



# ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

Years 1 – 3

**FILM – A LANGUAGE WITHOUT BORDERS**

A project of

**VISION KINO**  
Netzwerk für Film und  
Medienkompetenz

**B**  
**F**  
**I** Film  
Forever

**IFILM**  
DET DANSKE FILMINSTITUT

Co-funded by the  
European Union



**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAMME**  
**»FILM – A LANGUAGE WITHOUT BORDERS«**

Film is a language without borders, connecting people regardless of their origin, age, gender and life experience.

Migrant societies which have arisen as a result of political and social processes such as industrialisation, colonisation, mediatisation and globalisation, can use the power of film.

Based on this understanding, German non-profit organisation **VISION KINO**, together with the **BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE** and the **DANISH FILM INSTITUTE**, have developed this programme, consisting of eight European feature films for children and young adults, as well as three classic short films.

The selection of films is supplemented by educational materials which will provide students and teachers with opportunities to discuss emotions, identity and the common exploration of European film.

In addition, research in Denmark, England and Germany will examine the way in which the selected films offer children and young adults a collective movie experience as well as an opportunity for intercultural learning. Joint results from the three countries will form the starting point for the dissemination of the programme in other European countries.

**About us**

“Film – A Language Without Borders” is a project of the British Film Institute, the Danish Film Institute and Vision Kino gGmbH and was developed by Mark Reid (BFI), Charlotte Giese (DFI) and Sarah Duve (Vision Kino gGmbH)



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Materials published by:  
 Vision Kino gGmbH  
 Network for Film and Media Competence  
 Sarah Duve (V.i.S.d.P.)  
 Große Präsidentenstraße 9  
 D-10178 Berlin  
 Tel: +49 (0)30 2757 7571

Concept and Text: Laura Caterina Zimmermann  
 Editorial: Elena Solte  
 Editor: Lilian Rothaus, Elena Solte  
 Design: Laura Caterina Zimmermann  
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**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY GUIDE**

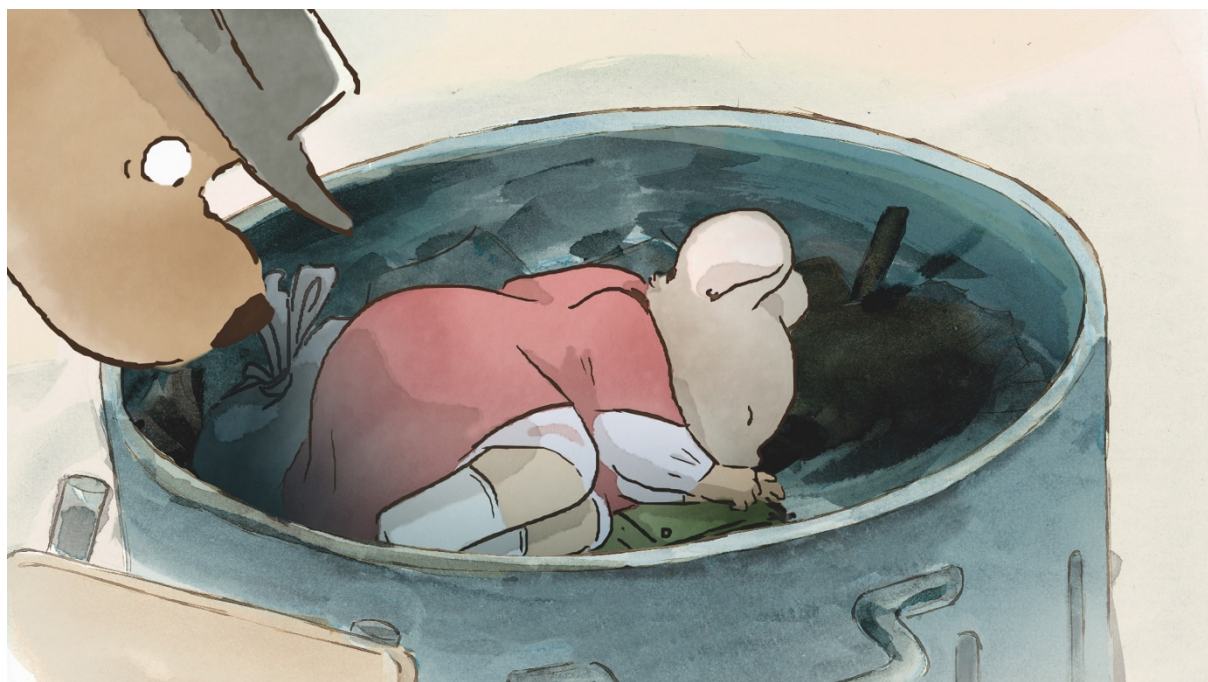
These educational materials refer to the film ERNEST & CÉLESTINE from the programme “FILM - A LANGUAGE WITHOUT BORDERS”. They are based on the publication “Materials for Film Education in Migration Societies” that contain information on the educational approach underlying the programme, as well as general teaching ideas and suggested reflections for teachers.

