

MVFF EDUCATION

SIROCCO
et le royaume des courants d'air



CURRICULUM GUIDE
GRADES: 5-9

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Dear Educators,

Thank you for attending the 46th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's screening of *Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds*.

This year, our MVFF Education film selections continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe this film will be a powerful and engaging text to use in your classroom. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence, with a particular emphasis on social-emotional learning. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your screening experience.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

Sincerely,

The CAFILM Education Team

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What lessons did you learn about the power of storytelling from watching the film? How is Agnes, the writer, also a sorcerer?
2. What other stories or films does *Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds* remind you of? How or why is this film's story and filmmaking style unique?
3. How did the film make you feel? What emotions did you experience while viewing it? Why?
4. How does the film serve as a tribute to sisters, who share a special, unbreakable bond?
5. What unusual places and characters did Carmen and Juliette encounter on their journey? How was their curiosity rewarded as they ventured through the Kingdom of the Winds?
6. What experiences from your own life did the film make you think about?
7. How does the unique animation style take the viewer on an adventure into a fantastical world and support the storytelling?
8. What other films do you know that also have a unique animation style and may have influenced or provided inspiration for the filmmaker in the making of this film?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Monomyth of the Hero's Journey

<https://thekidshouldseethis.com/post/the-monomyth-of-the-heros-journey>

TKSST: The Kid Should See This - smart videos for curious minds of all ages.

Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds Review

<https://variety.com/2023/film/reviews/sirocco-and-the-kingdom-of-air-streams-review-sirocco-et-le-royaume-des-courants-dair-1235640188/>

Tapped to open the Annecy Animation Festival, Benoît Chieux's free-ranging tour of a fantastical windswept wonderland follows two girls on a waking dream where seemingly anything can happen.

GKIDS Films: A Cat in Paris

<https://gkids.com/films/cat-in-paris/>

A film by Jean-Loup Felicioli & Alain Gagnol, co-writer of *Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds*.

This academy award nominated film is a beautifully hand-drawn caper that is set in the shadow-drenched alleyways of Paris.

NPR: How Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli became an animation powerhouse

<https://www.npr.org/2023/07/15/1187978009/how-miyazakis-studio-ghibli-became-an-animation-powerhouse>

Internationally famous animation artist Hayao Miyazaki's final film *How Do You Live* was released this year in Japan. NPR talks to Susan Napier, author of *Miyazaki World: A Life in Art*.

Offscreen: A Deep Dive in a Yellow Submarine

https://offscreen.com/view/A_Deep_Dive_in_a_Yellow_Submarine

Some notes on the filmmakers and the references in the animated classic.

ABOUT CAFILM

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CAFILM Education programs.

Follow the California Film Institute on social media



STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards ELA-Literacy

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g. how setting shapes the characters or plot).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.



ABOUT THE FILM

Juliette and Carmen's neighbor, Agnes, writes children's books that take place in a fantastical world. When Agnes is asked to care for the girls over a weekend, she is exhausted from having written all night and needs a nap when they arrive. Unsupervised, the girls promptly tumble into trouble, somehow discovering a passage between their world and the extraordinary universe of the author's fictional creations. There, Carmen and Juliette, who take on the appearance of cats, must flee a mean mayor and his Goodie Gobblers. Helped by the ethereal singing star Selma, they uncover more than they imagined. They're all way of the great sorcerer Sirocco, the terrifying character capable of controlling the wind. While Sirocco's moods are literally stormy, he may also be the key to these children getting back home. Charming and surreal, this whimsical tale finds our young heroines bravely answering their call to adventure, confronting various challenges, until finally returning to their world with new wisdom from the lessons they learned on their transformational journey.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER BENOÎT CHIEUX

Benoît Chieux, born in 1969 in Lille, France, is a French animation film director working notably for the Folimage studio, for which he has co-directed short and feature films. His cartoon *Tigers in a Queue Leu Leu* was nominated for the César for best animated short film in 2016. His third short film as director, *The Midnight Garden* (2017), was also nominated in that category in 2018. His first feature film, *Aunt Hilda!*, was released in 2014. In 2023, he launched his second feature film as director and screenwriter, *Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds*, which opened the Annecy International Animated Film, where he won the Audience Award.



DURING VIEWING STORY MAP

Directions:

A story map is a diagram that will help you think about the characters, setting, and events in a narrative. This will help you identify the themes in a film, or the lessons learned. While watching *Sirocco and the Kingdom of Winds*, fill out the chart below.

CHARACTERS

Who are the characters in the story?
What is their relationship to each other?

SETTING

Where does the story take place?
List all the places the characters go on their journey.

BEGINNING

What is the problem at the beginning of the story

MIDDLE

What are the challenges the characters face during the story?

END

How is the problem solved at the end of the story?

