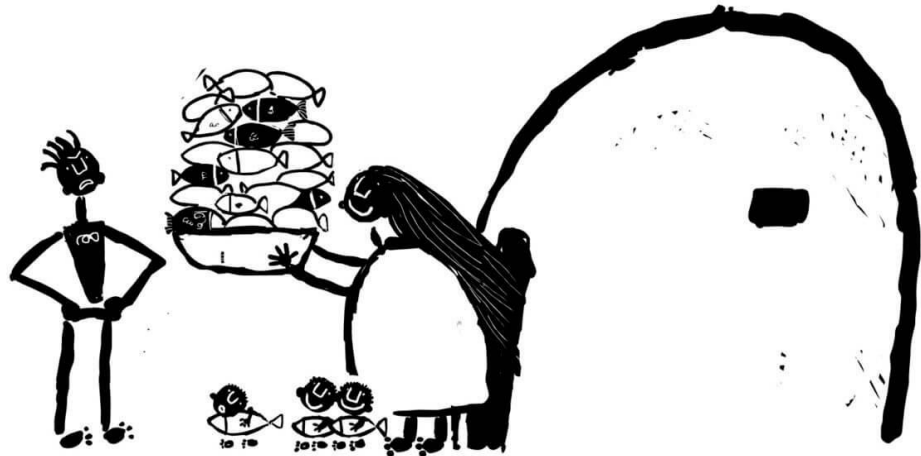


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# EDUCATIONAL KIT



“About a Mother ”  
by Dina Velikovskaya

# CONTENT

p. 4

## GENERAL INFORMATION

p. 5

Synopsis | Trailer

p. 6

## FILM ANALYSIS

p. 6

Film context

p. 8

Expressive means

p. 14

Recognition

p. 15

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

p. 15

Initial activity

p. 16

Analysis with critical way of the film - point

p. 17

Knowing Africa's culture with effective measures

# GENERAL INFORMATION

Dina Melikovskaya (Moscow 1984) is an animated director. After graduating in animation from the Russian State University of Cinematography (VGIK) in 2011, she continued her studies at The High Animation School- Studio SHAR (Moscow). During this time she made two films that brought her international recognition: My Strange Grandfather (2011) and About the Mother (2015). Kukushka's film (2016) has been screened around the world, receiving many awards and nominations. In 2018 he became a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The recent short film "Ties" (Germany/Russia 2019) explores her own migration from Russia to Berlin and the geographical and emotional distance that comes with her. Filmography: Bridge (2009) Pages If Fear (2010) My Strange Grandfather (2011) About The Mother (2015) Kukuschka (2016) Ties (2019)

## **TITLE**

About A Mother

## **COUNTRY**

Russia (2015)

## **TYPE OF MOVIE**

Animation

## **ISSUES**

Mother - Family - Love - Reward support – Interculturalism

## **RUNTIME**

8 min

## **LANGUAGE**

No dialogs

## **AUDIENCE**

This film was made especially for children (under 18 years old)

## **LEARNINGS (optional)**

Literature, Social Sciences, Artistic.