This particular study guide also provides suggestions for reflection on your lessons. For your personal notes, boxes can be found at the end of each chapter.

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**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**FILM DETAILS**



**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

ORIGINAL TITLE: ERNEST ET CÉLESTINE

DURATION: 77 MINS

DIRECTED BY: STEPHEN DALDRY, BENJAMIN RENNER, VINCENT PATAR, STÉPHANE AUBIER

WRITTEN BY: DANIEL PENNAC BASED ON THE STORYBOOKS BY GABRIELLE VINCENT

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Film Themes          | Friendship, Courage, Goals, Dreams, Prejudice and Stereotypes   |
| Teaching Subjects    | Ethics, Religion, Arts, French, German  |
| Countries / Year     | France, Belgium, Luxemburg / 2012   |
| Grade Levels         | Years 1-3   |
| Age Recommendation   | 6- to 8-year-olds   |
| Voices               | Lambert Wilson (Hartmut Neugebauer), Pauline Brunner (Paulina Rümmelein), Anne-Marie Loop (Eva-Maria Bayerwaltes), a.o. |
| Production Companies | La Parti Production, Les Armateurs, Maybe Movies, Mélusine Productions, StudioCanal                                     |
| Distributor          | ASCOT ELITE ENTERTAINMENT   |
| Language             | French, English subtitles   |
| Format               | digital, colour   |
| Rating               | U - Universal   |

Awards: French Film Prize César 2013 for Best Animation, ECFA Award 2014 for Best European Children's Film

**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**SYNOPSIS**

The most important tool mice have is their teeth, and in the realm of mice, the best thing to do is to become a dentist. From an early age, they are encouraged to collect as many milk teeth from bear cubs as they can, and to deliver them to the large mouse tooth clinic.

But Célestine does not want to become a dentist and collect milk teeth, she is an artist and loves to paint - preferably stories that feature a bear. Every night, the boarding school Headmistress tells the little mice horrible stories about a big bad bear, who likes nothing more than eating helpless mice. But Célestine's curiosity is greater than her fear. She wants to get to know the bear, but he actually does want to eat her when they meet for the first time. Has the boarding school Headmistress been right with her horror stories?

Célestine shows the hungry bear, whose name is Ernest, a cellar full of sweets and is spared. She likes him from the beginning, but first he has to be convinced that bears and mice can be good friends. When Ernest is arrested for eating up the sweets cellar, Célestine helps him escape. As a thank you, he helps her steal a whole sack full of bear cub milk teeth and take them to the mouse tooth clinic where Célestine had her sketchbook taken from her due to her lack of motivation.

Célestine is finally able to devote herself again to drawing and in order to do so moves in with Ernest. He does not like it at first, but when he discovers Célestine's drawings, he realises what they have in common: a love of art. For Ernest did not become a lawyer as his parents had intended for him, he is a cabaret artist and tells stories with music. Meanwhile, a search for Ernest and Célestine is underway in the realms of the mice and the bears. Célestine devises a plan for them to escape their dilemma and stay together forever.

**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**BEFORE THE FILM**

**MYTHICAL CREATURES TOOTH FAIRY AND TOOTH MOUSE**

The starting point of the story is the myth about the Tooth Fairy. The custom of leaving lost milk teeth for the Tooth Fairy, who collects them in exchange for a small present or a coin, is picked up in this story. Célestine, the protagonist, is one of those tooth fairies who, in France, as well as in other countries, is embodied by a mouse. The Tooth Fairy will be familiar to many children, perhaps some of them have also exchanged their milk teeth for small gifts.

