



Walt Disney Pictures  
presents

# THE LITTLE MERMAID

STUDY **F I L M** GUIDE  
EDUCATION



# TEACHERS' NOTES



Aimed at primary pupils, the ideas in this study guide are intended as starting points for a cross-curricular project on the film 'The Little Mermaid' at Key Stages 1 and 2. Many curriculum areas are covered although the focus is on English and Science.

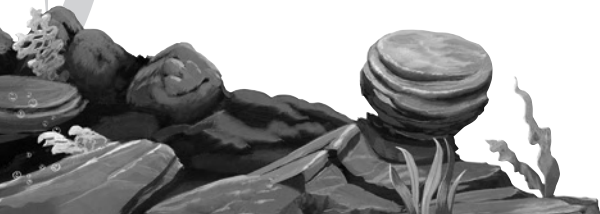
The activities seek to complement and extend the pleasure the children will have derived from a visit to the cinema and from watching the BBC programme (broadcast 10, 17 April, 1 May 4.30-5.00am) whilst at the same time meeting some of the requirements of the National Curriculum and Scottish Guidelines.

The tables provided can be used for planning and record keeping. The reference page at the back has a 'fishy' border. Simply cover up the text and photocopy to create special sheets for the children to write up their work.

## FILM SYNOPSIS

Ariel, a bubbly young mermaid longs to be part of the human world. She boldly goes where no mermaid has ever gone before to 'land' the prince of her dreams. Ignoring her father, King Triton, and her guardian crab, Sebastian, the determined mermaid strikes a deal with a devious sea witch but quickly discovers that there's a big 'catch'.

UK release date: July 17, 1998. Cert: U. Running time: 79 mins. Distributed by: Buena Vista International (UK) Ltd.





# HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN



From the time of the Greeks to the present day there have been tales of mermaids. Long ago mermaids were known as morgans and were thought to be very dangerous. They were said to live in wonderful castles under the sea. Hans Christian Andersen was one of the first writers to change this image of mermaids when he wrote 'The Little Mermaid'.



## TASK

*Find out which of the following fairy stories was written by Hans Christian Andersen and underline them. Put a tick next to the stories you have read. Try and find out about Hans Christian Andersen himself - where he lived, when he was born etc.*

- ★ The Emperor's New Clothes
- ★ Snow White And The Seven Dwarves
- ★ Cinderella
- ★ The Ugly Duckling
- ★ The Snow Queen
- ★ The Red Shoes
- ★ Sleeping Beauty
- ★ The Princess And The Pea

This is a picture of a statue of 'The Little Mermaid' in Copenhagen at the entrance to the harbour. It is a bronze figure of a mermaid looking out to sea. It was put there to commemorate the life and work of Hans Christian Andersen.



## TASK

*Make your own model of 'The Little Mermaid'. Use clay for the body and find a large stone for her to sit on.*

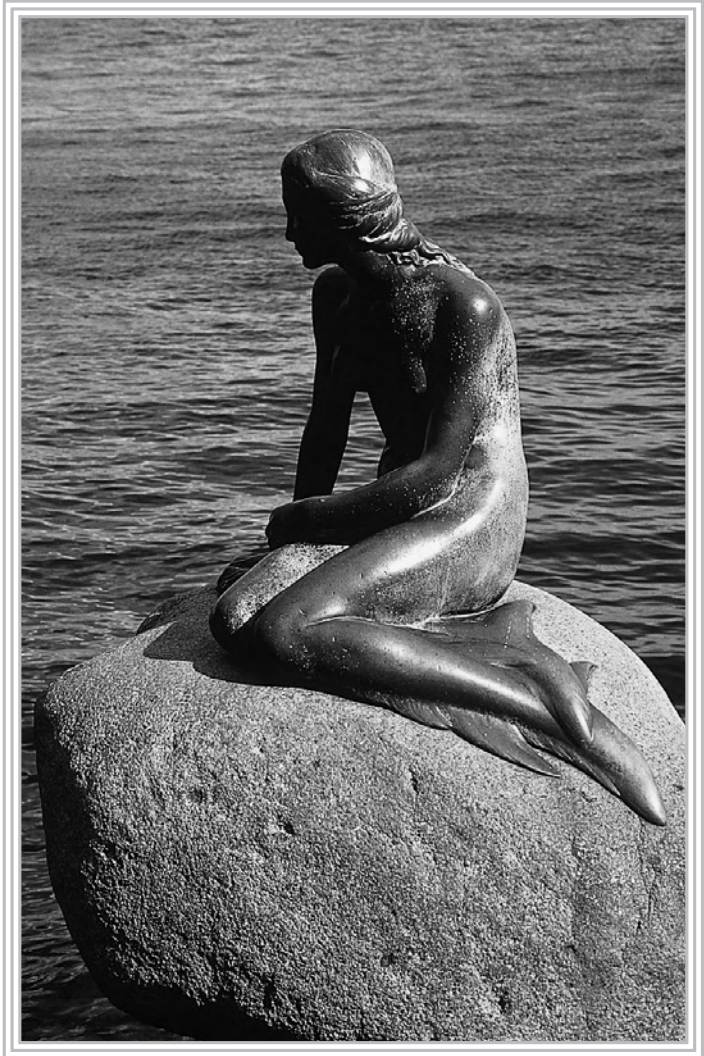
Walt Disney was a great fan of Hans Christian Andersen's work. How many of the fairy tales in the list have been made into films? Why do you think fairy tales are so suitable for animated films?