**DIRECTING / SCENARIO/ STORYBOARD :** Dina Velikovskaya (<http://www.velikovskaya.de>)

**Production:** School- Studio "SHAR" **MUSIC / SOUND:** Artem Fadeey

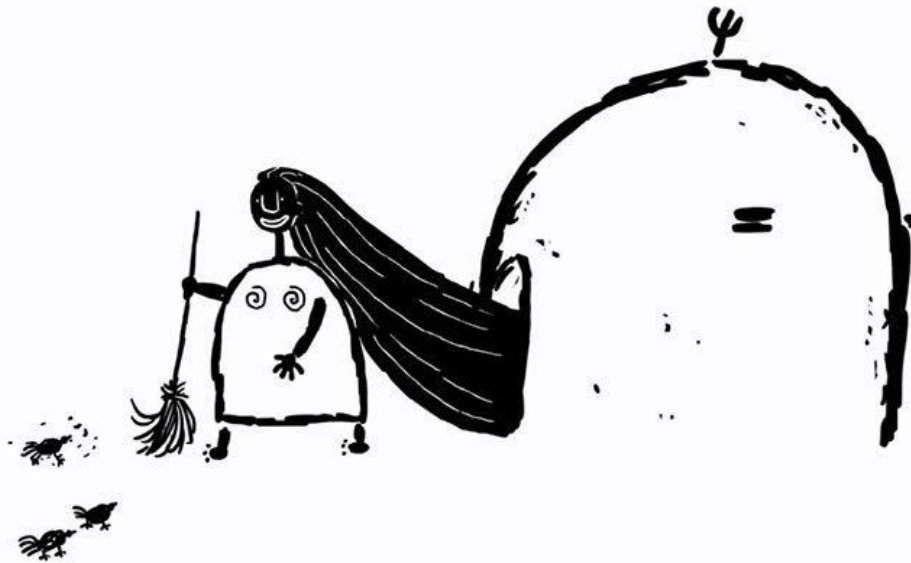
## Synopsis

A mother protects and cares for her sons when they are young. But even later, when they've already left home, she's always there when her sons need help.

A fascinating story about the power of sacrificing family love and particularly strong hair.

## Trailer

Watch the trailer [HERE](#)



# FILM ANALYSIS

## Film context

Dina Melikovskaya's overall artistic work constantly **reflects the inseparable and substantial ties between parents and their children.**

In a small village somewhere in Africa a mother lives with her three sons. She has beautiful long raven black hair (long enough to cover an entire village during a storm) that can cool her boys in the desert heat, become networks for fish and also serve as a trampoline for their entertainment. Her boys grow up and leave home to find jobs that take them to the edges of the world: the eldest works on a fishing boat; the other two children pick them up in a helicopter and a train. Shortly afterwards she receives her son's cries for help and has to sacrifice her hair to save their lives.

Director Dina Melikovskaya pays tribute to the love of a mother who proves to be more than a match to the many trials of life, large and small. The director recounts: [↓](#)

"When my older sister was born, my mom's hair suddenly became thick and curly. They told me this story when I was a kid. For me there is some connection between motherhood and hair. With this movie I thank my parents for everything they've done for me. While the story I'm telling is simple I wanted to express the complexity of raising a woman's children and the point in her life is to give what she has to people she cares about."

SOURCE: Animation show of shows  
<https://www.animationshowofshows.com/pages/18th-press-kit>



"About the Mother" is an animated film that uses static images called quick-motion frames to lend the idea of movement. The first animated film dates back to 1832 when phenakistiscope (known as Fantascopie) was invented by Belgian physicist-mathematician [Joseph Plateau](#). It consisted of cardboard trays with various figures designed in successive positions around the center. When you focus on the notches around the edge of the disc on the rotating disc reflected in a mirror, the figure appears to move. It has the same logic as the fenakistoscope or the latest GIF animations.

Due to the scope of this instrument many different categorizations have been proposed. Wholesale types of animation are three.

**Traditional animations:** the illusion of motion is created through some drawings usually 24 images per second. Each of which differs slightly from the previous one. Originally made by photocopying the original design on transparent acid sheets which were coloured.

**Stop Motion :** Motion performance is achieved by taking sequential photos of a real object, e.g. a puppet. The stop motion animator moves the object in a manner commensurate with the handling of the figure in the shadow theatre.

Today computer software allows animation designers to design movies much more easily. Computer Animation animations can be two extensions (2D) i.e. flat drawings or three (3D). Of particular interest is the machinima technique that you use mainly in video games. In this kind of 3D animation real actors wear special costumes that allow computers to copy their movements in a virtual world.

