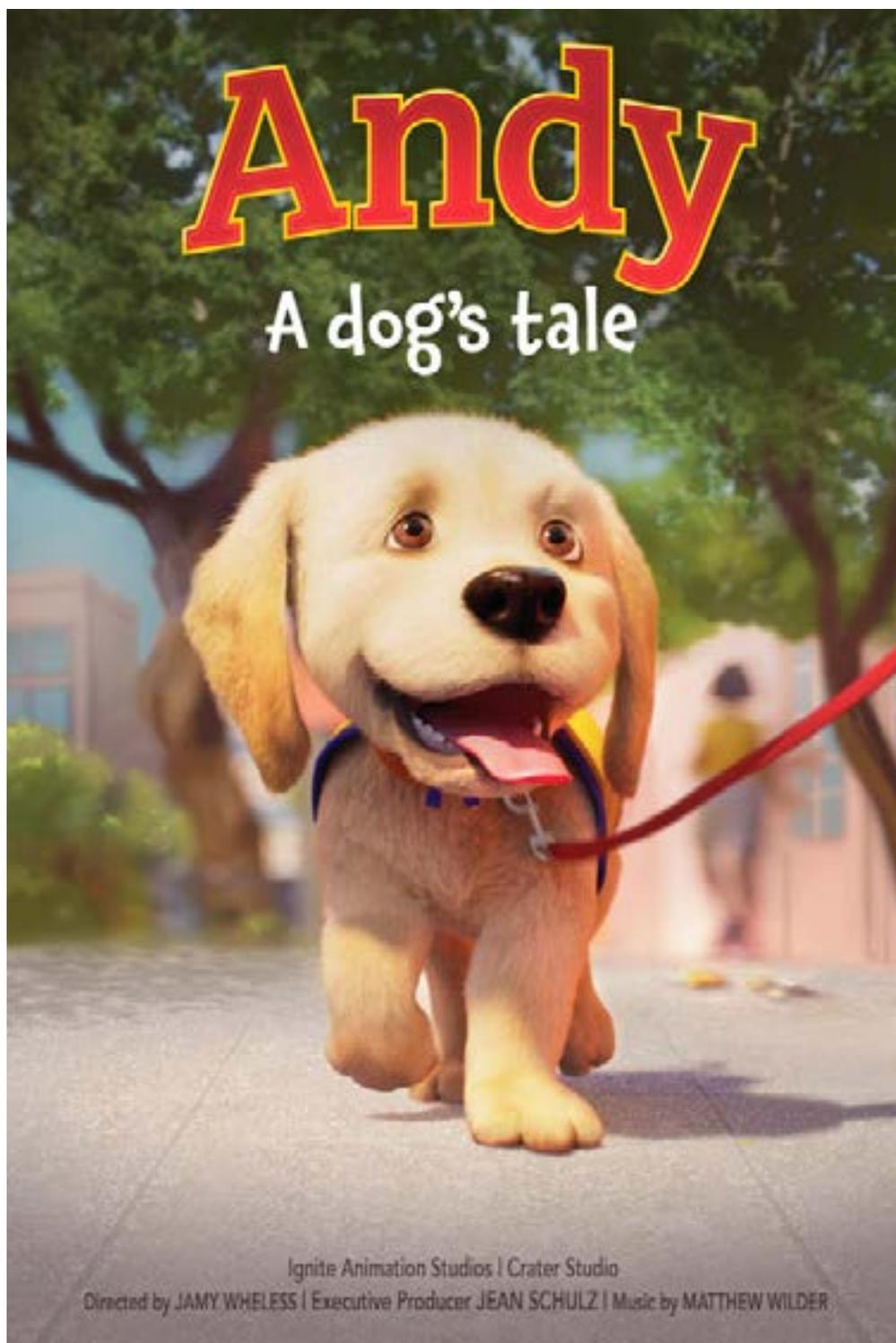


CAFILM EDUCATION

# FILMMAKERS GO TO SCHOOL



**CURRICULUM GUIDE**  
GRADES: 9-12

# FILMMAKERS GO TO SCHOOL



## ABOUT THE FILM

**Andy A Dog's Tale**  
**Jamy Wheless | US 2024 | 16 min**  
**Grades 9-12**

*ANDY: A Dog's Tale* is the inspiring journey of Andy, a puppy who overcomes challenges to discover his purpose as a service dog. With the help of others and a determined heart, Andy shows us that small beginnings can lead to heroic outcomes.

Originally intended for younger audiences, this film is also being offered to students in Grades 9–12 as part of a filmmaker engagement focused on animation, character animation, and animation as a career pathway.

