particularly interested in this tragedy.

*The Ten Lives of Titanic the Cat* is exciting and fully appropriate for students, and features a strong female character as the main protagonist.

The film also provides insight into the family life of a normal twelve-year-old urban Norwegian girl. These visual revelations of present-day family life in another country help foster a sense of global connection for Canadian students.”

## **PRE-SCREENING PREPARATION:**

1. Make sure all students are familiar with the Titanic story. Internet searches, library books and *National Geographic* films can provide this information.
2. “Show, don’t tell” is the mantra of script writers. To do this, the film director uses film conventions and techniques such as camera shots, lighting, colour, sound and special effects to create the narrative. Dialogue plays a part in advancing the story, but most of the ideas are expressed in film grammar.
3. On separate sheets, create a brainstorming chart for each of the following film conventions:
  - camera angles (e.g., close-up, medium and long shots, high- and low-angle shots)
  - sound (e.g., dialogue, music, silence, sound effects)
  - lighting and colour
  - special visual effects
4. Divide the class into five groups and appoint a recorder and presenter for each group.
5. Give each recorder one of the charts on which to record the prior knowledge of the group on the topic.
6. After a brief brainstorming session, ask the presenters to report back to the whole class.



## **POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY**

Arrange the class in pairs for a brief discussion about the film. Ask partners to share some ideas (e.g., likes, dislikes) with the class.

Revisit the brainstorming sheets listing film techniques. For each convention, discuss examples from the film. Identify how the technique or convention contributed to the narrative (e.g., dark lighting in basement scenes added to the suspense; black-and-white film identified elements of the story connected to the Titanic).

Ask students to write a review of this film using the Sprockets Film Review outline (see [reellearning.ca](http://reellearning.ca)).

## **CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP:**

Encourage students to apply their awareness and understanding of the conventions and techniques of film grammar to their general viewing of other films and television programmes. Allow time for intermittent class discussion of conventions used in popular new films or television series. In this way, students will apply their awareness of film conventions and techniques to wrest greater meaning from all visual texts.

## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**

1. Have students storyboard a brief film sequence in which a person or object appears or disappears. Using a video camera and a programme such as iMovie, they can practice making objects appear and disappear from a scene, using a variety of transition techniques available within the software.
2. Identify and discuss culture-specific ghost stories. Ask students to storyboard a section from such a story, including some directions for camera angles, lighting, sound and special effects (FX) to achieve excitement and suspense in the sequence.
3. Debate the following proposition: I love scary films.



**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

1. *National Geographic*, [www.nationalgeographic.com/society/ngo/explorer/titanic/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/society/ngo/explorer/titanic/)
2. Pictures of the real Titanic, [www.difference-engine.co.uk/library/titanic/index.html](http://www.difference-engine.co.uk/library/titanic/index.html)
3. Ghost stories and film, [www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/ghoststories/](http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/ghoststories/)