

# DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival for Young Audiences



## Teacher's Resource: Horse on the Balcony

Level 2

Created by Ian Cameron

Discovery Film Festival: Sat 19 October - Sun 3 November 2013

[discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk](http://discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk)

# DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

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**EUROPA CINEMAS**  
MEDIA-PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



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## Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery. They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals. Each resource aims to:

- Support and extend working with film in the classroom
- Help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit for delivery of CfE
- Develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21st Century Literacy /moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from [www.discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/resources](http://www.discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/resources) or via the Discovery Film Festival area on GLOW, which can be found within the Dundee 21st Century Literacy Group.

We do hope that you find this useful and enjoy your cinema experience with us,

- Discovery Film Festival team





## *A Horse On The Balcony (Das Pferd auf dem Balkon)*

Dir. Hüseyin Tabak

Austria 2012 / 1h30m

### Synopsis

Mika, a young boy with Asperger's Syndrome, finds it difficult to fit in with his peers in a world he finds confusing. He is befriended by a girl who is also a bit of a social outcast. The friendship develops as the two of them discover a horse (Bucephalus) is being kept in one of the apartments in the block where they live. Sascha, the owner of Bucephalus, is a gambler in debt and has to find a way of using the horse to pay his debts. Fuelled by his love of the horse and Maths they embark on schemes to ensure the horse's survival and on the way build new friendships.

The film is set in Vienna, spoken in Viennese German, with English subtitles.

### Main themes:

Asperger's Syndrome / overcoming difficulties / relationships and friendship

### Advisory Note

There is one moment of mild language in this film where Dana tells someone to "piss off". This is done within the context of the film and the feelings of the character. You may want to discuss with your class beforehand about what might be considered offensive in one culture may not be so in another and vice versa.



## Before the film

### Activity 1 – Researching Asperger's

The film's central character is a young 10 year old boy with Asperger's Syndrome. This activity involves investigating the syndrome.

Part of this activity could be done as a homework task, or completed in class as part of a "Co-operative Learning" strategy.

Using the Autism and Asperger's web links below ("Useful References/Resources" section) set your pupils the task of researching facts about Autism and Asperger's.

If this is being completed as homework the pupils can bring in their findings at the end of the week and "Pair and Share". If this is being done in the class then children should work in pairs or a maximum of threes to undertake the task.

Depending on the age/maturity of your class you may want to show them the clip from the children's TV show *Arthur* or for a more mature class the short film *A is for Autism*. Links to these can also be found in the Useful References section.

If you are operating with Co-operative Learning teams then the information they have gathered and shared can be brought back to the group and the group should prepare a short two minute presentation of their findings. This might include an oral presentation, a fact booklet or an infomercial (Direct Response TV) style presentation.

*I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. **LIT 2-15a***

*I am developing confidence when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning. I can communicate in a clear, expressive way and I am learning to select and organise resources independently. **LIT 2-10a / LIT 3-10a***

*To help me develop an informed view, I can distinguish fact from opinion, and I am learning to recognise when my sources try to influence me and how useful these are. **LIT 2-08a***

*I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all. **HWB 1-10a / HWB 2-10a***

*I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others.*

**HWB 1-05a / HWB 2-05a**

## Activity Sheet 1 - Autism & Asperger's Research

Using the websites, books and/or films clips you have been given fill in the following sections. Remember you cannot write down an answer until you have had that answer backed up by one other source.

<b>What is the difference between Autism and Asperger's?</b>	
<b>What things do children or adults with Asperger's Syndrome often find difficult?</b>	
<b>What things are children or adults with Asperger's often good at?</b>	
<b>Which of the sources did you trust the most and why?</b>	



## Activity 2 – Using the Trailer/Poster

Ask pupils to discuss with a shoulder partner which elements they would expect to have in a film or story to make an interesting narrative. This might include characters (if so what kind of characters? What will be their role in the narrative?), scenes/place, plot, genre, conflict, resolutions etc.

Put these ideas on the blackboard/whiteboard and ask them to consider these as they watch the trailer and/or examine the poster/DVD cover (shown below).

