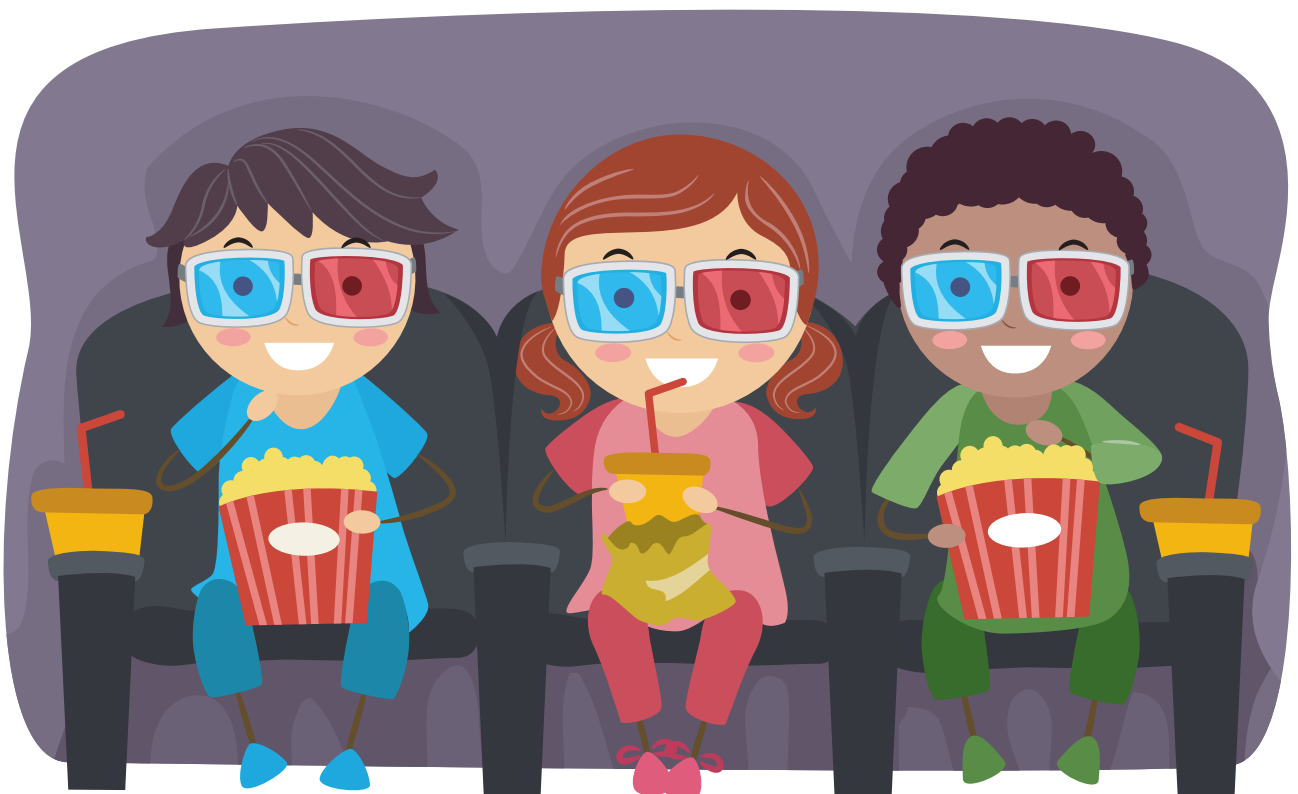




A GOGGLER WORKSHEET

LET'S TALK ABOUT MOVIES

A SERIES OF GUIDED LESSONS FOR
YOU AND YOUR CHILD TO SPEND
QUALITY TIME WATCHING GREAT
MOVIES AND LEARNING TOGETHER.



