Hände weg von Mississippi - Hands off Mississippi

Germany 2006/7, Director: Detlev Buck, 98 minutes,
German with English subtitles

WHAT IS THE FILM ABOUT?
The film is set in and around Schalsee, a nature reserve which lies on the border between Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein in northern Germany. At the start of the summer holidays, ten year-old Emma visits her grandmother, Dolly, in the countryside. Soon after she arrives, she learns that the mare, Mississippi, is to be sold to the butcher. Dolly scrapes her last savings together and Emma suddenly has a horse. When the former owner tries to get the horse back, using a variety of underhand tricks, Emma and her friends need to come up with some clever ideas to outsmart him.

CHARACTERS

Emma: a ten-year-old girl, kind, caring and resourceful and determined
Dolly: her grandmother, rather eccentric, loving and clever
Leo: Emma’s friend, loyal and adventurous
Albert Gansmann – ‘The Alligator’: the villain of the piece, motivated entirely by greed
Hinnerk: a car mechanic and Gansmann’s not-very-bright henchman

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Source
Based on Cornelia Funke’s popular novel, with its cast of eccentric and memorable characters, the film is a charming and entertaining portrayal of life in this unique rural environment.

Award
It was awarded the “Bayerischer Filmpreis” and “Deutscher Filmpreis” in 2007.

Schalsee – a biosphere reserve in Germany
The film is set in and around Schalsee. The region of Schalsee is part of the counties Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in northern Germany. Due to its location at the old German border this countryside is very well preserved. In 2000 it became an UNESCO Biosphärenreservat. People focus on the coexistence of human and nature and always refer to the question: How can we harness the nature without damaging it?
THEMES RELATED TO THE FILM

Adventure & Happiness
Responsibility & Friendship
The conflict between and co-operation with generations
The triumph, in the broadest sense, of ‘good’ over ‘evil’
Environment & Nature protection

LINKS RELATED TO THE FILM:

The official website of the film:
http://www.mississippi-derfilm.de/

Information about the film:
http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A4nde_weg_von_Mississippi

Goethe-Institut Filmkatalog:
http://www.goethe.de/kue/film/syn/deindex.htm

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Find out about Schaalsee, the biosphere reserve in northern Germany:
- Where is it?
- What is it?
- Are there as well biosphere reserves in your country, even in your area?
- Why is it important that such areas should be protected and maintained?
- Which nature or animal protection organizations do you know?
- Have they done anything in your area?

Useful web pages in German:
http://www.schaalsee.de/
http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schaalsee

Useful web pages in English:

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Gansmann’s objective is to build a discount store on the old Klipperbusch farm, thereby threatening the existence of the village shops. Pupils could be encouraged to consider:
- Why is it not a good thing?
- Which impact would it have on the variety of shops in their own area?
- Why- even in the city- is it important to have a variety of small shops rather than one large shopping centre?
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE FILM

ACTIVITY 1: ANIMALS IN THE FILM/TIERE IM FILM
There are lots of animals in the film.

Task 1A: Find out what the animals below are called in German.
Match the English word for each animal with the German word as shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>caterpillar</td>
<td>die Ente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horse</td>
<td>die Ziege</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog</td>
<td>der Schmetterling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duck</td>
<td>die Raupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>butterfly</td>
<td>das Schwein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>donkey</td>
<td>der Hund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goat</td>
<td>der Esel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pig</td>
<td>das Pferd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task 2B: Here are some pictures of these animals from the film.
Write the German name of each animal underneath the picture.

_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE FILM

**Task 1C, Extended writing: My Favourite Animal/Mein Lieblingstier**
What’s your favourite animal? It can be a pet or wild animal.

My Favourite Animal/Mein Lieblingstier: __________________________
Draw a picture of it in the box below or copy and paste a picture from the net.

