



### CHALLENGE FOR FILM-MAKERS

Create effects that would be too expensive to produce in reality and/or too dangerous for actors to undertake.

### RELATED ACTIVITIES

[Location, Location!](#)

[Mask Making](#)

[Scaling](#)

[Surfaces and Substances](#)

[Tens to Thousands](#)

### CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

BEFORE

- Find out about special effects used in the past.
- Make a timeline showing the approximate era in which each special effect was developed. Add illustrations or brief descriptions of the techniques.
- Discuss some special effects in movies today and the possible techniques used to create them. Research this topic.

### TEACHING POINTS

e.g. the use of models, puppets, miniatures, painted backdrops, dummies, and mannequins in early movies (especially science fiction movies)

e.g. blue screens, computer-generated imagery (CGI), digital video editing

Your students could compare the special effects used by Peter Jackson in his earlier movies (*Brain Dead*, *Meet the Feebles*, *Bad Taste*, *The Frighteners*, *Heavenly Creatures*) with those used in *The Lord of the Rings*.

DURING

**See or read about** the special effects used in creating:

- the oak tree above Bag End (zone 1)
- the fight scene between Saruman and Gandalf (zone 6)
- the character of Gollum (zone 18)
- characters of different sizes (zone 13)
- digital armies (zone 22)
- digital monsters (the Cave Troll, the Balrog), digital doubles, and prosthetics (masks, Hobbit feet, wigs, and Elven ears) (zone 27)
- the mannequin of the dead Boromir (zone

8).

**Focus questions:**

- What are some special effects used in the movie?
- Why were these special effects used?
- What would be some alternatives to using the special effects?



- Choose a special effect from the timeline and plan a scene that uses it. Include:
  - what resources you will need
  - how the effect will appear
  - how you will create the effect
  - how long it will take to complete and how much it will cost.
- If possible, carry out the plan.
- Present and assess your work.

Possible materials: screens, costumes, props, masks, paint, video, computer.

Possible techniques: shadow play, silhouettes, optical illusions, digital video editing.

**Extension:**

As a class, debate the statement "Film technology will make actors unnecessary."