Watch the trailer using the following link:

*A Horse on the Balcony* trailer (YouTube) - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY9jwO\\_jhFU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY9jwO_jhFU)

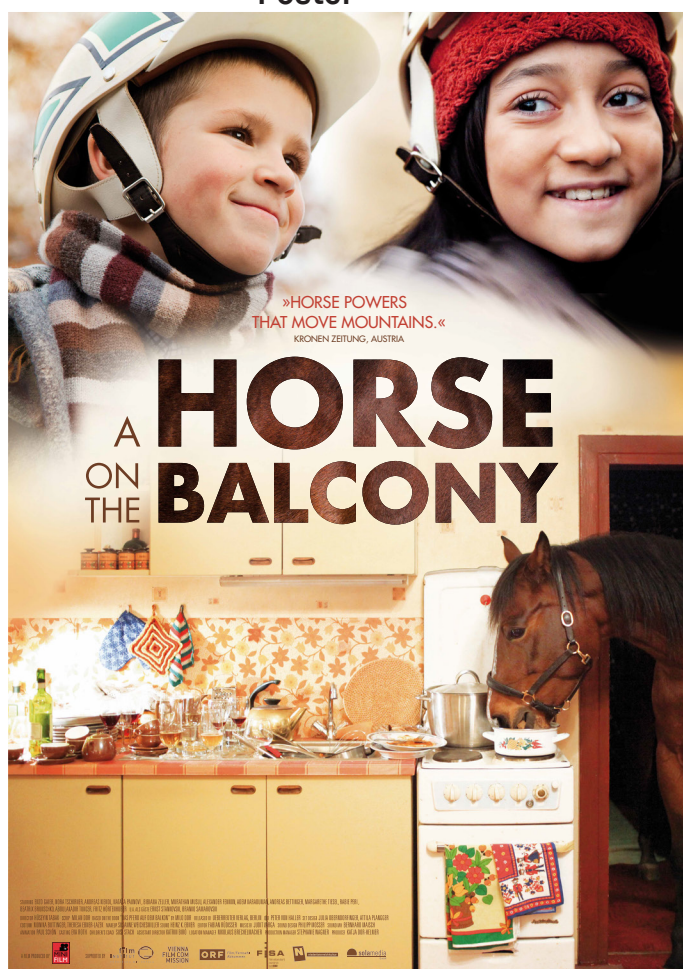
Ask the pupils to work with a shoulder partner and discuss, in relation to the ideas on the board, how much information they can fill in.

*I can select and use a range of strategies and resources before I read, and as I read, to make meaning clear and give reasons for my selection. LIT 2-13a*

DVD cover



Poster





### Activity 3 – Discussion Points

The following are points for the pupils to think about during the film. The pupils may use the sheet provided during their visit to the cinema to record their thoughts and ideas during the showing of the film or you may just want to introduce these points as part of a pre-visit discussion.

- What different ways does the director show the audience that Mika sees the world differently? (repeating greetings, animations over the film, anger at dinner time tardiness etc)
- What parts of the story/narrative show us that Bucephalus has become part of Mika's world? (routine of feeding the horse, the horse placed in the train set, the wearing of the hat, his anger at the loss of the horse, seeing the horse in the star constellations etc)
- What prop does the director use to show us that Dana and Mika are becoming friends? (Helmet wearing)
- How does the director show a link between the beginning, middle and end of the film? Why do you think he does this? (the stars/constellations: these make Mika feel comfortable because he likes the patterns, like in maths)

*As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, main ideas and supporting detail contained within the text, and use this information for different purposes. LIT 2-04a*

*I can select and use a range of strategies and resources before I read, and as I read, to make meaning clear and give reasons for my selection. LIT 2-13a*

## Activity Sheet 2 – Discussion Points Notes

What different ways does the director show the audience that Mika sees the world differently?

What parts of the story/ narrative show us that Bucephalus has become part of Mika's world?

What prop does the director use to show us that Dana and Mika are becoming friends?

How does the director show a link between the beginning, middle and end of the film? Why do you think he does this?





## After the film

### Activity 4 - Making Links

With Learning Partners the pupils should discuss other stories or films that *A Horse on the Balcony* reminded them of. These plot similarities might include:

- A child who is different from others and a bit of an outcast.
- A child being different and starting out with no friends and then finding friends who understand them.
- Children fighting to rescue someone or something they have become friendly with.
- A situation where an animal is being kept somewhere it shouldn't be.
- Children outwitting baddies and adversity
- A child and their single parent who are trying hard to survive their situation.

These ideas could be brought together on a class mind map or individual mind maps in the pairs. Pupils should be encouraged to only put down answers once they have had them backed up by more than one source.