Fairy tales usually have a happy ending and at the end of the film we see Ariel and Prince Eric getting married. The ending of the story written by Hans Christian Andersen is quite different.



## TASK

*Find out what the ending by Hans Christian Andersen is. Why do you think the filmmakers changed the ending? Which ending do you prefer and why?*

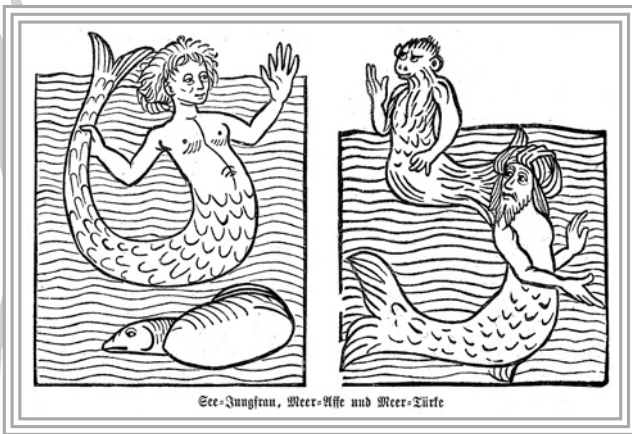


© Tony Stone Images





# MERMAIDS AROUND THE WORLD

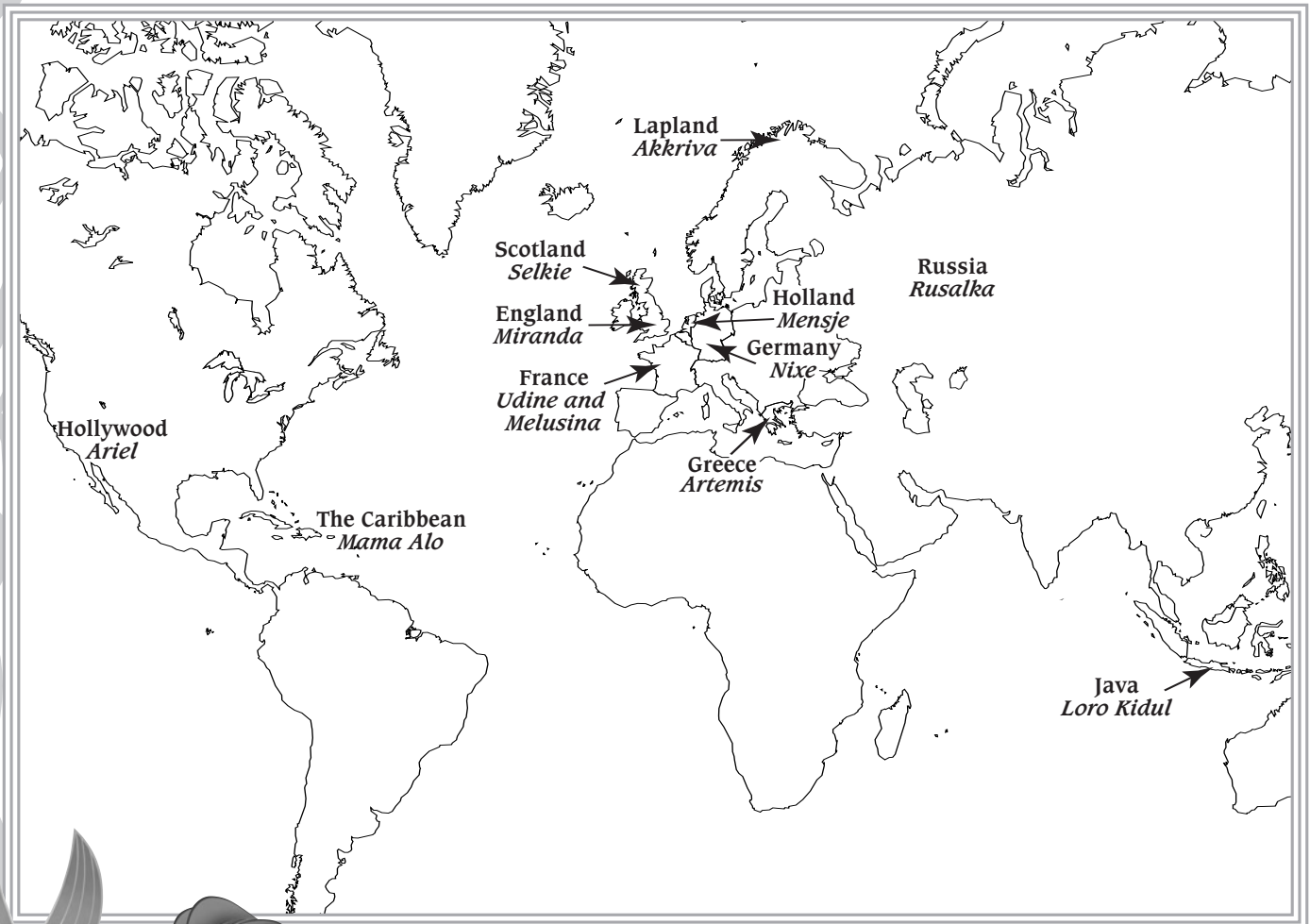


Mary Evans Picture Library

There have been many different beliefs about mermaids around the world. In Ireland, some people used to think that on St Patrick's Day old women were turned into mermaids and thrown into the sea. Another idea was that if humans and mermaids had children together, their children would find it hard to sleep at night and were haunted by the sound of the sea.