Source

Inside Multimedia \_ University Media Group

<https://polymesapanteion.wordpress.com/2018/04/27/339/>

# Expressive Means

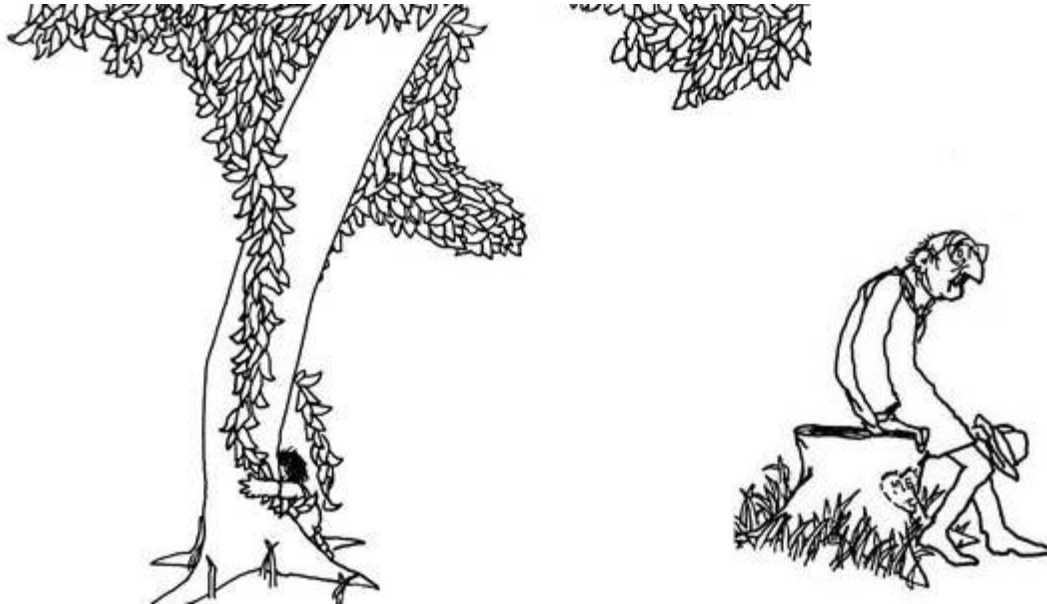


Illustration from the children's book "The Giving Tree"

The animated short film "For the Mother" shows the eternal bonds between a mother and her children with a strong artistic voice with wood carving aesthetics. He uses simple black-and-white linear-minimalist drawings and some nice comic touches to tell an African folk legend about the power of a parent's generosity.

It looks like a fascinating hybrid of racial art and drawings by the American writer and illustrator **Shel Silverstein**, with shades from his timeless children's book "**The Giving Tree**", that his moral has occupied researchers and academics for over 50 years.

Shel Silverstein  
<https://www.shelsilverstein.com/>

**COLLECTIONAL MEMORY**



Popular stories around the world identify common roots among heterogeneous cultural traditions.

This small kind includes the representation of the social and institutional ties at stake in a particular time and place. They are part of every people and meet over the centuries. **They are guides to the continuation of dialogue between different cultures and therefore concepts.** The film "About a Mother" influenced by African folk legend displays specific elements that characterize the life of an African village. Like the mother's habit of cooking outdoors in a clay pot and placing on the head of a large basket with products for transport.

In his recent autobiography "Mandela's Favourite African Folktales" **Human rights defender Nelson Mandela** affectionately mentions a cherished hobby of his childhood:

After supper we would listen enthralled to my mother and sometimes my aunt telling us stories, legends, myths and fables which have come down from countless generations, and all of which tended to stimulate the imagination and contained some valuable moral lesson. (Mandela 2010: 10)

Mandela for instance remembers that the huts of his native village, Qunu in the Transkei region, were: "beehive-shaped structures of mud walls, with a wooden pole in the centre holding up a peaked grass roof. The floor was made of crushed ant-heap, and was kept smooth by smearing it regularly with fresh cow dung." (Mandela 1994: 9).

In general, what is striking in the collection of **African folk myths is that everything happens in broad daylight and that is a significant difference with European stories.**

Source

Mandela's Favourite African Folktales Carmen Concilio  
<https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/AMonline/article/view/4475>

"Motherhood: all love begins and ends there" had written by the English poet of the 19th century Robert Browning. The concept of "mother" **is a primordial concept that one could say defines and permeates human existence from its beginnings.** If you look back at human history and the myths of every civilization,

you will find Mother-Earth, Mother-Goddess mother as the dominant element, a catalyst many times in the evolution of man. Mother – Mother – Mom holds a prominent place in myth and history, folk tradition, municipal song and art, literature, theatre and poetry in all its forms and all seasons.

Here are some examples:

### Poetry

**Odysseus Elytis** makes a quantitative calculation:  
And a quarter of a mother is enough for ten lives,  
There's still something left,  
to mix it  
at a time of great danger. ('From the near')

**Georgios Vizyinos** refers to everything a mother offers her child:  
How to hurt the mother  
I'm going to make him sad.  
that all night and all day  
Is she trying for my own good?