*I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to literal, inferential, evaluative and other types of questions, and by asking different kinds of questions of my own.*

**LIT 2-07a**



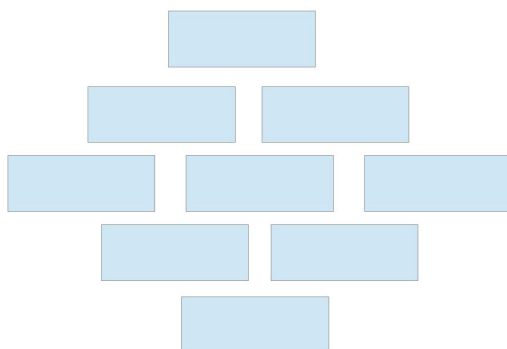
## After the film

### Activity 5 - What was Important?

This activity asks the pupils to consider which parts of the plot made the film work and why.

Ask the pupils, working in pairs/learning partners/co-operative learning group partners, to produce a list of the most important elements of the story or plot. These might include Bucephalus being stolen, Mika thinking the horse is going to be slaughtered, Mika having Asperger's, Sascha's gambling, the visit to the casino etc.

The pupils should put each of their ideas on a small square of paper and move them around to form a diamond nine. This would mean putting them into a diamond shape with the most important plot point at the top and the least at the bottom as below.



The pair, or the four (if you are using a full Co-operative Learning team), must be in agreement before the Diamond 9 can be considered complete. You can explain that this may involve negotiation and compromise.

*I can:*

- *discuss structure, characterisation and/or setting*
- *recognise the relevance of the writer's theme and how this relates to my own and others' experiences*
- *discuss the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre.*