It was widely believed that if you looked at a mermaid you would have bad luck. If however you managed to get something that belonged to a mermaid then you would share their magic powers.

These are some of the names that have been given to mermaids throughout the centuries in different parts of the world. Some of these names are from stories and films, some are old and some are new. Which one do you like best?



## **TASK**

Find out about one of the mermaids mentioned above or make up a mermaid myth of your own. Plan out your story carefully before you begin. Write out your plan on the 'Mermaid Story Plan' worksheet on the next page.





# MERMAID STORY PLAN



## CHARACTERS

*(Who is going to be in your story?)*

## SETTING

*(Where is it going to happen?)*

**BEGINNING** *(How is it going to start?)*

**MIDDLE** *(What is going to happen in your story?)*

**END** *(How is it going to end?)*





## Octopus

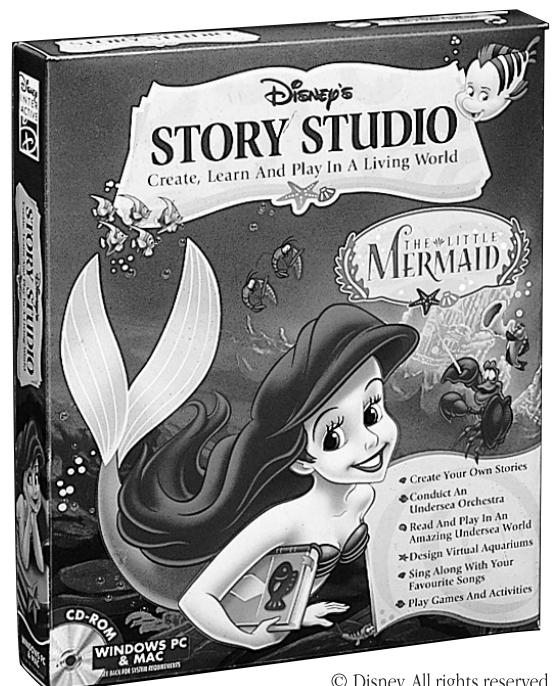
• Believe it or not, an octopus is related to snails, clams, mussels, and squids. All these animals are called "molluscs." All molluscs have tubes that suck in water and blow it out. Octopus use their tubes for jet-propulsion when they want to swim fast.

- An octopus has eight legs with strong suckers. Their relatives, squids, have ten legs. Both octopus and squid are excellent hunters. (By the way, more than one octopus can be called octopi, octopuses, or even octopus. Take your pick.)
- There are many kinds of octopus. Some are small and can be held inside your hand. Others are big and can weigh more than a four-year-old child.
- Octopus are good hunters. They see shrimp, crabs, and snails with their big eyes. They grab and hold on with their strong sucker-covered arms, then bite down with their strong, sharp beaks. Some octopus use their beaks to drill holes in the shells of snails. Then they suck out the body of the snail.



This is a fact file about the octopus - reproduced from Disney's Story Studio THE LITTLE MERMAID (more details of this and Disney's Print Studio can be found on the references page at the back of the guide). Read it through - you will probably be amazed at how much there is to know!

**TASK** Choose another sea creature shown in the film. Find out as much as you can about it. Look in reference books, on the Internet etc. Create your own fact file on your sea creature - make it as funny and interesting as possible. Remember to draw a picture of your creature at the top of the page.



© Disney. All rights reserved.

[www.disney.co.uk/disneyinteractive](http://www.disney.co.uk/disneyinteractive)

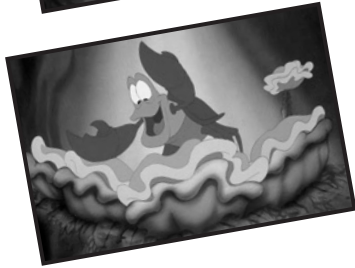


# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY



## TURN YOUR CLASSROOM INTO ARIEL'S UNDERWATER WORLD!

Now that your pupils' imaginations are bubbling with marine images - why not set them a challenge? Your group can take ideas from one (or all) of the following suggestions... or maybe they'd prefer to come up with something entirely original.



### DISPLAY IDEAS

- ★ Turn one corner of the classroom into a coral reef. The brighter the colours the better! Decorate it with paintings, drawings or models of algae, tropical fish and plants.
- ★ Turn another corner into a shipwreck scene, with sunken treasure and relics from an ancient ship. You could find out about famous sea-farers from the past and write a diary of a day in the life of a sailor.
- ★ Make shell patterns out of clay.
- ★ Design and make some diving gear of the future.
- ★ If you are very brave, you could make a life sized Ariel out of wire mesh and papier mâché!





# WHO EATS WHO? - FOOD CHAINS



Every living thing needs to eat to stay alive. This is the same for things that live in the sea. Limpets eat algae, crabs eat limpets and seals eat crabs. This is called a food chain, or a food web.



## TASK

*Cut out the creatures shown on the following page and stick them onto card. Colour them in. On a large sheet of paper, stick your pictures down and draw arrows to show who is eaten by who. This is a FOOD WEB. Use reference books to help you. Remember, all food chains start with a plant.*



## TASK

*With a partner or in small groups, talk about what would happen to your food web if the following things happened:*

- ★ the fish were poisoned?
- ★ the seals were hunted and made extinct (wiped out)?
- ★ there were too many shrimp?
- ★ the seaweed was coated by oil from an oil slick?
- ★ too much fishing was going on and most of the cod disappeared?

