

From Page to Predator: Analyzing 'The Lost World' Book vs. Movie

Materials Needed:

- Copy of Michael Crichton's novel "The Lost World"
- Access to the movie "The Lost World: Jurassic Park" (1997)
- Computer or notebook for notes
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: Venn Diagram or Comparison Chart template

Lesson Activities:

Introduction (15 minutes):

Discuss the concept of adaptation. What does it mean to adapt a book into a movie? Why do filmmakers often make changes? Briefly review the student's prior knowledge or interest in the Jurassic Park franchise, specifically "The Lost World." Discuss initial expectations for both the book and the movie.

Activity 1: Reading the Source (Time Varies - Assign over several days/weeks):

Read Michael Crichton's novel, "The Lost World." Encourage active reading: take notes on major plot points, character introductions and development, key themes, and particularly suspenseful or impactful scenes. Note any passages that seem very visual or might be challenging to film.

Activity 2: Viewing the Adaptation (Approx. 2.5 hours):

Watch the film "The Lost World: Jurassic Park." While watching, take notes focusing on:

- How characters are introduced and portrayed differently.
- Major plot points included, excluded, or changed.
- New scenes or characters added in the film.
- How themes are presented visually or through dialogue compared to the book's narration/prose.
- The overall tone and pacing compared to the novel.

Activity 3: Comparative Analysis (1 - 1.5 hours):

Using notes from both reading and viewing (and potentially a Venn Diagram or comparison chart), systematically compare the two versions. Focus on:

- **Plot:** List 5-7 major differences in the sequence of events or outcomes. Which version had a more compelling plot? Why?
- **Characters:** Compare Ian Malcolm, Sarah Harding, and any other characters present in both (or note significant omissions/additions like Kelly or Nick Van Owen). Whose portrayal felt more developed or believable? Were changes effective?
- **Themes:** How did each version handle themes like chaos theory, human interference in nature, and corporate espionage? Did the movie simplify or shift the focus?
- **Tone/Atmosphere:** Did the book feel more like a science thriller, while the movie leaned more

towards action/adventure? Discuss specific scenes that highlight this.

- **Key Scenes:** Compare specific iconic scenes present in both (if any, like the T-Rex encounters or raptor sequences) or major scenes unique to one version (e.g., the San Diego sequence in the film, Dodgson's role in the book). Which version handled its key moments better?

Discussion & Conclusion (30 minutes):

Discuss the findings from the comparative analysis.

- Why do you think Spielberg and the screenwriters made the changes they did? (Consider audience expectations, budget, visual medium constraints, pacing for film.)
- Which version did you find more engaging overall and why?
- Did the movie successfully capture the 'spirit' of the book, even with the changes?
- Did reading the book change your perspective on the movie, or vice-versa?
- What makes a 'good' adaptation? Is it faithfulness to the source, or success as a standalone work?

Assessment/Wrap-up:

The student's active participation in the discussion and the thoroughness of their comparison notes/chart serve as the primary assessment. Optionally, the student could write a short analytical essay (1-2 pages) arguing which version (book or movie) offered a more compelling experience or exploring a specific thematic difference in depth, using evidence from both texts.

Differentiation/Extension:

- Research Michael Crichton's views on film adaptations of his work.
- Explore reviews of the movie from 1997 – did critics notice the divergence from the book?
- Compare the book/movie themes to real-world discussions about genetic engineering or conservation.
- Analyze the soundtrack of the movie and how it contributes to the tone compared to descriptive passages in the book.