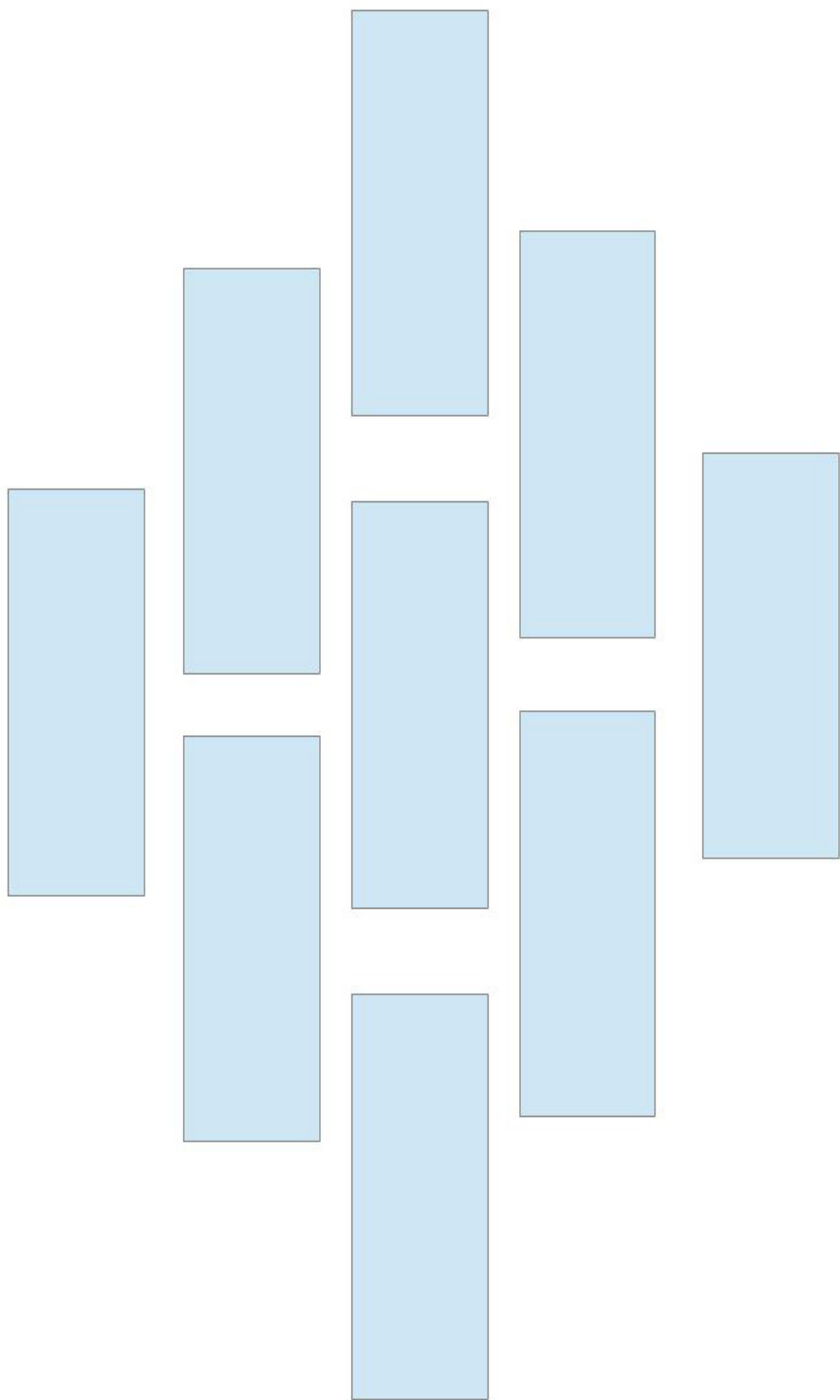
**ENG 2-19a**

*To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own.*

**ENG 2-17a**



Activity Sheet 3 - Diamond 9





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## Activity 6 - Character Relationships

This activity asks the pupils to make decisions about the main relationships between the characters.

Ask the pupils to list all the characters they saw in the film. These may include Mika (boy), Sascha (gambler), Bucephalus (horse), Dana (Mika's friend), Lana (mother), Tony (chief henchman), Heidi (neighbour).

The links between all these characters are important for the plot.

Using a different colour pen or pencil for each new link the pupils should use Activity Sheet 4 to draw in the links between each of the characters. When they have completed this they can draw their favourite character on the back of the sheet and write down as much information as possible about that character as possible, thinking about personality, likes/dislikes etc using information from the film.

Ask the pupils to consider which are positive relationships and which are negative, justifying their answers. Are there any that change throughout the film? How did this impact on the other characters?

*I am aware that positive friendships and relationships can promote health and the health and wellbeing of others. **HWB 2-44b***

*I understand that a wide range of different kinds of friendships and relationships exist. **HWB 2-44a***