*How would this change things?*



## TASK

*Pretend that you and your partner(s) are reporters for a newspaper or a television programme. It's your job to tell everyone about the dangers of pollution in the sea and how it affects the food webs. Together, write a news bulletin (no more than 150 words) on the problems that face British sea life. When you have written your*

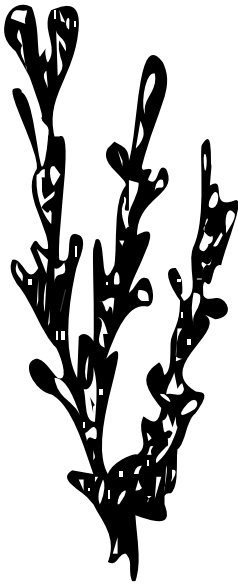
*bulletin, draw pictures to show the problems. You could present your final copy either as a newspaper article, or you could record it as a radio or television item. Remember though, it's your job to try and stop people from polluting our seas...Good luck!*



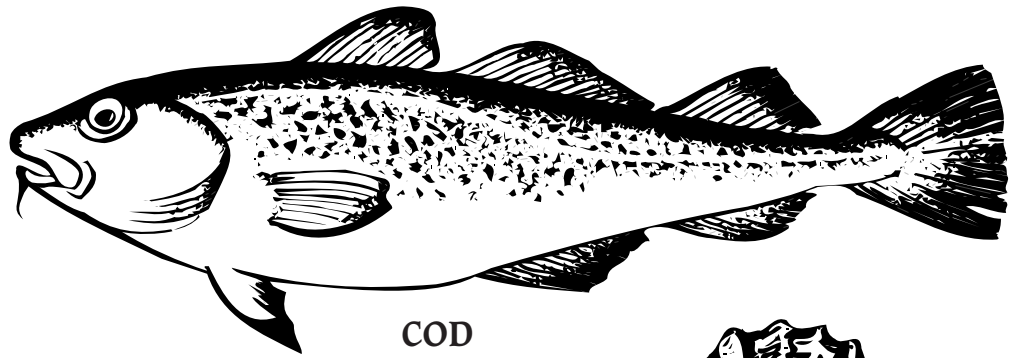




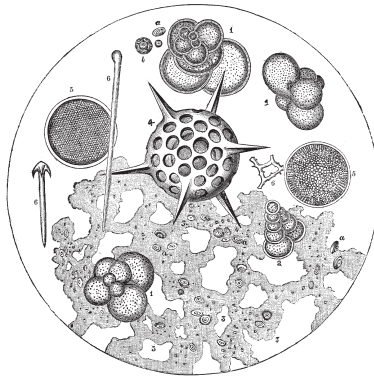
# WHO EATS WHO? - FOOD CHAINS II



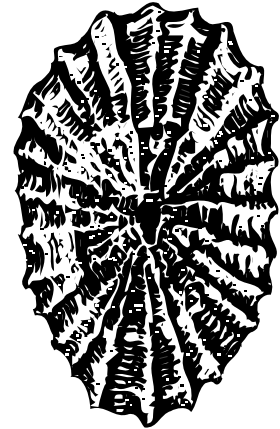
SEAWEED



COD



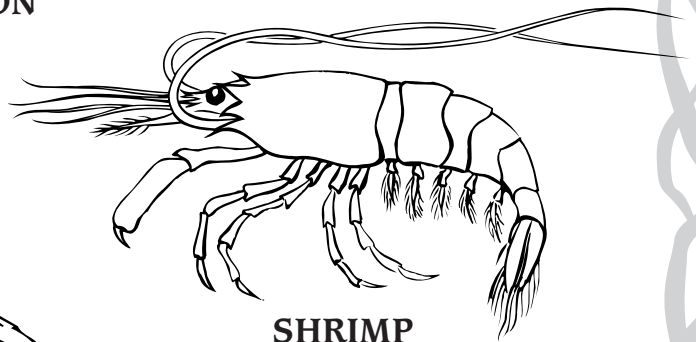
PLANKTON



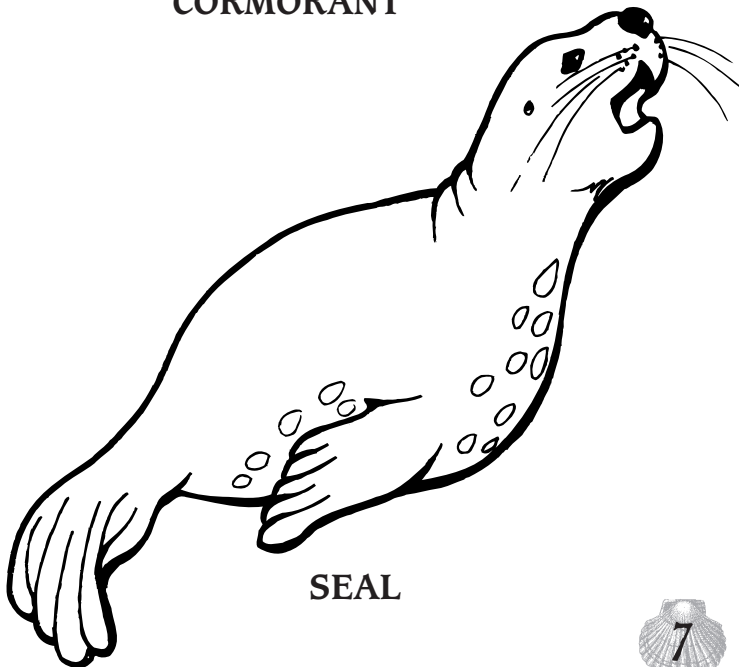
LIMPET



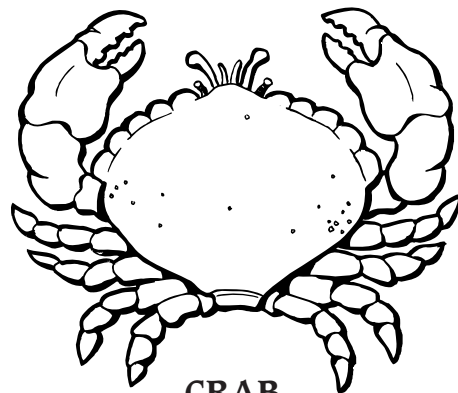
CORMORANT



SHRIMP



SEAL



CRAB



# ANIMATION

Animation means making drawings move. It can take a very long time to do this. It took four hundred people three years to make 'The Little Mermaid' and in that time over one million drawings were made. The people who