THEMES

Themes are not just a lesson for the characters in the story. Themes are meant to apply to real life.
What do you learn from watching this film?

AFTER VIEWING

SEE, THINK, ME, WE

Directions.

Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds is a story of adventure, bravery, and heroism. Use the graphic organizer to dig a little deeper into what the film means and connect it to the bigger picture.

SEE

What did you notice while you were watching the film? What observations did you make?

THINK

What thoughts do you have about the film?

ME

What connections can you make between you and the story in the film?

WE

How is the film connected to bigger stories about the world and our place in it?

A Thinking Routine Borrowed from Harvard Project Zero's Think Routine Toolbox:
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/resources>

AFTER VIEWING RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Directions:

Respond to each question, using details from the movie.

1. How does Carmen and Juliette's adventure into the Kingdom of the Winds begin? Who, or what, is responsible for their passage, and how do they get there?

2. What kind of transformation do the girls go through upon their entry into this extraordinary world? What do you think it means?

3. What trouble do the girls get into, and what kind of fate are they each sentenced to by the Mayor?

4. Who is Selma, and what does she do in the kingdom? What is her relationship to Agnes, and how did she end up in the Kingdom of the Winds? What did she do before she arrived there?

5. How do Sirocco and Selma know each other? What is the story behind the necklace she wears? What is the story behind her voice?

6. What do you learn about Sirocco, the sorcerer who is known for terrorizing the kingdom, by the end of the film?

7. How does Carmen and Juliette's adventure end? How do they get back to their ordinary world, and what have they learned? What does Agnes think happened?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

STORYBOARD THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds is about two girls, Juliette and Carmen, who discover a passage between their world and the extraordinary universe that exists in the children's books created by their neighbor, Agnes. Once there, the two girls embark upon a journey that proves both exhilarating and challenging. In order to get back home, they will need to confront Sirocco, the terrifying character capable of controlling the wind. When they return, it is with a new understanding of both worlds and lessons learned.

Directions:

1. Create a storyboard of the film that outlines and represents the four main parts of the hero's journey, along with the different stages within each part.
2. This can be done on paper or digitally. Whichever format you choose, your storyboard should include hand-drawn images, photos, or stock images that connect to each of the stages of the journey.
3. Add captions to describe what is happening at each stage.

Part One - Call to Adventure

At the beginning, the hero is in the ordinary world, usually the hero's home or natural habitat. Conflict arises in their everyday life, which calls the hero to adventure. They are beckoned to leave their familiar world in search of something. They may refuse the call at first, but eventually leave, knowing that something important is at stake and the refusal of the call is no longer an option.

ORDINARY WORLD

What is the ordinary world like for Carmen and Juliette?

CALL TO ADVENTURE

What happens that causes Carmen and Juliette to leave the ordinary world and go on this adventure?

REFUSAL OF THE CALL

How do each of the girls hesitate before answering the call to adventure?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

STORYBOARD THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Part Two - Supreme Ordeal or Initiation

Once the hero makes the decision to leave the normal world, venture into the unfamiliar world, and has officially begun their mysterious adventure, they will meet a mentor figure and together these two will cross the first threshold. This is the point where turning back is not an option. On the journey, they will encounter tests, allies, and enemies. Obstacles like tests and enemies must be overcome to continue. Helpers aid the hero on their journey.

MENTOR HELPER

Who is the helper that arrives to guide Carmen and Juliette on their journey?.

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

Why do the two girls continue on to the point where turning back is not an option?

TESTS/ALLIES/ENEMIES

How are Carmen and Juliette tested? What enemies do they face? What allies or friends help them?

Part Three - Unification or Transformation

After already overcoming many obstacles on the journey thus far, the hero and their allies approach one more major challenge in this new or special world. This proves to be the hero's greatest test and they must prepare for it by overcoming their greatest fear. After confronting their fear and surviving the ordeal, the hero reaches a reward and is somehow transformed and ready to return to the ordinary world with lessons learned.

APPROACH

What final, and major, challenge do Carmen and Juliette face?

ORDEAL

What do the girls experience during this final ordeal?

REWARD

How do they succeed together? What is their reward?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

STORYBOARD THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Part Four - Road Back or Hero's Return

Once the hero achieves their goal and the reward is won, the hero and their companions start on the road back. The hero wants to complete the adventure and return to their ordinary world with their treasure. This stage is often referred to as either the resurrection or atonement. This is because the hero has conquered their demons or enemies and is transformed by the experience into a new person with a renewed sense of self confidence. As the hero crosses the threshold, and returns from the unknown to their ordinary world, they may be tested one last time. This test is an attempt to undo their previous achievements. Once home, the hero has come full circle, and the major conflict at the beginning of the journey is finally resolved. The hero resumes life in their original world, and things are restored to normal.

