Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project X

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_ Matthew Broderick, Helen Hunt

1. **Movie Summary** – Give a brief summary (8 points) of the movie plot from start to finish

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

1. **Characters** Write a brief description of each of the characters listed below and the role they played in the film

##### Airman Garrett

Virgil

Terri McDonald

Sargent Creager

Dr. Carole

C. How do you feel about animal research in the context of this film? Give explanations for your feelings.

D. How far should we allow animal research to go? (Be sure to think about ramifications in the military, in medicines we use, etc.)

E. Name THREE facts presented in the film which “drew us in” to the plot, yet were not necessarily true. Support all your facts with explanations.

1.

2.

3.

F. Was Airman Garrett justified in his actions, especially at the end of the film? Support your opinion with explanations.

G. Overall, do you feel this movie made a reasonable statement about a scientific concept that people should be aware of? Support why you feel the way you do.

Answer Key

1. **Movie Summary** – Give a brief summary (8 points) of the movie plot from start to finish

1. Virgil was captured in the wild and brought to University of Wisconsin, Psych dept.

2. Terri McDonald taught Virgil sign language.

3. Virgil was taken to Lockridge Airforce base because funding ran out at the university.

4. Virgil was taught to “fly” a simulator by Airman Garrett as part of “Project X.”

5. Garrett figured out the Virgil knew sign language. He contacted Terri McDonald anonymously to find out why Virgil was in the program.

6. Bluebeard was radiated and died when doing a simulation run for testing … Garrett figured out what “Project X” really meant.

7. Garrett is promoted to lead the Bovarium. He tried to intervene on Virgil’s behalf to Dr. Carole, but the doctor was unsympathetic at first.

7. When it was Virgil’s turn to perform (in front of politicians and Air Force commanders), Garrett took a stronger stand and wanted to resign. Dr. Carole was more sympathetic, but expected Garrett to perform his duties even at Virgil’s expense. Garrett went after Terri McDonald who previously visited Garrett at a bar.

8. Garrett saved Virgil, but chaos broke out among the monkeys. Goliath went into the simulation chamber while the reactor got stuck and irradiated him. It seemed a “melt down” would occur and Goliath removed the fire extinguisher from beneath the reactor.

9. Garrett and McDonald tried to take Virgil and escape the base, but were caught. Virgil and several monkeys flew a swamp plane off the base and crashed in the everglades.

1. **Characters** Write a brief description of each of the characters listed below and the role they played in the film

##### Airman Garrett

***Garrett is the lead role played by Matthew Broderick. He was a former pilot who gambled at the academy and stole an airplane so he was re-stationed to Lockridge Airforce base (he was not discharged completely because his dad was an air force commander). He discovered that Virgil (monkey) knew sign language and therefore, tried to save him from radiation. He contacted Terri McDonald (Virgil’s trainer) and eventually led the “cause” to save Virgil.***

Virgil

***Virgil is the lead monkey who had been captured in the wild and sent to the University of Wisconsin’s psychology department. He was trained to know sign language. He was very smart and learned the flight simulator at the air force base very quickly. Therefore, he was chosen to demonstrate “Project X” to some politicians.***

Terri McDonald

***Terri is the lead female role played by Helen Hunt. She was a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin’s psychology department. She taught Virgil sign language. When the funding ran out for Virgil, she was made to believe that Virgil was sent to a children’s zoo. When Garrett contacted her about Virgil being at Lockridge Air force base, she was understandable upset and tried to get Virgil back.***

Sargent Creager

***He was in charge of the Bovarium, keeping the monkeys healthy and trained to perform the simulations in the nuclear reactor chamber. He gave the same speech to all recruits that the monkeys were trained like college (different colored collars, etc.)***

Dr. Carole

***The veterinarian who was in charge of “Project X.” He had the authority regarding the airman, the monkeys and the program. He was portrayed as a “monster” eventually because he killed the monkeys in the simulations.***

C. How do you feel about animal research in the context of this film? Give explanations for your feelings.

***This is an opinion question, meant to get an emotional response from students. Animal research in this movie seemed barbaric and inhumane.***

D. How far should we allow animal research to go? (Be sure to think about ramifications in the military, in medicines we use, etc.)

***For a drug to be accepted by the FDA in the United States, it takes ten years of research, including animal testing. We all enjoy prescriptions from doctors for our health with little realization of the testing that the drug underwent.***

E. Name THREE facts presented in the film which “drew us in” to the plot, yet were not necessarily true. Support all your facts with explanations.