**IDEAS FOR TEACHING**

**The Myth of the Tooth Fairy**

In the UK it is the Tooth Fairy, but in other countries there are different myths about losing one's milk teeth. In France, for example, it is the tooth mouse who collects lost milk teeth that children have previously placed on the bedside table or under their pillows. Some children may not associate any myth with it but rather have their own family rituals in dealing with the loss of milk teeth. An open question can help find out which children are familiar with the myth of the Tooth Fairy.

- What do you do when you lose a wobbly tooth?
- How do you feel when you lose a wobbly tooth?

**Bears and Mice**

Together, words are collected that can be associated with mice and bears.

*Bears:*

- What do bears look like?
- What do you know about bears: Where do they live? What do they eat?
- Do you know any books or films that are about a bear? What is the featured bear like?

*Mice:*

- What do mice look like?
- What do you know about mice: Where do they live? What do they eat?
- Do you know any books or films that are about a mouse? What is the featured mouse like?
- 

*Bears and Mice:*

- How do you imagine a friendship between a mouse and a bear? What could they experience together?

**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**SUGGESTED REFLECTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

- Did the children know the myth of the Tooth Fairy? What other myths did the children know with regards to wobbly teeth?
- How did the children imagine a friendship between a mouse and a bear? What images, prejudices and stereotypes about bears and mice have they internalised from other books and films?





**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**AFTER THE FILM**

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND CREATIVE APPROACHES**

ERNEST & CÉLESTINE is about a friendship that must be fought for by the two protagonists. The bear and the mouse oppose the prejudices of society and show that true friendship knows no boundaries. The two understand each other so well because they share a passion for art, which is not accepted by their respective environments.

Maybe the children have had similar experiences and sometimes face expectations that they cannot or do not want to meet. The film can give courage to those who sometimes feel lonely and misunderstood.

**IDEAS FOR TEACHING**

The following teaching suggestions can either be combined with each other or implemented individually.

**Non-verbal discussion**

The children draw an emoticon to say how they liked the movie. Then they draw the film's most important scene for them. An exhibition of the pictures can then be used as a starting point for a subsequent verbal discussion.

One by one, the following adjectives are read to the children: boring, beautiful, fast, slow, loud, quiet, funny, adventurous, scary, surprising. Where the adjective matches their movie experience, they stand up. Afterwards, they sit down again.

**Film discussion**

- What would you like to say about the film?
- At the cinema, how did you feel after the film?
- Are there any scenes or themes in the movie that you would like to talk about?
- What questions remained unanswered in the film? Is there something you did not understand?

**Comprehending the Storyline with Film Scenes**

So that the children can comprehend the storyline at their own pace, they edit the *Worksheet Storyline* in small groups of about four. Scenes from the film are cut out and pasted in the right order on a large sheet of paper.



## ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

### Collage Dreams for the Future and Career Aspirations

Ernest's parents wanted him to become a lawyer. Célestine, like all mice, is supposed to become a dentist. But the two have their own plans and dreams. From brochures, magazines and newspapers, children make a collage on the subject of "My Future".

### Drawing and Making Music of Winter and Spring

In a scene towards the end of the film, Ernest and Célestine make art and associate winter and spring with music and drawings.

Using different musical instruments, colours and paper, and depending on their personal preference, the children will experiment first with the theme of "winter" and then with the theme of "spring".

#### Winter/Spring

- What does winter/spring sound like?
- Which instruments are suitable for winter/spring?
- Which sounds are suitable for winter/spring?
- Which colours are suitable for winter/spring?
- Which shapes or objects are suitable for winter/spring?