How to refuse or postpone  
what it defines and requires  
since on earth I have no more  
friends like her?

The one on her sweets breasts,  
has me infant soft  
But she was sitting on her knees.  
And she taught me to talk.

She feeds me and dresses me  
all the time she's been coming back  
and next to my little bed  
Like I'm getting sick awake.

She when I fall and I hit  
Kisses to heal the wound.  
What should I leave  
And what to do she leads me.

So how does such a mother  
I'm going to make sad.  
that all night and all day  
she tries for my own good? («**The Mother** »)

#### ➤ **Mother figures of Greek mythology**

In Greek mythology, the mother figures such as the goddess Demeter, Litos, Thetida, Hera and others are impressed. They were not only mothers who would do anything for their children but would also maintain

their integrity as strong and independent women. "Mother" is presented as a source of life, food, tenderness, but also as a source of femininity, strength and ability.

### **Gaia - Mother Earth**

Gaia (Earth) gave birth to Uranus and Pontus (Sea) without association with a father, according to Hesiod (Theogonia). From the life-giving rain that Uranus threw at her, she created the grass, flowers, trees, birds and animals. Also, from its union with Uranus gave birth to the first generation of gods, the Titans, among them Saturn and Rhea, parents of Zeus, Hera, Poseidon and others. The castration of Heaven by Saturn caused the eternal separation of the Earth from Heaven and from the drops of blood and sperm of Heaven Gaia gave birth to the Erins, the Nymphs and various Giants. According to tradition, Gaia's maternal instinct prompted her to avenge Heaven by persuading her other sons, the Titans, to attack him. In a more orthodox version, Uranus embraced Gaia, wrapping her whole with his lime love, resulting in all her children being imprisoned in her womb.

### **Rhea - Mother of the Gods**

Gaia had prophesied that one of Saturn's children would take his kingdom, which is why he, once one was born, ate it directly. Rhea could not bear her pain for the loss of her children and decided to save the last of her children, Zeus, by hiding him with the help of Gaia, as soon as she was born, in a cave of Crete, where she was raised by the Nymphs Amalthea and Melissa.

### **Hera - Wife of Zeus, deity mainly maternal**

Hera had four children from Zeus: Mars, god of war, Hephaestus, god of fire, Ilythia, goddess of childbirth, and Evie, who brought to the gods nectar and ambrosia. As Zeus was particularly unfaithful, they were constantly fighting with Hera and their quarrels were so fierce that the whole of Olympus trembled.



In this painting of Rubens, Zeus fools Hera into breast-feeding Hercules and thus the demigod is brought up with divine milk. Hera realizes the scam pulls her breasts and the milk that was thrown created the galaxy. | Photo Source:www.asociacionsina.org

### **Dimitra - Goddess of land and agriculture**

Dimitra means "mother earth" and was identified, many times, with Gaia. From the union of Demeter with Zeus, Persephone was born, which the goddess loved most. But when Persephone fell in love with Pluto, god of the Underworld, and stole it, Dimitra, who did not know what happened, was inconsolable and, holding two torches, began to search all over the earth to find her. She didn't want to eat or wash until she found her daughter again. In the end, with the help of Hecate and the Sun, she learned the truth, and from her despair she imposed an absolute drought for a whole year and people nearly starved to death. Then Zeus intervened and Persephone returned to earth every spring and then everything blossomed from the joy of Demeter, while when he returned to Hades in winter, nature died again.

### **Lito - Mother of Apollo and Artemis**

Artemis and Apollo are considered fruits of the union of Zeus and Litos. For this reason, Lito was ruthlessly persecuted by Hera, the wife of Zeus, until she gave birth. Legend has it that poor Lito wandered for months and no place accepted her to give birth. In fact, Hera prevented Ilythia, the goddess of childbirth, from going to help Lito give birth, while she had a huge dragon, Python, go after the dying woman. Of course, with their birth, Apollo and Artemis killed Python for the harm he had caused their mother. Lito first gave birth to Artemis, who even helped her in the birth of Apollo, who came into the world after nine days of odines. It is said that this experience was so traumatic for Artemis that she decided to remain a virgin, but helping pregnant women to give birth.