Write a paragraph explaining:

- What the animal is
- What it looks like
- How it behaves
- What you like about this particular animal

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE FILM

ACTIVITY 2: SEE WHAT YOU SEE/SAG, WAS DU SIEHST

Can you match these German words with things you see in the picture? One has been done for you.
ACTIVITY 1: WHO AM I?/WER BIN ICH?
Here are the names of some characters from the film:
MISSISSIPPI  DOLLY  ALBERT GANSMANN  ELSBETH  OTTO  EMMA  LEO
Write the name of each character underneath the correct picture.
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

ACTIVITY 2: PERSONS-CLOZE
Find the missing words in the horse below.

Hallo, mein Name ist Emma. Ich bin ________ Jahre alt. Ich komme aus Deutschland. In den Sommerferien bin ich bei meiner Oma Dolly. Ich habe ein ________.
Es heißt Mississippi.

Guten Tag, ich bin Dolly. Ich bin die ________ von Emma. Ich habe sehr viele ________.

Guten ________, ich heiße Albert Gansmann. Die Kinder nennen mich „Der Alligator“. Ich möchte einen ____________ bauen.

Hallo, ich bin Leo. Ich bin der beste ________ von Emma. Mein ________ heißt Max.
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

ACTIVITY 3: PLOT SUMMARY

**TASK 3A (English):** In the summary below, some words are missing. Working on your own or with a partner, try to work out which words would best fit in. *If you’re stuck, have a look at the Word Bank below.*

Emma visits her _______________ Dolly, in the countryside to spend the ________ ________ with her. Soon after she arrives, she ________ that the _______, Mississippi, is to be sold to the ___________. Dolly has just enough ________ to buy the horse for Emma. Then Gansmann discovers that he can only inherit his uncle's ________ if he also _____ _______ the horse. He ________ to get the horse back, using underhand _________. Emma and her _______ need to come up with some clever ideas to outsmart him. In the end, they are _____________: __________ loses the farm and it is turned into an animal ___________.

**Word Bank (English)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>money</th>
<th>friends</th>
<th>summer holidays</th>
<th>methods</th>
<th>butcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grandmother</td>
<td>successful</td>
<td>Gansmann</td>
<td>animal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mare</td>
<td>tries</td>
<td>farm</td>
<td>learns</td>
<td>looks after</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TASK 3B (German):** Here is a simplified version in German. Working on your own or with a partner, try to work out which words would best fit in. *The missing words are in the box below.*

Emma hat _______________. Sie besucht ihre Großmutter Dolly. Das Pferd Mississippi soll zum ____________, aber Emma möchte Mississippi haben. Dolly ________ das Pferd. Gansmann will das ____________ wieder haben. Aber Emma hat eine gute _________.

Am Ende verliert Gansmann den ____________. Der Bauernhof wird ein _______________.

**Word Bank (German)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pferd</th>
<th>Tierheim</th>
<th>Schlachter</th>
<th>Großmutter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kauft</td>
<td>Bauernhof</td>
<td>Idee</td>
<td>Sommerferien</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

ACTIVITY 4: ADJECTIVES
Here are some German adjectives which can be used to describe two of the main characters.

**Task 4A**: Look up in a dictionary and find out what they mean in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>böse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brav</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feige</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freundlich</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gemein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfreundlich</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lustig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dumm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>klug</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task 4B**: Now write the German adjectives under the character you think they best describe.

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________________________________________________________________________
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

**Task 4C.** Think about how these characters behave in the film.

Choose two adjectives from Task 4B for each character and write them **in German** into the first part of the sentences below.

Using evidence from the film, finish the second part of the sentences below **in English**.

1. I think “Emma ist ________________________________”
   because _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________________

2. I think “Emma ist ________________________________”
   because _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________________

3. I think “Gansmann ist ________________________________”
   because _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________________

4. I think “Gansmann ist ________________________________”
   because _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________________
ACTIVITY 5: DISCUSSION: FRIENDSHIP/FREUNDSCHAFT
Friendship is one of the main themes in the film. Leo is one of Emma’s best friends.