***1. Airman Garrett was not very moral in his personal life and professional life (gambler, stole a plane for sex), yet he became the moral stronghold to save Virgil.***

***2. Chimpanzees are 7 times stronger per pound (only weigh 15-40 pounds)***

* ***Terri McDonald caught Virgil off the fence and hardly flinched***
* ***“Goliath” was so strong he removed the fire extinguisher from beneath the nuclear reactor which weighed well over a ton***

***3. Garrett wouldn’t leave the nuclear reactor chamber even when there was an imminent threat of a nuclear melt down.***

***4. Goliath/Virgil understood Garrett to fetch the fire extinguisher***

***5. Goliath pulled the fire extinguisher from beneath the concrete base of the nuclear reactor (the extinguisher did not explode neither did the lid come off).***

***6. Could monkeys fly a real plane? Brakes? Could the air force men have stopped them before they took off?***

***7. Would monkeys survive in the Florida everglades? Monkeys live in jungles, not the everglades with no trees, food, etc.***

***8. Wouldn’t Terri McDonald have followed up with Washington DC, filed a lawsuit, called the newspaper?***

F. Was Airman Garrett justified in his actions, especially at the end of the film? Support your opinion with explanations.

***A common theme throughout this film is “the ends justify the means.” Garrett broke a lot of rules (at the academy and at Lockridge Air Force base), but regarding Virgil, the film conveys the thought that it was okay.***

***Dr. Carole felt justified in killing monkeys to save human lives in simulations of war.***

G. Overall, do you feel this movie made a reasonable statement about a scientific concept that people should be aware of? Support why you feel the way you do.

***On one hand, the movie was quite one sided in its statement that animal research should be stopped. On the other hand, animal research should be under scrutiny so that life is not expended without just cause.***

**FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT BIAS IN MEDIA**

1. **Historical films are greatly embellished for viewer interest. For instance, the History Channel adds or deletes many details to capture audiences.**
2. **Movies are rated in various ways to give us the impression that they are factual (“inspired by a true story” vs. “based on a true story”) … facts are deleted or embellished for audience interest.**
3. **Chariots of Fire 🡪 Eric Liddell ran and won the 1920 400 m in the Olympics. He began as the favored 100-meter runner, but refused to run on Sunday (his Sabbath). He fell down during the finals of the 400 m race, but still came back to win (underdog). His sister in the movie was portrayed as an antagonist to his racing, but was very much the opposite in real life.**
4. **Braveheart 🡪 An “inspired by a true story” movie about the life of William Wallace, a little-known hero of Scotland back in the 1200’s. Almost nothing is written about Wallace.**
5. **Hoosiers 🡪 A “based on a true story” movie about a small, rural, hic town whose basketball team won the Indiana state championship. They were portrayed as farmer-hics, short. There were supposedly only 8 players. The championship game on the movie was definitely presented as a huge underdog coming from behind. In reality, the Hickory Huskers were tall and dominant, blowing away their opponents throughout the state tournament.**
6. **NEW CASTS**

* **IRAQ: US soldiers killed in Iraq totaled less than 5000 over 8 years … yet media presented it as a mass slaughter. WWII cost the US millions of lives in just 4 years. Vietnam cost the US well over 100,000 lives in 4 years.**
* **A US soldier killed a wounded insurgent. The media presented this as a vile act because the insurgent was wounded … not accounting for the fact that the insurgent had just killed the soldier’s partner. Many terrorists dress in civilian clothes for deception and created suicide bombs and raids.**

1. **Many movies are outright FALSE or politically based (biased)**

* **The Conspiracy Theory 🡪 man supposed never landed on the moon. This film depicted several “crucial” pieces of information to “prove” that the moon landing was staged in a studio. However, each piece of evidence was refuted scientifically because of clear “doctoring” by the documentary. Millions of people believed the documentary.**
* **Fahrenheit 911 🡪 Michael Moore in a totally politically based film spewed his opinions and falsehoods about what happened after “9/11.” His purpose was to make president George Bush look incompetent. Millions of people seriously consider his inaccurate, biased propaganda.**
* **Global Warming 🡪 Al Gore, former vice president of the United States was given the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to prove global warming. His evidence was one sided and easily refuted. He got many scientists to speak on his behalf. Afterward, many other scientists refuted and proved much of his finding false or tentative at best. He also owns a personal jet and several mansions, using more energy than some third world countries.**