

Teaching Diversity with Film



The Illinois and United States Constitutions guarantee that all people are to be treated as equals under the law. A wide range of anti-discrimination laws protect people including specific provisions against discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, military service or unfavorable discharge from military service. These laws extend protections to everyone in our increasingly diverse nation. We can be proud that our equal rights laws and acceptance of diversity stands as an example to other governments and societies.

To enhance diversity discussions in classrooms and communities, here is a partial list of films that can be used as tools to generate discussions. **Please note: Some have adult content. Teachers should review a selected movie before using in class.**

A Day Without A Mexican
A Time to Kill
Amistad
Beauty and the Beast
Billy Elliot
Boys Don't Cry
Brokeback Mountain
Dances With Wolves
Do the Right Thing
Gandhi
Glory
In the Heat of the Night
Mississippi Burning
Munich
Osama
Philadelphia
Radio
Real Women have Curves
Roots
Schildler's List
Snow White
Spanglish
The Gods Must Be Crazy
The Joy Luck Club
To Kill a Mockingbird
West Side Story
Young Frankenstein

A Patch of Blue
Akeelah and the Bee
Babe
Bend it like Beckham
Birth of a Nation
Boyz 'N the Hood
Crash
David and Lisa
Fried Green Tomatoes
Ghosts of Mississippi
Hiroshima Maiden
Malcolm X
Monsoon Wedding
My Left Foot
Patch Adams
Pocahontas
Rain Man
Remember the Titans
Save the Last Dance
Shrek
Sophie's Choice
The Color Purple
The Hiding Place
Thumbelina
Transamerica
Wizard of Oz

Visit the ABA for more diversity film titles

http://www.abanet.org/publiced/resources/diversity_ae.html

DIVERSITY MOVIE REVIEW ACTIVITY - View one of the movies on the list provided and write a brief review. Here are the steps to the assignment.

- Rent and watch the movie. You may do this as a solo assignment or assign groups of students to watch the movie. While watching the film, tell students to watch for themes that reflect diversity.
- Write a two or three page, double spaced paper that reviews the movie, including the diversity themes that were noted. Papers must be done individually and not as a group effort. Include the title of the film, the year it was produced, what areas of diversity are addressed. List the main characters and provide a brief plot outline. Then address the theme or themes that you noted while watching.
 - Did the film address
 - cultural differences
 - issues of race
 - gender issues
 - religious issues
 - age discrimination
 - physical or mental ability
 - or other differences

Include a few paragraphs on how the movie made you feel. Were you angry, sad, sympathetic or amused? Do you think the movie meant to make you feel these feelings? Synopsise the message you believe the movie was supposed to make. Was there an obvious conflict addressed by the film? What was the resolution? Was a problem solved in a way that satisfied all parties? Was there violence depicted? If so, were there better ways of resolving the conflict? Could you imagine yourself in a situation like the one depicted in the film? How would you have reacted?

Conclude your paper by rating the film on a scale of 1 (awful, disappointing, failed to address issues) to 5 (fantastic, would highly recommend, learned from the film, provided great insights).

Students should be prepared to defend the ratings rating during class discussions.

Ask students to expand the list we've provided with suggestions of their own.