Task 5A: Make a list of some things Leo does or says which make him a good friend to Emma.

- ___________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________

Task 5B: A good friend is someone who… - Discuss in groups the list below.
Try to agree on the ones which you think are *most* important. Underline them and then go to Task C. If you can think of any other things, add them at the end.

*A good friend is someone who…*

- supports you
- tells you things about themselves
- lends you money
- listens to you
- thinks the same as you about everything
- does what you tell them
- tries to help you
- stands up for you
- never argues with you
- tells you exactly what they think of you
- makes you feel good about yourself
- ...
- ...
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

**Task 5C: Extended writing: My Best Friend**

Think about the answers you gave in Task B. Using these answers (and the discussion you had), write a paragraph about one of your own friends.

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HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

ACTIVITIES 6: SCENE ORDER

1) Cut out the pictures and scene descriptions.
2) Put them in the correct order.
3) Glue them into the table.

Teacher advice:
Depending on your pupils' level of German there is a choice of English or German descriptions.
**HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM**

**Picture Descriptions in English**

Arrange pictures in the right order

- opening ceremony of the animal shelter

The kids disguise another horse as Mississippi.

- Emma arrives.

Dolly buys Mississippi.

- Gansmann und Hinnerk try to catch Mississippi.

Emma runs into Gansmann.

- Emma goes to Dolly.
**HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM**

*Picture Descriptions in German*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrange pictures in the right order</th>
<th>Tierheim- Eröffnung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Die Kinder bemalen das Pferd.</td>
<td>Emma kommt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolly kauft Mississippi.</td>
<td>Gansmann und Hinnerk versuchen Mississippi zu fangen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma trifft Gansmann.</td>
<td>Emma fährt zu Dolly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Scene Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

ACTIVITY 7: WORD SEARCH
Find and highlight these words in the box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOLLY</th>
<th>HUND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMMA</td>
<td>KLUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESEL</td>
<td>LEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEIGE</td>
<td>MISSISSIPPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GANSMANN</td>
<td>PFERD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P Q S E M M A W R X K R
F N L V E B M X Q R T Z
D N U H R T G H Y O X H
B A D R H G S W Z V K C
Z M I S S I S S I P P I
P S E D C G R T Y U F L
U N K R T F F E I G E D
X A V B N D W S G L R N
Y G S A W D O E H K D U
K I U Z A Q R L G H T E
F G J L K X O E L Z Y R
W E D R K B M K U Y P F
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

ACTIVITY 8: DISCOUNT STORE – TANTE-EMMA-LADEN

A “Tante-Emma-Laden” is a small corner shop. Due to the increased building of discount shops in Germany, even in the countryside, the “Tante-Emma-Läden” have to close more and more.

**Task 8A:** Make a list of those shops where you and your family buy food and drinks.

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**Task 8B:** Compare your list with your partner’s list and discuss the differences.

**Task 8C:** Extended writing: Write a paragraph considering this question:

**What do you prefer: Shopping at a discount store or at a “Tante-Emma-Laden”?**
HÄNDE WEG VON MISSISSIPPI: ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM

Task 8D: Extended writing: Write a paragraph considering this question:
A discount store in a biosphere reserve?

Now refer to the movie. Gansmann planned to build a discount store on the old Klipperbusch farm. What would have happened with the in Germany so-called “Tante-Emma-Läden” and to the people in the village? What would be the impact on the countryside and on the biosphere reserve?

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Task 8E: Slogan for a demonstration
Imagine you go to a demonstration against a discount store in Schaalsee.
Create a slogan in German and write it into the box below. The word bank below could help you.

| No nature protection | Kein der Naturschutz |
| countryside          | die Landschaft      |
| Stop                  | Stopp               |
| animal protection     | der Tierschutz      |
| damage                | die Zerstörung      |