



Bottle

In this short stop-motion film, two unlikely pen pals—one a pile of sand, the other a mound of snow—communicate by sending each other things in a bottle across the ocean. Through these exchanges, both learn about the other's landscape and come to life.



Recommended for ages 3 +

Themes: friendship; environment

Director(s): Kirsten Lepore | **5 min** | **Stop Motion Animation** | **YEAR** | **Country:** United States | **Language:** No dialog

Official film website: www.kirstenlepore.com/Bottle

SET THE STAGE | THOUGHT-STARTERS

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Stop Motion:** A filmmaking technique in which objects are photographed in a series of slightly different positions and sequenced together so that the objects appear to move.
- **Pen Pal:** A person who usually lives far away, with whom you exchange letters even if you have never met in person.
- **Habitat:** The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.

For more film terms, refer to the PCFF Film Glossary (pcfri.org/FilmHub).

TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION

- Describe the story. How do the characters change from the beginning to the end? What leads to these changes?
- How would you describe the relationship between the characters? What do they learn about one another as the film goes on? How do their different habitats affect their relationship?
- Think about a time you met someone new. How did you start to learn things about them? Did you learn anything about them through objects, such as a special toy or piece of clothing they had? Did anything about you change because you'd met them?
- If you had to choose three objects to tell someone about you, what would they be and why would you pick them to represent you?
- The filmmaker used stop motion animation, which means she made this film by taking pictures of objects in a series of slightly different positions and stringing them together so the objects seem to move. Why do you think she chose stop motion for this project? What are the benefits of this type of film? What do you think the challenges are?

Clues and Cues



Pay attention while watching

- Think about how the filmmakers made the sand and snow characters seem real.



GET CREATIVE | EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



For Activity Reel details, downloadable storyboard template and more, visit the the Film Hub website: www.pcffri.org/FilmHub

• Writing Prompt

Write a letter to a real or imaginary pen pal—someone who lives far away and who you've never met. Like the snow creature and sand creature, think about how you can tell your pen pal about your surroundings and life by including drawings of important objects or objects themselves in your letter or package. Choose three items you would want to include in your pen pal package. (They can be as simple as a pressed flower from your garden or the label from your favorite snack.) Describe the significance of these objects in your life.

• Create A Creature

The sand creature came from a beach habitat, but after sending messages in the bottle with the snow creature, it began to incorporate elements from the snow creature's habitat into its appearance—and vice versa. What kind of creature do you think would evolve from your habitat? Find elements from your habitat—natural or manmade—and construct a creature out of it. What personality do you think your creature has? How did your habitat determine your creature's personality?

• Fun with Stop Motion

Materials: Camera, access to a computer to print or display picture slideshow, creature-making materials (based on what you have handy!)

For this stop motion activity, develop an idea for a simple story and create characters out of any material, such as clay, paper, or LEGOs. Move the characters just slightly several times to tell the story. Each time you move your character, take a picture. To create the effect of movement, you can upload the pictures to a computer and create a slideshow. Alternatively, use an app to digitally string together the changing positions of characters or print the photos and create a flipbook.

See this website for an example of a project completed with the LEGO app: www.mykidsadventures.com/stop-motion-video

MAKE CONNECTIONS | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources complement the film and inspire further discussion or programming.

BOOKS

• Fish is Fish

by Leo Lionni

A story about creatures trying to imagine life in a different habitat.

• A Letter to Amy

by Ezra Jack Keats

A beautifully illustrated picture book about friendship and the mail.

FILMS

• Aardman Animation Retrospective (2010)

A collection of short films from the claymation geniuses at Aardman Animations.

• Balloon Moon (2010)

A stop motion and hand-drawn short film about Niki, a shy one-eyed fiddler, a moon-spirit and her band.

• Hose (2008)

A short film about a garden hose in search of adventure discovers that the grass isn't greener on the other side of the fence.

• Fantastic Mr. Fox (2009)

A Wes Anderson stop-motion adaptation of Roald Dahl's tale with intricately developed sets.

• James and the Giant Peach (1996)

A stop motion adaptation of the famous Roald Dahl book.

• Indicates PCFF festival selection

BEYOND THE FILM | RELATED INTERNET LINKS

• Pen Pals

Look into starting a pen pal relationship with someone. Several websites will match you with a pen pal from elsewhere in the world. Try: interpals.net, penpalworld.com, or penpalsnow.com. Or ask friends for connections to possible pen pals. What do you want your pen pal to know about your life? What do you want to know about theirs? What do you think will be interesting or beneficial about the relationship?