*To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own. **ENG 2-17a***

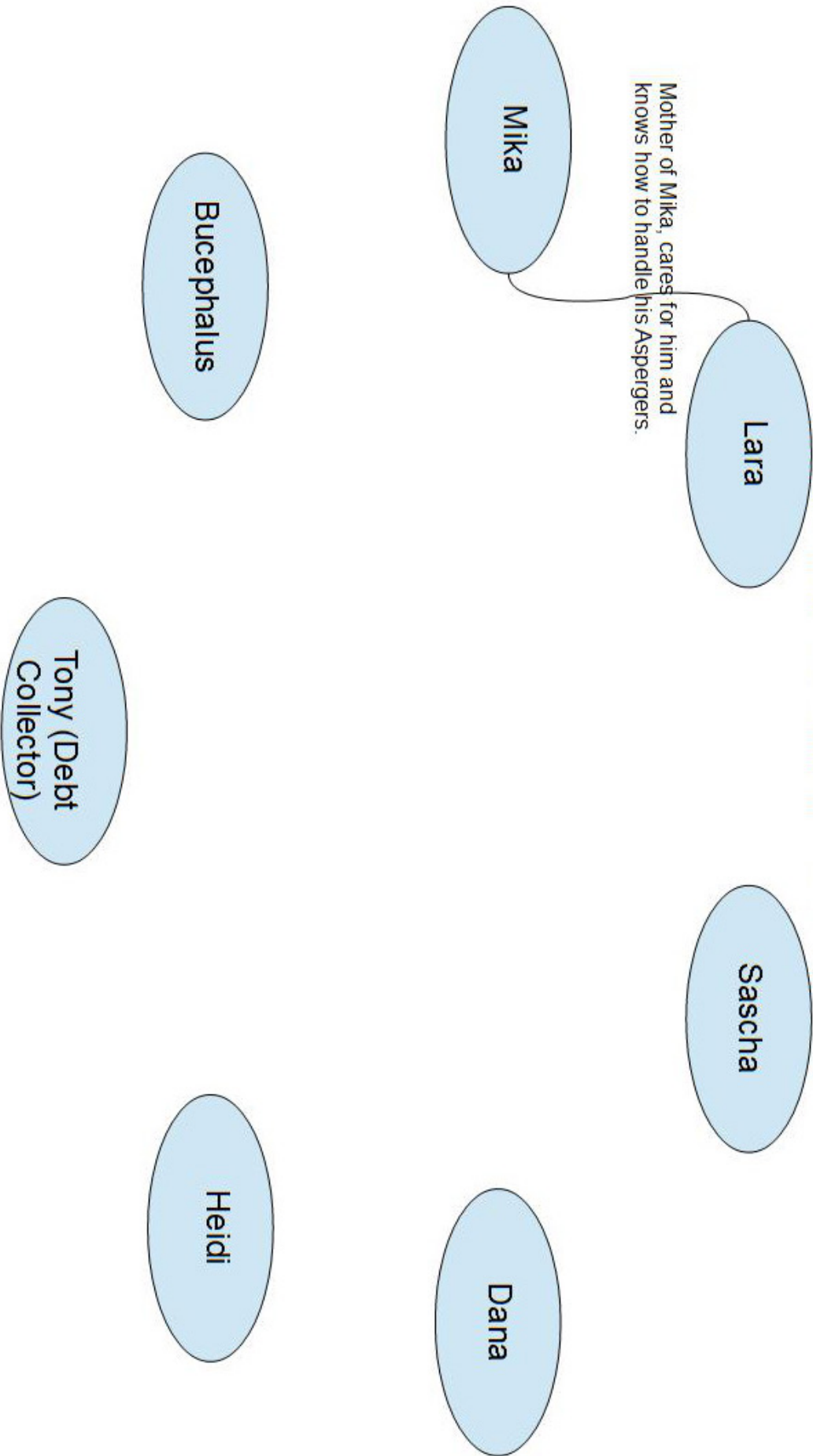


# Activity Sheet 4 - Making Links

To be copied on A3

## Character Mapping

Using different coloured pencils or pens draw lines between characters that are linked in the film. Along each line write their relationship to each other in the story. The first one is done for you.





## Activity 7 - Understanding Mika

Using their knowledge of Mika in the film (and the pre-film research Activity 1), pupils should create a guide for a new friend for Mika. This might take the form of a poster, flyer or booklet. It should include his interests, things to watch out for, family, other friends, where he lives etc. It should also contain some persuasive text that should convince a prospective friend that Mika would be a good choice.

*I am aware that positive friendships and relationships can promote health and the health and wellbeing of others. **HWB 2-44b***

*I understand that a wide range of different kinds of friendships and relationships exist. **HWB 2-44a***

*I am learning to use language and style in a way which engages and/or influences my reader. **ENG 2-27a***

*I can persuade, argue, explore issues or express an opinion using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. **LIT 2-29a***

## Activity 8 – What Happens Next?

Using their knowledge of the narrative of the film and the characters pupils should write a short story about what happened after the film ends. Pupils may use any of the characters that appeared in the film, but may only add one new character to the plot

*By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. **LIT 2-26a***

*Having explored the elements which writers use in different genres, I can use what I learn to create stories, poems and plays with an interesting and appropriate structure, interesting characters and/or settings which come to life. **ENG 2-31a***





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## Useful References / resources

*A Horse on the Balcony* Trailer (YouTube) - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY9jwO\\_jhFU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY9jwO_jhFU)

KidsHealth Autism Page - [http://kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/brain/autism.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/autism.html)

Autism Speaks Website (Facts about Autism) -  
<http://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/facts-about-autism>

NHS Choices “Asperger and Autism” -  
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autistic-spectrum-disorder/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

NHS GOSH Asperger’s Syndrome page - <http://tinyurl.com/lac6kqh>

Kids’ Health Asperger’s Syndrome page - <http://tinyurl.com/yqvxa0>

*A is for Autism* (YouTube) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPR2H4Zd8bl>

*Arthur* TV show clip “When Carl met George” - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9eATBV-\\_lg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9eATBV-_lg)  
OR  
Full Episode - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsmjwHW40ps>

BBC Science “Autism and Asperger” - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/0/21700034>

\*You may also want to consider using Tim Burton’s *Edward Scissorhands* as an investigation into the social attitudes towards disability and being different.\*



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## Evaluating this resource

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate. Please do send us film reviews, letters from your pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback by e-mailing [mike.tait@dca.org.uk](mailto:mike.tait@dca.org.uk)

## Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels.

Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival websites. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included.

If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please e-mail [sarah.derrick@dca.org.uk](mailto:sarah.derrick@dca.org.uk)