draw the pictures are called animators. They often spend a long time finding out about the subject they are going to draw. As part of the preparations for the film 'A Little Mermaid', a large aquarium was brought to the design studio so that the animators could watch and sketch the fish. They also studied pictures from reference books and posters.

## TASK

*In the box below write down the names of all of the sea creatures that you see in the film.*

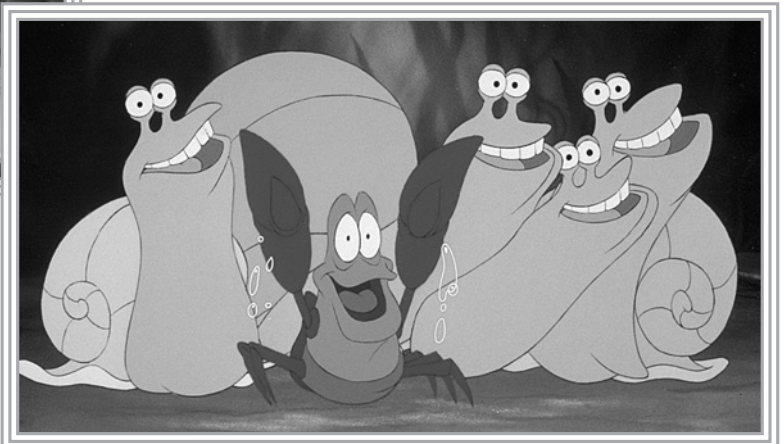
## TASK

*Find out as much as you can about one of these sea creatures by looking in reference books and on the Internet. Your information should include what the creature looks like, where it lives, what it eats and if it is eaten by any other creatures. Try to include a picture too. The information that you collect could form part of an exciting wall display or reference book for other people.*



## TASK

*The producer of the film has decided to include the sea creature that you researched as one of the characters in the film. You have been asked to draw a cartoon sketch and fill in the details in the chart on the next page.*





# CREATING A CHARACTER



Name	Sketch	Interesting features
Personality		Likes
This character would fit into the film because		Dislikes