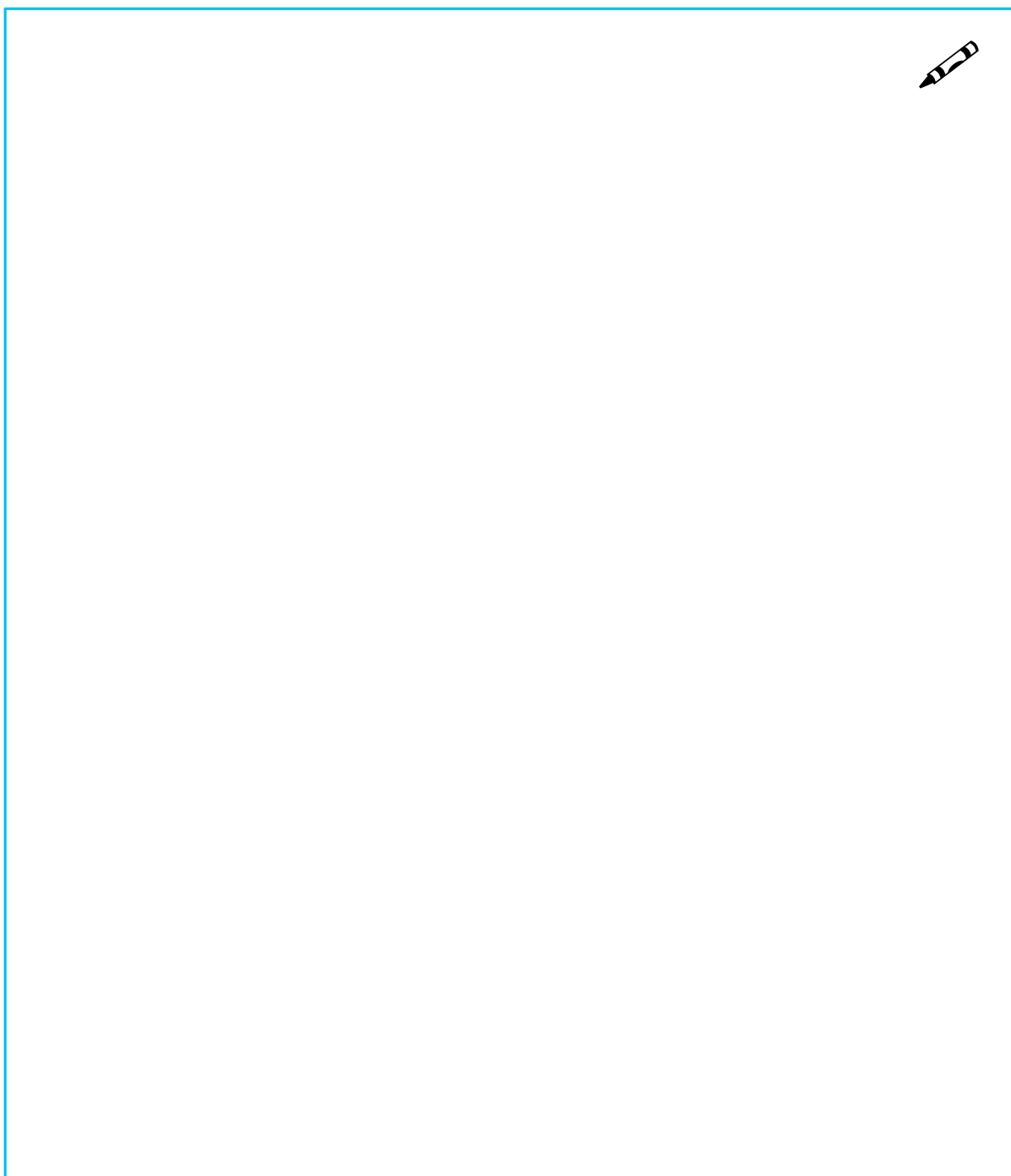
As part of the research project for Film: a language without borders, we would appreciate it if you would send us the **anonymised results of the film discussion or individual work results of the assignments "Painting and Making Music to Winter and Spring" or "Collage of Dreams for the Future and Career Aspirations"**:

Vision Kino gGmbH  
 Network for Film and Media Competence  
 Große Präsidentenstraße 9  
 D-10178 Berlin  
 or via email to [elena.solte@visionkino.de](mailto:elena.solte@visionkino.de)

## ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

### SUGGESTED REFLECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

- What analogies to current social issues did I see in the film?
- Which scenes in the film were particularly emotional for the students?
- How did I like the movie? In which scenes or themes lie the strengths of the film?
- What would I like to convey to the children through the film?
- Was it difficult for the children to understand the storyline?
- Was it easier for children with prior knowledge of the myth of the Tooth Fairy to understand the storyline?



## ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

### ANIMATION TECHNIQUES

The film is based on the children's book series by Gabrielle Vincent. The drawing style Gabrielle Vincent used in her books was transferred to the film and animated.

#### IDEAS FOR TEACHING

##### **Paint a Picture with Watercolours**

The drawing style of the children's book author and illustrator Gabrielle Vincent is reminiscent of paintings done using watercolours. Another book from her children's book series about Ernest and Célestine is called "Ernest and Célestine are having a picnic."