### **Thetida - The most important of the Nereids and immortal mother of the hero Achilles**

According to a prophecy of the Fates, Thetida would give birth to a son who would become stronger than his father. Thus, while until then she was besieged by Zeus and Poseidon, they decided that Thetida had to marry a mortal and chose Peleas, king of Iolkos. Thetida and Peleas had seven sons. To determine whether her children had inherited her immortality, Thetida milled them with ambrosia and burned their mortal parts. None of her first six children survived. To save the life of his seventh son, Achilles, Peleas sent him to Pelion, to Centaur Chiron. To make the little Achilles inedible, Thetida dipped him in the waters of Stygia, but the heel from which she held him did not get wet, so it became his vulnerability. Often, Thetida visited Achilles in the Trojan War and comforted him.

#### ➤ **Works of Art**

**Statuette of Equal and Mount ( Egypt, Ptolemy period 30 - 304 BC).**

For the Ancient Egyptians, the image of the mother- goddess Isis breastfeeding her son Oro (Horus) was a sacred symbol of rebirth. This ceramic statuette is located in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.

**Krishna with his adoptive mother, Yashoda (India, early 12th century)** According to legend, baby Krishna was in danger from his father, the murderous King, Kamsa, and so his mother gave it to surrogate parents so that they could raise it in a safe environment. This bronze sculpture belongs to the Indian period, Chola.

**Midnight: Their rat hours: Mother and sleeping child. (Japan, 1790)** by Kitagawa Utamaro ( 1753-1806) / printing in wooden mold. Kitagawa Utamaro is one of the most prolific artists of the Japanese Edo period (1615-1868). Known for his portraits of women and for his interest in depicting the daily relationship between mother and child.

**Tote Mutter, tou Egon Schiele (1890-1918)** The work was crafted by Egon Schie in 1910, after his wife passed away during pregnancy.

**Mother and child (1921)** by Pablo Picasso. In 1921, the great Spanish painter becomes, for the first time, a father. From this period and for at least 2 years, he will create over 12 works of art, depicting the woman as a mother, exhaling an unusual – for Picasso's works – tenderness.

An additional dimension of motherhood is given by **Nikolaos Gyzis** in his oil painting "Psychomana" -which was crafted between 1882 and 1883 and belongs to the collection of the E. Koutlidis Foundation. The play highlights a young mother's charitable willingness to help the survival of an orphaned child by breastfeeding her own daughter. For Gyzis, the mother-child relationship exceeds his pregnancy by the mother.

# Recognition

The student animated short film " For Mother " has participations in festivals and many awards from all over the world.

Stuttgart'16 ITFS (Germany) - Best Student Film, SICAF 2016 - Korea - Best Student Film ,Zagreb "ANIMAFEST" 2016 - Special Jury Mention in the Student Category, ZLIN Film Festival 2016 - Hermína Týrlová Award - Award for Young Artists under 35,ANIMOCJE (Poland) 2016 - Grand-prix,LUCAS (Germany) - Best Animated Short Film,Animator (Poland) - Best Animated Short Film,T ampere Film Festival (Finland) - Diploma of Merit in the "Animation" Category, IndieJunior Allianz Festival 2017- Best Animated Short Film, XXVI International Film and Music Gathering MEDIAWAVE (Hungary) 2016 - Best Animated Film, XXIII Student & First Film Festival "Saint Anna" (Russia) 2016 - 1st Place and Prize in the "Animated film" category, Southern Arizona Independent Film Festival (USA) 2016 - Best Dramatic Student Film, IX Cairo International Forum of Animation Films (Egypt) 2016 - Best Prize, International Children and Youth Film Festival "Zero Plus" (Russia) - Best Animated Film, XII International Animated Film Festival "Animateka" (Slovenia) 2015 - Best Film in the Elephant Programme, X International Animated Film Festival "Tindirindis" (Lithuania) 2015 - Best Student Film, XVII Animated Dreams (Estonia) 2015 - Best Student Film, XI EARLY BIRD International Student Film Festival 2015 - Best Animated Film,JIO Mumbai International Film Festival (India) 2015 - Silver Gateway Award for Children's Short Film, International Festival of Animated Films TOFUZI (Georgia) - Best Student Film,XX Giffoni Experience (Italy) 2015 - The 1st Winner in the +18 Section (Animation),Open Air Animated Film Festival "Insomnia" (Russia) - 1st Place in the Student Film Category,10 Tehran Animation Festival 2017 - Golden Prize for the best student animation,IndieJunior Allianz (Lisboa)2017 - Short Film Grand Prize

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The activities are intended for group or individual viewing.  
Recommended Age Group 12+

## INITIAL ACTIVITY

**Learning purpose:** In this activity students will learn about the expressive emotional and narrative value of sound/music.