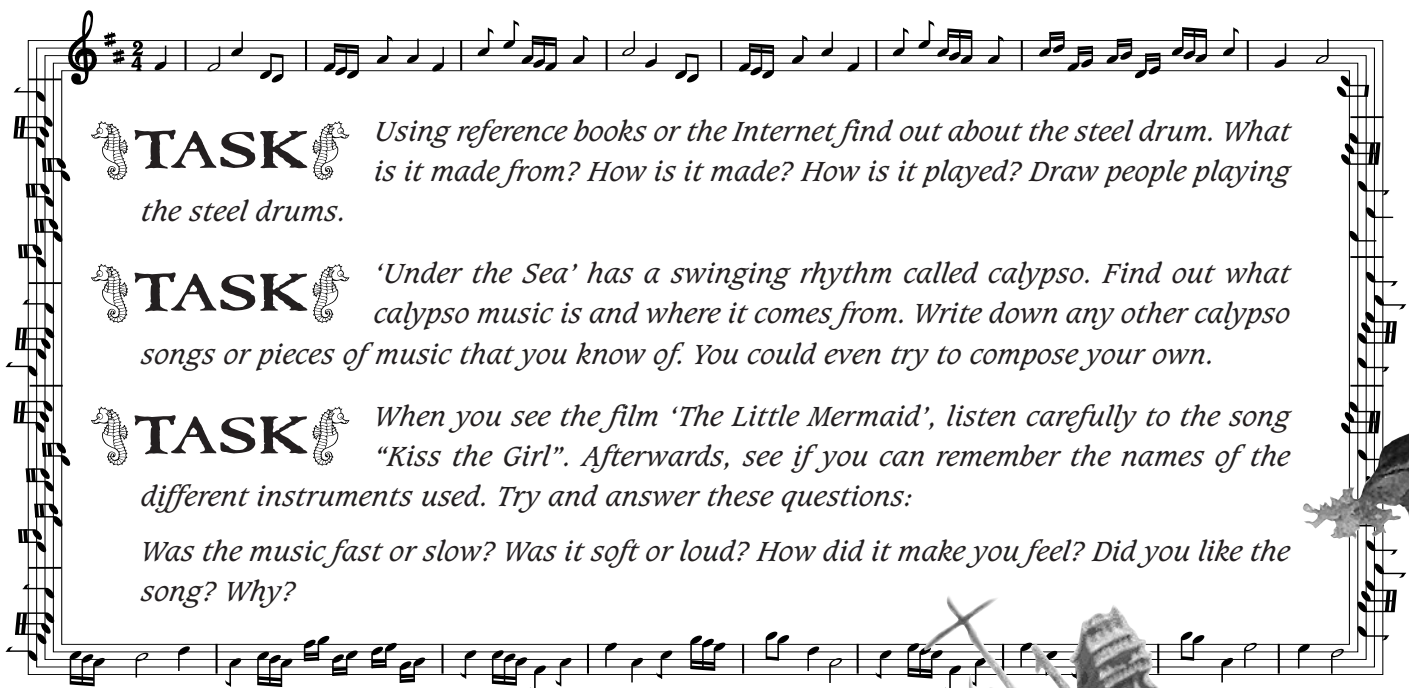


## MAGICAL MUSIC FROM THE FILM THE LITTLE MERMAID



When originally released in 1989, the music from 'The Little Mermaid' won many awards. Now singers Peter Andre and Shaggy have recorded their own versions of 'Kiss the Girl' and 'Under the Sea' to coincide with the re-release of the film. No doubt you will soon be familiar with these new versions, due to hit the charts in July!

Sebastian the crab comes from the Caribbean. There is an island in the Caribbean called Trinidad. A very unusual percussion instrument comes from the Caribbean which is called the steel drum. This steel drum is used in the song 'Under the Sea'.



**TASK** *Using reference books or the Internet find out about the steel drum. What is it made from? How is it made? How is it played? Draw people playing the steel drums.*

**TASK** *'Under the Sea' has a swinging rhythm called calypso. Find out what calypso music is and where it comes from. Write down any other calypso songs or pieces of music that you know of. You could even try to compose your own.*

**TASK** *When you see the film 'The Little Mermaid', listen carefully to the song "Kiss the Girl". Afterwards, see if you can remember the names of the different instruments used. Try and answer these questions:*

*Was the music fast or slow? Was it soft or loud? How did it make you feel? Did you like the song? Why?*

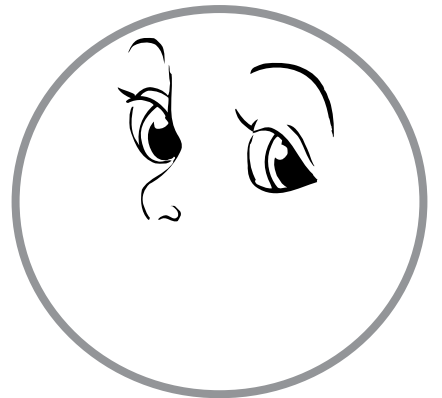
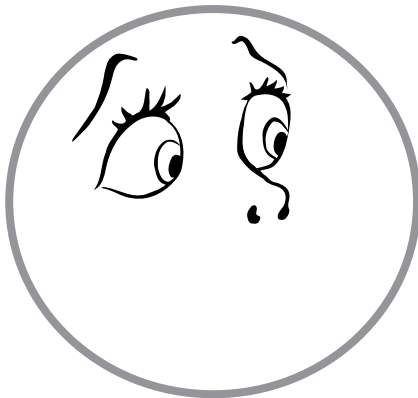
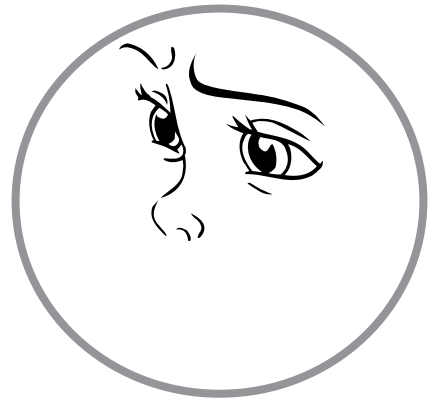
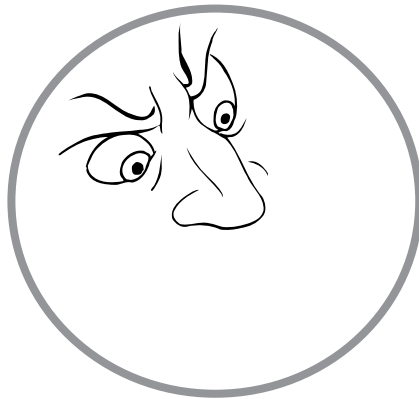
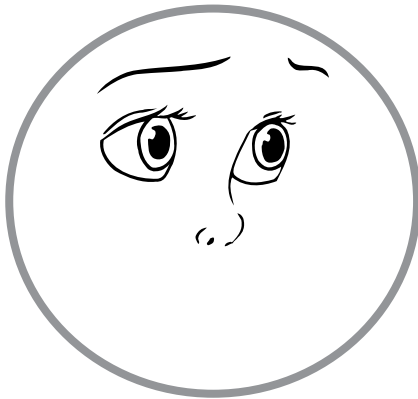


# COMMUNICATING FEELINGS



When Ariel gives her voice to Ursula as part of her contract, she has to communicate by body language alone. Eye contact is a particularly good way of letting other people know how you are feeling or what you are thinking.

**TASK** Look carefully at the eyes in the drawings below. What message do you think is being conveyed? Draw suitable mouths to match the eyes on a piece of paper. Cut them out and place them on the faces. Change them round. Is a different feeling created?



**TASK** Imagine that you are Ariel and that you have no voice. Work with a partner and try to give them information or instructions without speaking to them. Use the list below or invent some of your own.