The children paint a picture with this title using watercolours. What could Ernest and Célestine experience when they picnic together?

##### **Discussion on Animation**

Many children already know pretty well how pictures are animated for a movie. In a discussion, the children with prior knowledge of the subject can explain to the others how images can be turned into a film.

- How do you think the movie ERNEST & CÉLESTINE was made?
- What do you need to make an animation?
- How can images be animated?

##### **Make a Flicker Book**

To try out how images are made to move, the children can make a flicker book from the printed template (p.19), in which Ernest and Célestine run into each other's arms. It is best to print the template twice, cut it out and glue one behind the other. This makes the movement even more visible. Each frame is cut out including the left-hand white section, which uses a number to indicate the order in which the cut-out frames are superimposed. The white sections with the numbers are glued to each other in the given order so that a small stack of images is created. At the end, the flicker book can be secured with a piece of tape on the left side so it sticks together well.

**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**

**SUGGESTED REFLECTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

- Which of the children already knew something about animation techniques? Where did this knowledge come from?
- What ideas did the children have for the title "Ernest and Célestine are having a picnic"?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for teachers to write their reflections on the film.

## ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

### TOPIC: FRIENDSHIP

Célestine dreams of having a bear for a friend. When she meets Ernest, this dream seems to come true. The central theme in the film is the friendship between Ernest and Célestine, which must prevail against prejudice.

### IDEAS FOR TEACHING

#### Discussion on Friendship and Prejudice

At the beginning of the film, Célestine draws a picture while the other mice at the boarding school watch her. Based on the scene, discuss the following questions:

- What can you see in the picture?
- Who draws this picture?
- Why does Célestine draw this picture?
- What do the other mouse children say about Célestine's picture?
- Why would Célestine like to be friends with a bear?

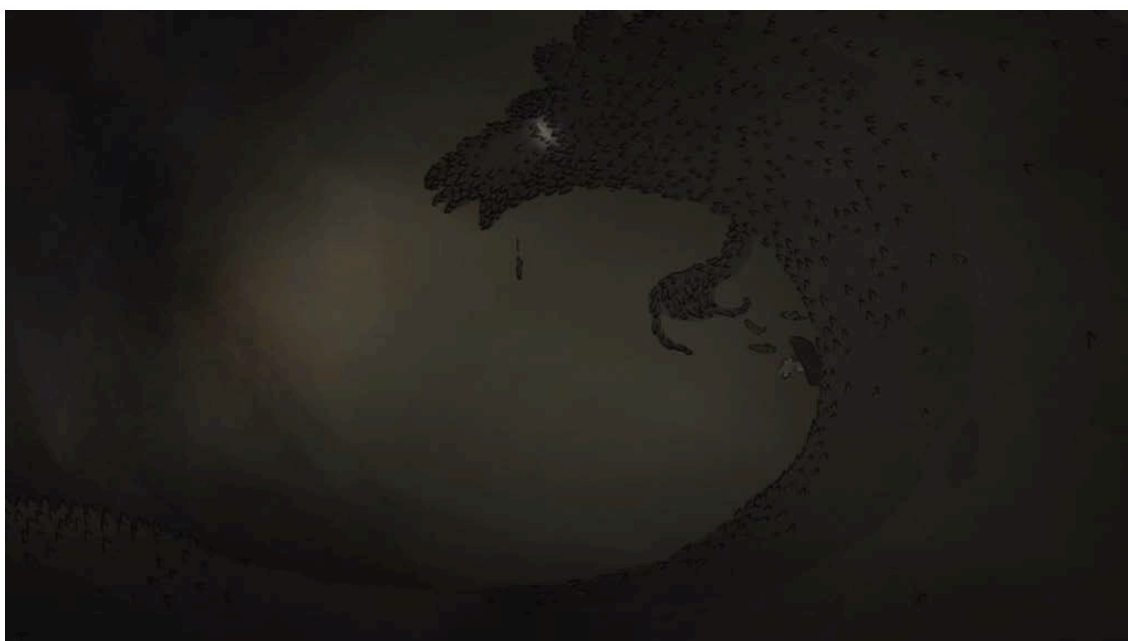


## ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

After Célestine wins her struggle to stay in the cellar with Ernest, both are successively caught up in bad nightmares.

Based on the two images, discuss the following questions:

- What does Ernest dream of in his nightmare?
- What does Célestine dream of in her nightmare?
- Why can bears and mice not be friends? What do mice say about bears? What do bears say about mice?
- How do Ernest and Célestine convince the others that bears and mice can be friends?



## ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

### Shadow Play: The Big Bad Bear

Together, the children look at the scene of the boarding school Headmistress talking about the big bad bear.

- Who do you see in the picture?
- What is the boarding school Headmistress talking about?
- What does the shadow on the wall look like?



In their own shadow play the children can try out which figures they can represent with their hands and bodies. For this they need a white wall and a very bright lamp. When the children stand between the light and the cloth, their shadows are visible on the screen. The children can make figures while the other children guess what they represent.

### Topic: Friendship

The friendship between Ernest and Célestine can inspire us to think about friendship in one's own life.

- What is important in a friendship?
- What do you like about your friends?
- Has anyone ever told you that you should not be friends with a particular person? What did you do about it? What can be great about being different?



## ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

### Expressing Feelings

Ernest likes to express his feelings in music, Célestine in her drawings. The children can write some short lyrics about the friendship between Ernest and Célestine, compose a small melody using musical instruments or paint a picture of it

In small groups of 3 - 4, the children take 3 - 4 photos together that are related to friendship. They find captions for the pictures and then show them the others.

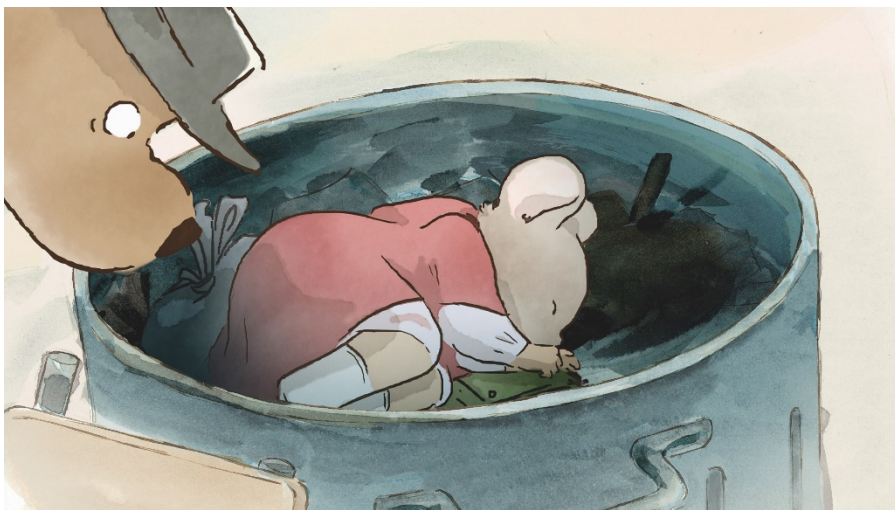
### SUGGESTED REFLECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

- How did the students who were placed in small groups work together?
- What is important to the children in friendships? Do opinions tend to differ or do the children have the same requirements?
- How do children like to express their feelings and thoughts? For which children is art a good way to express themselves?
- Which children find it difficult to express themselves with music and drawings?



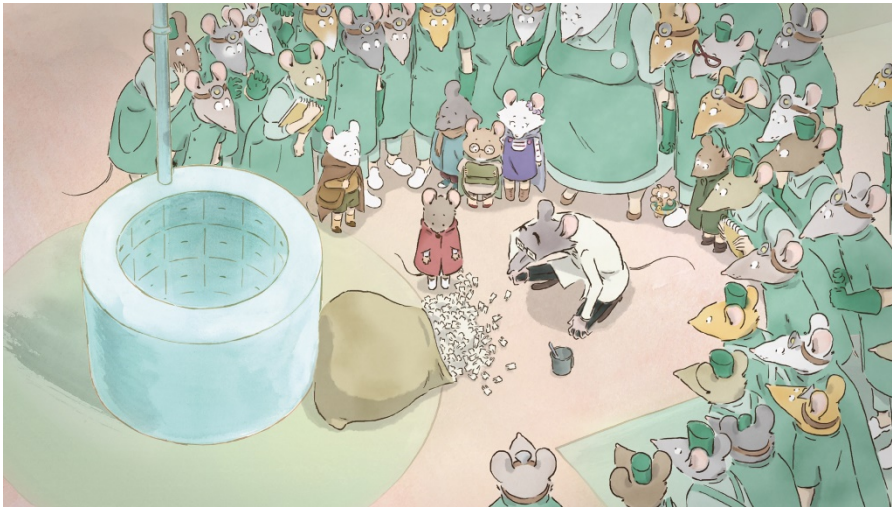
ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