**Before the screening of the movie.** Close the image – screen listen only to the sound and imagine the movie. **Note:** There is no correct answer: each sentence is about in conclusion, based on its own experiential approach, personal experience and life choices.

**SOUND:** What conclusions do you reach about the film based only on sound? Do you hear one or more sounds?

**CHARACTERS:** How many characters can you imagine? What kind? What are they wearing? What's he like?

**LOCATION- SCENIC:** Can you imagine where the story unfolds? Inside (indoor) or outside (outdoor) Lonely or full of people?

**HISTORY:** What does the sound tell you about the story of the movie? Who's he referring to?

**SPECIAL OF THE WORLD:** What kind of movie do you imagine it to be? Why do you think that? Is it a comedy? A drama? children's program? music clip? historical clip? advertising?

What would be your opening phrase and why? What is the importance of the phrase-image in the introduction of film and narration? What signs do they give us about what's to come?

## GOOD VIEW

# ACTIVITY II

## ANALYSIS WITH CRITICAL WAY OF THE FILM – POINT

**Learning purpose::** In this activity students will learn to critically analyze the characters and narrative in the film.

### ANALYSIS OF PLOK

Immediately after watching the film we ask the students questions and discuss in class:

- What are the first impressions of the film ?
- What surprised you? Were there any revelations you didn't expect?
- What patterns are recognized in the history of the film?
- Do you find similarities with your own culture, history, choices, scenery?
- What is the film about? It's recognized if there's a hidden meaning in history.;

**Each audiovisual content consists of obvious and secondary functions. It bears a secondary meaning, referring to non-obvious at first reading, concepts and semantics.**

- Is there a character you remember vividly?
- Indicate a point in the movie where a change occurs and report the impact, if any, it has on the decisions the hero makes from then on.
- What other films, myths, songs with similar stories come to mind?

### FILM FILMING

- Analyze the usefulness of music in the movie. Did it reinforce the story the creator is trying to tell? Were you emotionally affected by the music – the song of the film?
- The film is a great visual medium. Locate any three shots (Download: capture image. Synonym: shot) that contribute greatly in your opinion to the plot. Describe each of the shots and explain the impact they have had on the evolution of the story.

### END

- What did you feel about the end of the movie?
- Will the public connect with the story?
- Would you come to the same conclusions if there were different standards in the film?
- Select a character in the movie and write down the question you would like to ask him/her.

**Write / Design YOUR PERFORMANCE OF THE FILM.**



## ACTIVITY III

# KNOWING AFRICA'S CULTURE WITH EFFECTIVE MEASURES

**Learning purpose:** Students learn about Africa's cultural heritage and the different expressive means of the film.

Students discuss and analyze Africa's cultural heritage and present it in the form of a map.

### STEP 1

For this task, we choose AFRICA. We collect objects, images, clothes, musical instruments, jewelry, tools virtually anything that can help the public understand the place.

### STEP 2

We're watching the movie in a second screening. Students are divided into groups and should mark exactly the minutes and seconds (shown on the screen if they press the pause button) or take a picture of the items they would like to include on their map.

### STEP 3

In a common mental map, all groups will include the clips they have selected. For each item they add a short explanatory text.

### STEP 4

All students together present their details in class and discuss their options.

Recommended exercise

Discover with your students **what are the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) we have in this film?**

This training kit is published as part of the Psaroloco Media Literacy Project's free educational resources.

The recommended age group is 10-12+. You should watch the movie and related clips before delivering activities to the classroom to make sure the content is suitable for your students.

Search for more films related to The Sustainable Development Goals on the Psaroloco page in the category [SDGs](#) and [Watch The Films](#)

RECOMMENDATION : Soultana Tatiana Koumoutsi  
TRANSLATION EDITING: Margarita Kataga

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#### **GOT SOME FEEDBACK**

We like to hear how teachers have used our resources.  
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# [www. psaroloco.org](http://www.psaroloco.org)



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