- ★ I have lost my voice.
- ★ I am very tired.
- ★ What time is it?
- ★ Please would you go and get me a drink as I am very thirsty.

Charades is a game played by using actions alone. Try to act out the title of a film, book or television programme to a friend.



# CASTING

Casting is a very important job in film making. The person in charge of casting has to try to find the most suitable person for each character in the film. In animated films such as ‘The Little Mermaid’ the voice of the actor or actress is particularly important.







**TASK** *Talk about the voices of each of the characters below and how these make them special.*

CHARACTER	VOICE	MAKES US THINK
 <p style="text-align: center;">Ariel</p>		
 <p style="text-align: center;">Prince Eric</p>		
 <p style="text-align: center;">Triton</p>		
 <p style="text-align: center;">Ursula</p>		



# CASTING II

**TASK** *Imagine that you have been given the opportunity to cast 'The Little Mermaid' using real people. You may choose well-known actors or actresses or you may prefer to choose people from your class instead. In each case say why you chose that particular person for the role.*

CHARACTER	THE PERSON MOST SUITED TO PLAY THIS PART	WHY I CHOSE THIS PERSON
 <b>Ariel</b>		
 <b>Prince Eric</b>		
 <b>Triton</b>		
 <b>Ursula</b>		
 <b>Sebastian</b>		
 <b>Flounder</b>		

# 🐟 EDITING 🐟

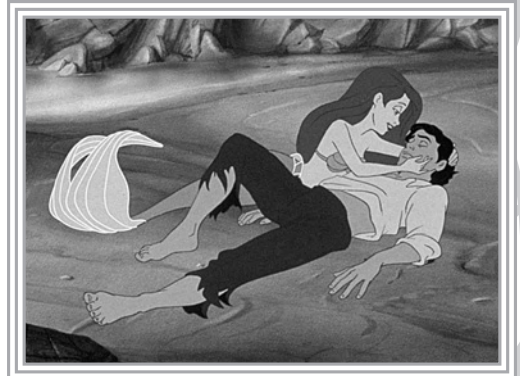
Scenes in films often have to be filmed many times so that the right shot is captured. The artists who created the characters in 'The Little Mermaid' would have had to draw lots of sketches before deciding on the look they wanted.

When writing stories more than one attempt is often necessary. We can improve written work by including interesting words such as adjectives and adverbs. These are describing words.

**TASK** *Change these dull sentences into more interesting ones by adding descriptive words. The first one has been done for you.*

Ariel found a boat.

*Ariel discovered a sunken boat lying forgotten on the sea bed.*



She swam to rescue Eric.

Prince Eric looked for the girl.

Triton was angry and went to Ariel's secret grotto.

The birds flew towards Vanessa.



**TASK** *Arrange the pictures below from the story in the right order.*





# WHAT WOULD THEY SAY?



## TASK

Imagine that we were able to interview the characters in the film and ask them what they thought of Ariel. What do you think they would say?



Triton

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Ursula



Sebastian

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Flounder



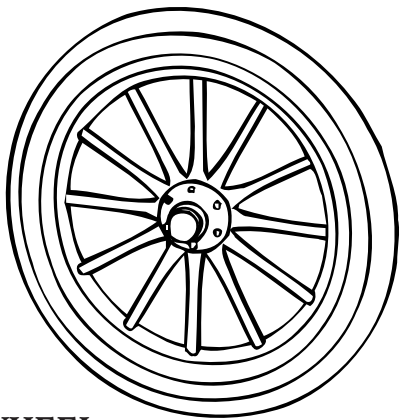


# IN ANOTHER WORLD

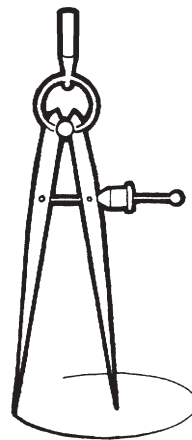
Ariel loved to collect things from the world of humans even though she did not know what they were. The seagull, Scuttle, made up names for these things. For example he said that the fork that she found was called a dingle hopper and was used for straightening hair.



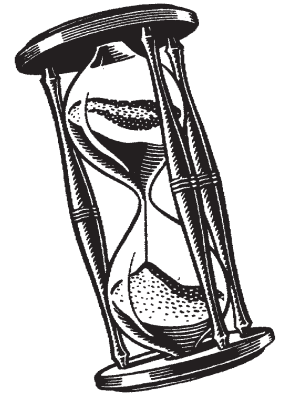
**TASK** Imagine that Ariel found the following items. What might Scuttle call them? What might he say they were used for?



A WHEEL



A COMPASS



AN HOUR GLASS



A SIEVE

*Merpeople may need special items too. For example what would they clean their scales with? How do you clean the sand at the bottom of the sea?  
Design a tool for merpeople and give it a name.*