AN AMERICAN TAIL

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE ANIMATED FILMS OF DON BLUTH

Like us, you probably grew up watching the films of Don Bluth. He was the guy whose cartoons made you think. Where Disney's movies were often happy-clappy affairs, with the biggest emotional beat often being the death of a parent (see: *Bambi*, *The Lion King*, *The Fox and the Hound*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Frozen*, etc.), Don Bluth made movies that weren't afraid to show us the darker side of humanity. He truly was a master storyteller with a real knack for capturing not just our imaginations, but also the reality of the world around us. *The Secret of NIMH* taught us about animal rights. *The Land Before Time* taught us how to come to terms with death. And *All Dogs Go to Heaven* taught us that... well... that all dogs go to heaven.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The movie is about Fievel and the Mousekewitz's, a family of mice who flee the predatory cats of their native Russia. In America, Papa Mousekewitz promises, there are no cats and that "the streets are paved with cheese". Crossing the Atlantic, the family is separated from young Fievel, whom they believe to be killed in a storm. He, in fact, survives in a floating bottle. Accompanied by some new-found friends, the activist mouse Bridget and the streetwise Tony Toponi, Fievel combs New York City searching for his family.

NOTES

Before striking out on his own, Don Bluth was an animator at Disney, working on movies like *Sleeping Beauty*, *Robin Hood*, *The Rescuers*, and *Pete's Dragon*. His first solo movie, *The Secret of NIMH*, was such a critical success, that it gained him a very important fan: Steven Spielberg, who soon approached him about making *An American Tail*.

WHY AN AMERICAN TAIL?

The lessons learned by watching the trials and tribulations of Fievel and his family feel more important and relevant now than ever before. What, on the face of it, is the simple tale of a young mouse separated from his family on the streets of New York City, is actually a harrowing allegory for our world's enduring evils: racism, the vilification of "the other", and the breaking of the Golden Rule - that essential principle of treating others as you would want to be treated. This movie is a great way to kickstart a conversation with your children about these otherwise tricky topics.

SUITABLE FOR

Ages 6 and up.



AN AMERICAN TAIL

DISCUSSION POINTS

Why did the Mousekevitz family want to leave Russia?

Why is life in Russia hard for Fievel and his family?

What did Fievel and his family think that life in America would be like? Were they right to think that way?

What do you think the song "There Are No Cats in America" means?

Which character, other than Fievel, did you admire the most? Why?

Are Fievel's friends different from each other? Are they different from him?

Have you ever felt different? Has anyone ever made fun of you for being different?

How did that make you feel? What did you do about it?

Have you ever been lost?

If you've ever moved as a family: How did it make you feel? Were you lonely? Were you scared of all of the new places and new people?

IF YOUR KIDS LIKED THIS...

We would highly recommend that your kids watch both [The Secret of NIMH](#) and [The Land Before Time](#).

The book on which the movie is based on - [Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH](#), by Robert C. O'Brien - should also be on every child's bookshelf right alongside [Where the Wild Things Are](#) and [Watership Down](#).

There were a few sequels to [An American Tail](#), and while [Fievel Goes West](#) was entertaining, the rest of them are completely forgettable.

IF YOU LIKED THIS...

Then reading [Maus](#), by Art Spiegelman is an absolute must. It tells the story of Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and his son, a cartoonist coming to terms with his father's story.

AN AMERICAN TAIL

A FAMILY TREE IS A CHART THAT HELPS YOU LEARN ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU CAME FROM. IT HELPS YOU REMEMBER WHO THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE ARE IN YOUR FAMILY. IT ALSO ALLOWS YOU TO FIND OUT SOME INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT YOUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS.

BECOME A FAMILY DETECTIVE. ASK YOUR PARENTS ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AND DRAW YOUR FAMILY TREE HERE

AN AMERICAN TAIL

AT THE END OF THE MOVIE, THE MICE UNITE AND BUILD A SECRET WEAPON TO BE USED AGAINST THE CATS. USE THIS SPACE TO DRAW YOUR VERY OWN GIANT ROBOT MOUSE!