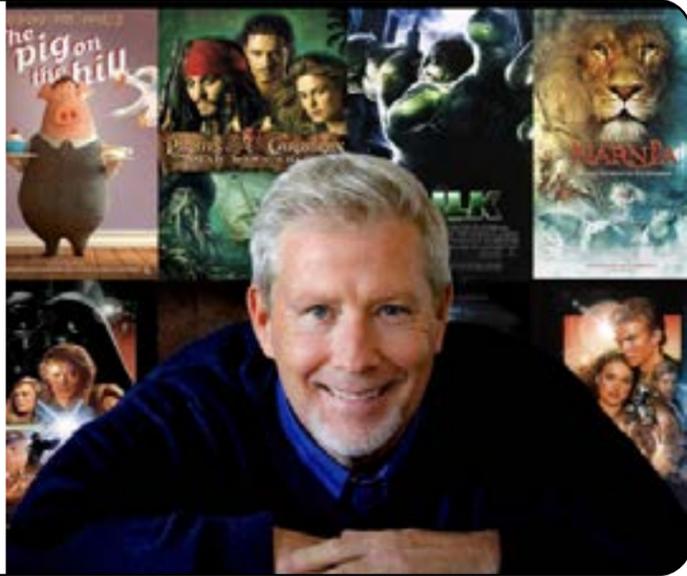
"People forget facts, but they remember stories" - Joseph Campbell

## IMPACT

"*Andy: A Dog's Tale* follows a young puppy learning perseverance, patience, and purpose on his journey to becoming a service dog. Through heartfelt storytelling and humor, the film introduces students to empathy, inclusion, and the importance of helping others." Director, Jamy Wheless.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Jamy Wheless is an American animation director, producer, and veteran animator with over 30 years of experience in film, independent animation, and education. He began his career at Industrial Light & Magic, contributing to iconic films including *Star Wars*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *The Hulk*. Jamy is the CEO and Animation Director of Ignite Animation Studios and the creator of the award-winning short film *Andy: A Dog's Tale*. He also teaches character animation at Auburn University and through his online program, Animate Characters™, helping the next generation of animators build strong creative foundations. "Good animation entertains...great animation transcends."



## THE HERO'S JOURNEY AS A VIEWING LENS

The Hero's Journey is a common story pattern where a character goes on an adventure, faces challenges, gets help, and learns something along the way. In the end the character has grown or changed in some way.

# VIEWING GUIDE: ANIMATION CRAFT AND STORY STRUCTURE IN THE HERO'S JOURNEY

### How to Use this Thinking Routine:

The animated short you are about to watch tells a story without dialogue or narration. As you watch, use this notecatcher to track how the film follows a version of the Hero's Journey. Animators often rely on this structure because it creates a clear emotional arc that can be understood across cultures without words. Pay close attention to how each stage of the journey is shown rather than told. Your goal is not just to identify story moments, but to analyze why this structure works so effectively in animation, especially one without dialogue. By the end, you should be able to explain how form (animation choices) and structure (the Hero's Journey) work together to create meaning.

<p><b>The Ordinary World - Visual Story Setup</b>                      How the film establishes normal life without words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting, color palette, and pacing.</li> <li>• Andy's routine and body language.</li> <li>• Mood and tone.</li> <li>• What feels stable or safe</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Disruption - The Visual Inciting Incident</b>                      The moment everything changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What breaks the routine?</li> <li>• Sudden changes in movement, sound, or framing.</li> <li>• How tension is created visually.</li> <li>• How we understand the problem without dialogue.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The Journey - Escalation Through Motion</b>                      How challenges and growth are shown through action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetition or variation of obstacles.</li> <li>• Changes in pace, rhythm, or environment.</li> <li>• How Andy's movement shows learning or struggle.</li> <li>• How time is compressed or expanded.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Guides &amp; Forces - Visual Mentors</b>                      Who or what helps, and how that help is shown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting characters, objects, or instincts.</li> <li>• Framing and positioning between characters.</li> <li>• Moments of connection or recognition.</li> <li>• How getting help shifts Andy's direction or confidence.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Transformation - The Visual Turning Point</b>                      The moment Andy becomes someone new.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A key decision, risk, or realization.</li> <li>• Changes in posture, expression, or motion.</li> <li>• Visual echoes of earlier moments.</li> <li>• How the animation signals internal change.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Return With Meaning - Resolution and Theme</b>                      Why the journey mattered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where Andy ends up vs. where he began.</li> <li>• Visual callbacks or contrasts.</li> <li>• Final tone.</li> <li>• What the film suggests about courage, loyalty, friendship, or belonging.</li> </ul>	

# ECHOES OF AN EPIGRAPH

PEOPLE FORGET FACTS BUT THEY REMEMBER STORIES

## How to Use this Thinking Routine:

An epigraph is a short quote meant to set the mood, theme or context, sometimes from another work. Today you tracked the Hero's Journey in Andy: A Dog's Tale. Now you'll echo the epigraph to explain why this story matters to you and others. The objective is to make your thinking visible and give the filmmaker some feedback.

**Discussion Prompts:** Think about the film you watched and the Hero's Journey you followed. Discuss the following questions in small groups.

- **STORY - THE MONOMYTH IN ACTION**

Which moments echo the Hero's Journey - call to adventure, challenge, mentor, transformation, return? How does the journey connect to real people and real service dogs?

- **STYLE - WHY ANIMATION?**

How do animation choices shape our emotional response? Why might animation be more powerful than live action?

- **SIGNIFICANCE - WHY THIS STORY MATTERS**

What does the film teach us about responsibility, service, empathy, or advocacy? How does it show that artists and filmmakers can take on a Hero's task?



# ECHO THE EPIGRAPH

PEOPLE FORGET FACTS BUT THEY REMEMBER STORIES

- What truth does the story communicate that a list of facts could not?

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- What responsibility does a filmmaker have when shaping a hero's story so it will be remembered?

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- This story proves that people remember stories over facts because . . .

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**Exit Ticket - Final Echo.** Write one sentence that shows what you think this story leaves behind.