ROAD BACK

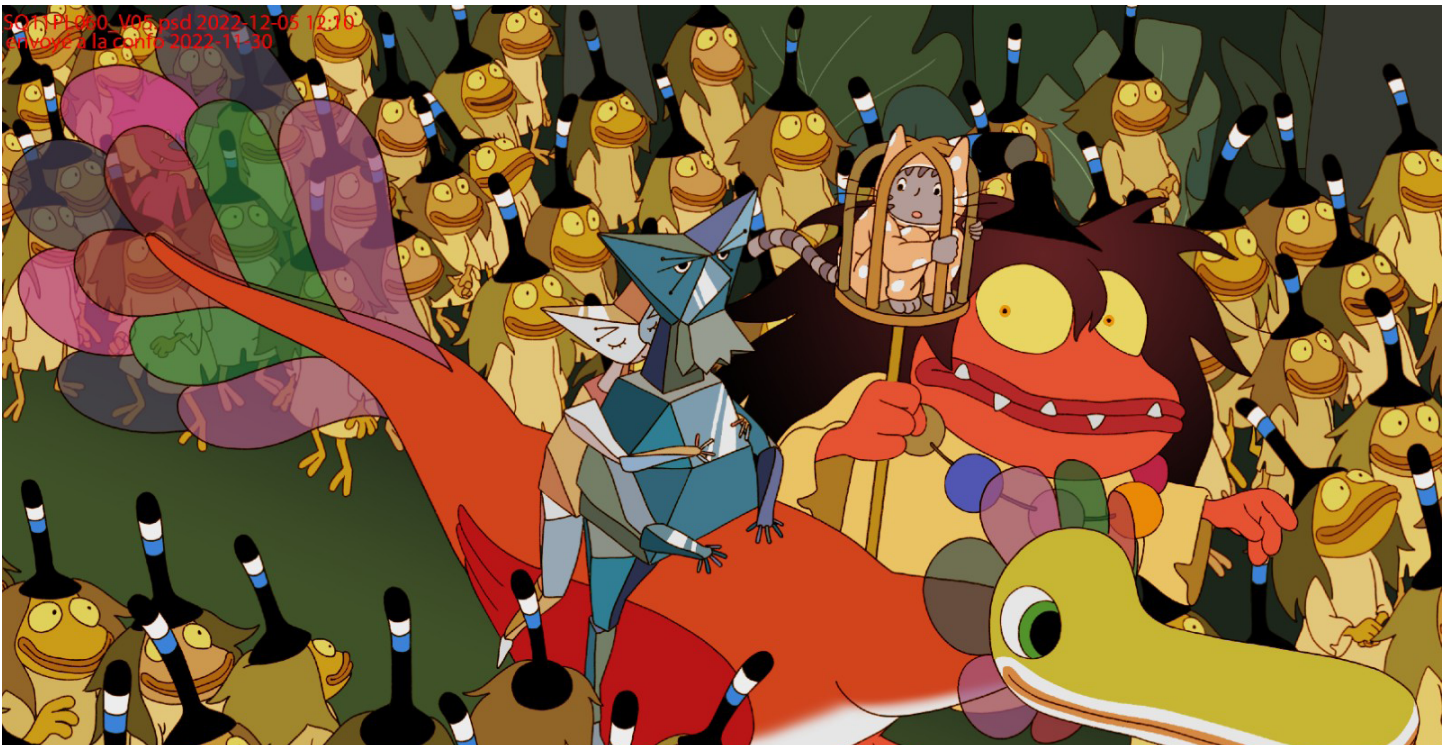
What obstacles do Carmen and Juliette come across on their way back to the ordinary world?

ATONEMENT

What have Carmen and Juliette learned on their journey?

RETURN

How are things restored to normal?
What does their world look like now?



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

INFLUENCE & INSPIRATION

Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds takes the viewer on a journey into the imagination of French director Benoît Chieux. The filmmaker himself is the sorcerer of this animated adventure. But, as original as the film is, you might also recognize connections or similarities between this film and others you have seen.

Directions:

- Influence.** Use this column to make a list of other films you have seen that are similar in story or style to *Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds*.
- Inspiration.** Use this column to provide evidence, or specific details from the film that show similarities in either story or style.

INFLUENCE Influence is defined as the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself.	INSPIRATION Inspiration is defined as the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.
What other films have you seen that are similar in story or style to <i>Sirocco and the Kingdom of the Winds</i> and may have influenced the filmmaker?	What are some specific details from the film that might provide evidence of the filmmaker's inspiration? This could include similarities you see to other films in either story or style.
Film: Director: Story: Style:	Supporting Details:
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ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

©Tommy Lau

What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films.. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway (www.filmfreeway.com) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.