

# Earth



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**DIRECTED BY:** Alastair Fothergill, Mark Linfield

**CERTIFICATE:** PG

**RUNNING TIME:** 90 mins

**COUNTRY:** USA

**YEAR:** 2007

**SUITABLE FOR:** primary literacy, science, geography, music, citizenship and PSHE

## **SYNOPSIS**

This film is a feature-length version of the documentary TV series Planet Earth, following the migration paths of four animal families.

## **TEACHERS' NOTES**

This educational resource provides teachers and learners with a range of questions and activities linked to the film. It gives an opportunity to learn about the featured animals and their environments.

Teachers of Key Stages 2 & 3, Geography, Science, English, Music, Literacy and Visual Literacy, Citizenship and PSHE will find it useful both as a way of introducing the film and the issues that it raises about the natural world, and as a means of extending their students' learning. Some of the activities reference chapters on the DVD and we recommend teachers obtain a copy of the whole film to make the most of this resource.

## **ACTIVITY 1: USE OF SOUND IN THE FILM**

The music for a film is always carefully chosen to make you feel certain emotions as you watch certain scenes.

Watch the trailer for the film. Look closely at what you can see and think carefully about what the music you can hear.

## **TASK**

- What do you imagine as you listen to the music? What sort of mood do you think the music creates? How does it make you feel?
- Do you think there are different 'moods' in the music? When do these change?
- What sounds can you hear in the music? Can you recognise any instruments?
- Now play the trailer again, but this time switch off your screen and just listen to the sound. Do you hear anything new this time?

## **MAKING YOUR OWN SOUNDS - KS2 MUSIC**

Choose an animal you know really well. You might want to find some pictures of that animal to remind you of exactly how it looks.

- What do you imagine as you listen to the music? What sort of mood do you think the music creates? How does it make you feel?
- What sounds can you hear in the music? Can you recognise any instruments?
- What do you imagine as you listen to the music? What sort of mood do you think the music creates? How does it make you feel?
- What sounds can you hear in the music? Can you recognise any instruments?

## ACTIVITY 2: CINEMATOGRAPHY

The filmmakers had to be very patient and also had to use a variety of different techniques to capture the images that we see in the film.

In some places, they have used 'time lapse photography' where we see things that might take days or weeks happening in just a few seconds. In other places, slow motion is used to help us see all the details of things that happen in a flash.

Examples of slow motion in the film include the ducklings jumping from their nest in the tree, the cheetah chasing the gazelle, or the Great White Shark catching a seal.

- Why do you think these particular scenes are shown in slow motion? What would you miss if you were watching it at normal speed?
- Choose one example of slow motion in the film. Can you explain what you see in the clip, moment by moment? How does it make you feel, watching it in slow motion?
- Now draw three key images of your chosen slow-motion sequence that show what happens.

## TASK

The first chapter of the DVD focuses on a polar bear family.

- What can we see the polar bear and her cubs doing?
- How do you feel about the bears?
- Can you name some of the different camera angles used to show the polar bear family?
- How do you think these different camera angles help us to understand and sympathise with the bears?
- How does the voiceover help you understand the images you are seeing? What extra information does the voiceover give you?



## ACTIVITY 3: FAMILIES IN THE WILD

The film follows the journeys of three families who face difficulties and find strength by sticking together.

The polar bear mother and her cubs; the humpback whale and her calf; the elephant mother and her baby with their herd - they all have long journeys to make. All the animals have adapted to the environments that they live in and, by working together, they have a better chance of surviving in the wild.

The different animals all live in very different environments.

- What is the polar bears' habitat like?
- What is the elephants' habitat like?
- What is the whales' habitat like?

Show the different features of these habitats on a wallchart.

- Adapting to different environments

Use the film and other sources to find out the ways in which whales, the polar bears and the elephants are specially suited to the environments in which they live. You could look at the colour or texture of their fur or hide; you could also explore how their legs, feet and fins help them to survive in their habitat. You can then match up your findings with your wallchart showing the different habitats.

Questions to think about:

- Can you think of any times when groups of animals gather together?
- What brings them together, and how do they behave towards each other?
- In the film we see mothers trying to help their young. In what ways do the parents try to help their young and give them the best chance of survival?
- How has the landscape changed for the elephants migrating to water, or for the polar bears trying to hunt? What effects have humans had on the natural habitats of some of the animals in the film?



## NON FICTION WRITING TASK:

- Can you explain some of the ways in which humans have affected the animals shown in the film?
- Do you feel that humans need to take more care to protect the environment for these animals?

Carry out further internet research on an animal or its environment from the film. Write a persuasive speech to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by this animal in the wild, and to encourage people to protect it.

## ACTIVITY 4: CREATIVE WRITING

### ■ POLAR BEAR CUBS' FIRST DAY OUTDOORS

Polar bears are born blind and deaf, underneath the snow, in their mother's winter den. When they emerge from their snowy home they are seeing the outside world for the very first time.

#### TASK

Imagine that you are one of the bear cubs. Today is the day when you will see, hear, touch, taste and smell the outside world for the very first time. Write a description of that new world from the bear cub's point of view, focusing on the five senses.

### ■ ELEPHANT CALF'S FIRST SWIM

The elephant herd in the film have to travel for weeks to find water at the Okavango delta. This young elephant calf is having his first swim.

When they emerge from their snowy home they are seeing the outside world for the very first time.

#### TASK

Imagine you are the elephant. Try to describe your excitement as, after such a long, hard and dusty journey, you finally plunge into the clear cool water.