# MAKE YOUR STORY COME TO LIFE

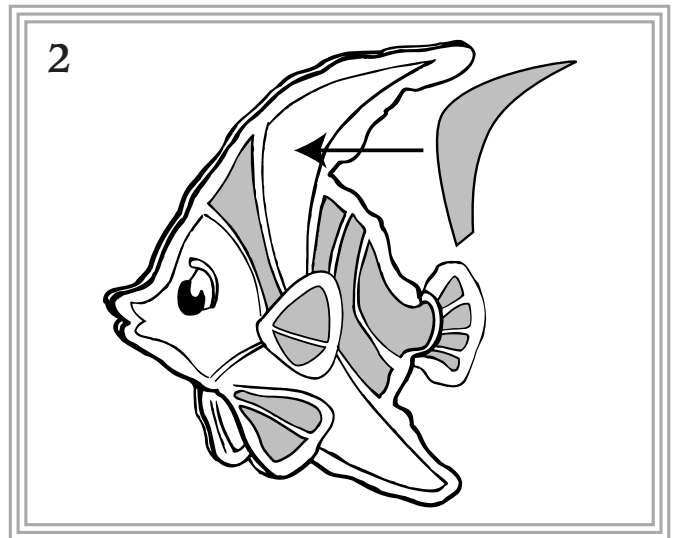
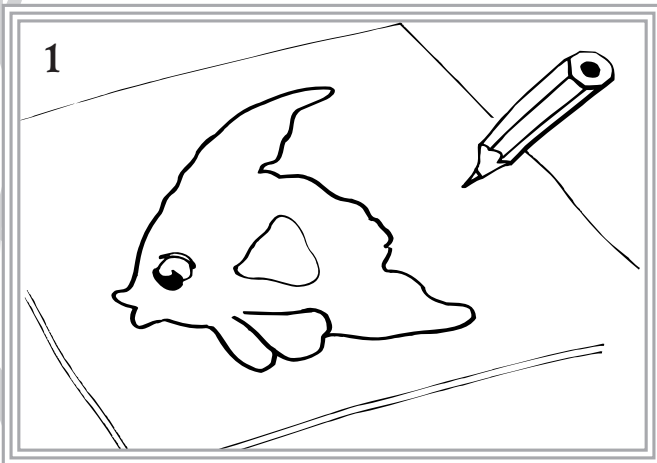


From early times people have enjoyed making pictures move. Shadow puppetry is one of the oldest examples of this. Shadow puppet plays have been performed for at least 3000 years.

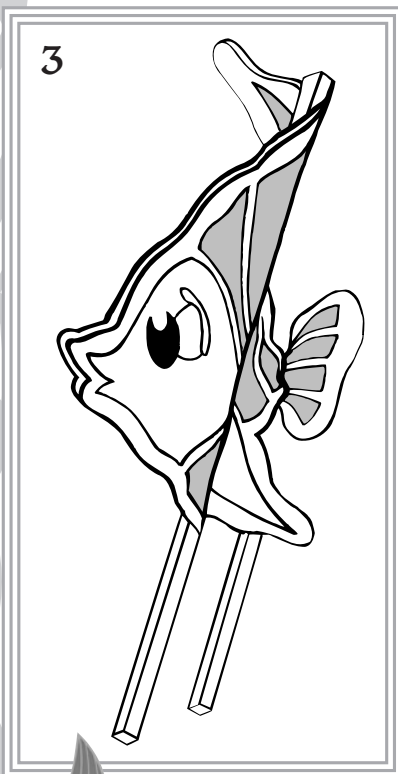
## TASK

Work in a group. Choose a character from the film or from your own story and draw them onto card.

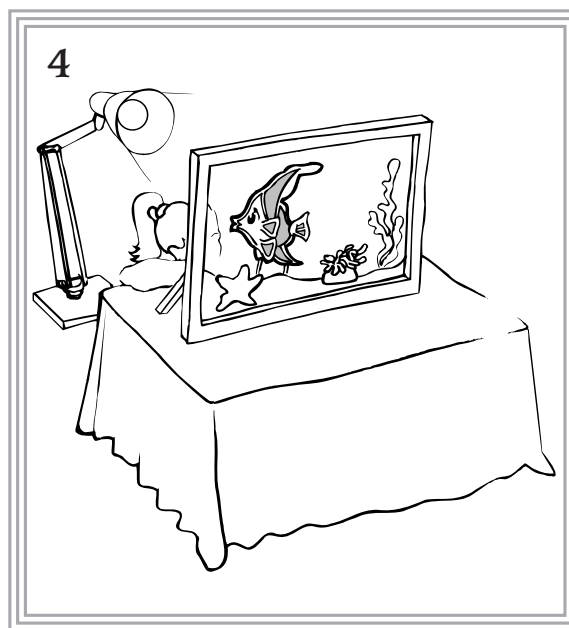
Cut out the character.



To make the puppet more attractive cut out details such as scales on fish and fill them in with coloured cellophane.



Attach rods with which to hold your puppet at either end so that it can move around as if it were swimming. You may have to experiment with where you place the rods to make the movement look realistic.



Draw a scene onto a piece of thick greaseproof paper and attach it to a frame. This will form the background. It is best if you are able to put the frame on top of a table so that you can hide under the table while you are performing. Shine a strong light from the back and hold your puppet up to the paper.

Each group may like to take a different scene from the film or you may like to tell your own mermaid story this way.





## **Bringing film to education across the UK**

For over twenty years our charity has been bringing film to teachers and schoolchildren. We produce BAFTA winning and curriculum-based resources, run cutting-edge teacher training events and each year take 430,000 schoolchildren to the cinema free of charge in the world's biggest festival screening programme for young people, National Schools Film Week.

Visit our website to find out more and see our latest resources.

**[www.filmeducation.org](http://www.filmeducation.org)**

**Film Education, 91 Berwick Street, London W1F 0BP**  
t. 020 7292 7330 f. 020 7287 6970 [postbox@filmeducation.org](mailto:postbox@filmeducation.org)

Written by Carolyn Anstruther and Film Education.

Produced by Film Education for Buena Vista International (UK) Ltd

All images of 'The Little Mermaid' © Disney. Designed by Chapman Beauvais.