WORKSHEET STORYLINE





ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

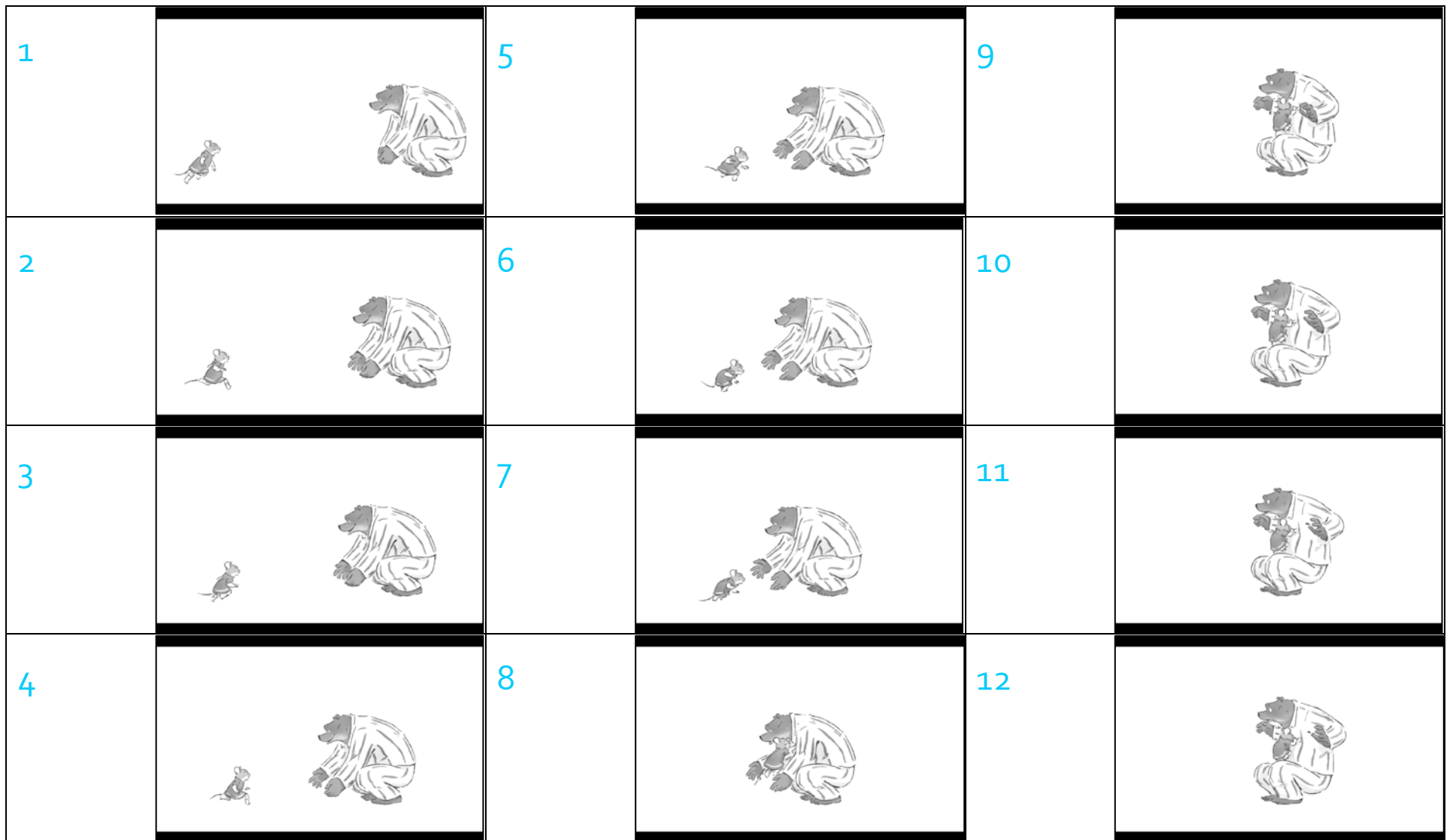


ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

















ERNEST & CÉLESTINE



ERNEST & CÉLESTINE

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| 16 |  | 20 |  | 24 |  |

**ERNEST & CÉLESTINE**