

Media Study Guides

for Secondary Schools



ETEC 531 Students
University of British Columbia
2014

Edited by Franc Feng

Table of contents

Technoscientific imaginaries, Post apocalyptic/future visions: Social justice, discourses of power, dystopia, relationships, censorship, experimentation, divergence, identities, norms, ethics, culture, body image, stories, empathy, social interaction

1. *Dr. Who: A Media Study Guide for Grades 8-10* (Robert McElroy, Leah Raghunath & Mark Bates)
2. *Divergent: A Grade 8 Film Study* (Christy Smith & Charlotte Paterson)
3. *The Future of Relationships: Grade 11/12 Media Study- Fahrenheit 451 & Equilibrium* (Tracy Faucher, Rupinder Banga & Monique Waters)

Critique of normality, 21st century society: Modern families, heteronormativity critique, relationships, diversity, stereotyping, LGBT issues and support, real life issues/stories, media analysis, communication, bias, identity, representation, norms, roles

1. *The War at Home: A Media Study Guide* (Erin Kitchen & Adeel Farooq)
2. *Modern Family: A Study Guide for Media Studies 11 & 12* (Sarah Parker)

Representation, belonging, bullying, giving back: Relationships, identity, stereotyping, self-image, status, popularity, power, control, role of media, role of technology, stories, exclusion, harassment, change, kindness, sacrifice, compassion

1. *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the Online Playground* (Christina Luciak & Dale Pearce)
2. *Pay it forward Media Guide* (Christine Hulme, Riea Elder & Gurpreet Koonar)

Human Condition, existentialism, narrative: Love, meaning, pain, reading, novels, ghetto, feelings, significance, sacrifices, friendship, courage, critical reflections, interpretations of history, holocaust, tragedy, ghettos, living conditions, memory

1. *The Fault in Our Stars: MET 531 Media Analysis Guide* (Theo Dykstra & Rochelle Lamoureux)
2. *The Book Thief: An Exploration into Living Conditions during the Holocaust: Grade 12 Media Study Guide* (Breanna Lloyd & Matthew O'Connor)

Discourse of power, consumption, controversies: Ecology, food, health, safety, ethics, science, poverty, legalities, critique, engineering, industry, commodity, farming, bias, economics, famine, biodiversity, global warming, daily living, practice

1. *Food Inc Media Study Guide* (Sarah Rowe)
2. *An inconvenient Truth: Media Study Guide* (Rachel Graf & Shaimaa Otify)

Preface & Acknowledgements

This text represents the work of a group of 23 graduate students enrolled in the MET program, many of whom are also teachers enrolled in a (Curriculum issues in) Cultural and New Media Studies course in the Fall of 2014, designed by Dr. Stephen Petrina and Dr. Franc Feng, and taught by Dr. Feng. The challenge for the group was to write a Media Studies text that appealed to all grades in the school system, providing teachers with an interesting, diverse and rich resource for use in the classroom. The individual sections can be adopted and integrated into any number of subjects or adopted as a textbook for (Curriculum issues in) Cultural and New Media Studies in the schools. Many of the Media Study Guides span provincial curricula, exploring commonalities and differences.

We acknowledge the support of family and friends and the various cultural agents and artists whose illustrations or texts were incorporated into the sections of the book. We acknowledge the work of graduate students who contributed towards publishing this textbook.

We hope you are as inspired with the insights within each section, as we were producing these, and we encourage you to continue learning about media, culture and technology.

Modern Family

A Study Guide for Media Studies 11 & 12



Introduction

Modern Family is comedy *mockumentary* sitcom that centres around three closely connected families. Creators Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levita showcase the three families dealing with the concerns and trials of everyday life and how it impacts each family member. Within the three families the audience sees the impact: divorce, second marriages, stepchildren, gay marriage/relationships and adopted children can have upon a family structure. Although the show tries to illuminate expectance, the characters are widely accepted stereotypes.

Stereotype: *A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.*

Learning Outcomes

Students will show a greater understanding of the impact stereotyping can have upon an individual and/or group.

Students will become more aware of stereotypes within the media.

Class Discussion and Self-Reflection Before Viewing

1. Name and define three different stereotypes.
2. Identify other stereotypes in television.
3. What are the main stereotypes in the media?

Please Watch The Following Introduction To Modern Family

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aogZUDx51vQ>

(We will also show 2 other Modern Family Episode.)



Stereotypes In The Media

With a partner please answer the following question:

1. Name all the character stereotypes in Modern Family.



Review and Define Characters Now As A Class:

Alex: Nerd sister that is only concerned with school

Hayley: Popular sister that is only concerned with the superficial things in life

Luke: Annoying little brother.

Claire: Mom that does not work

Phil: Man that supports the entire family





Gloria: South American woman that comes from a violent upbringing that comes to American and marries older man

Jay: Masculine. Older man that marries very young wife in a second marriage

Mitch and Cam: Flamboyant gay couple who seek the approval of Jay



Class Discussion:

1. Why do we need to be aware of stereotypes in the media?



Making Connections. Self-Reflection

Please Answer Two Of The Following On Your Online Video Blog:

1. Identify stereotypes in your school.
2. Do you believe you fit into a stereotype? Why or why not?
3. Identify family and friends that you know that others would stereotype.



Final Questions and Key Concepts

1. The media is filled with stereotypes. How do viewing these stereotypes affect our perception of others?
2. How can we become more informed and aware of stereotypes in the media?



Sources For Further Study and Information

1. Media Smarts

A Canadian resource for media literacy.

<http://mediasmarts.ca>

2. GLAAD

A site that wants to debunk myths and stereotypes.

<http://www.glaad.org>

3. Youth Media Alliance.

Youth Media Alliance (YMA) seeks to enrich the lives of Canadian children and teens by helping improve the quality of the content created for them on all screen-based media.

<http://www.ymamj.org>

Cyber bullying

Bullying in the Online Playground

Key Issues

To what extent has social media played a role in fostering bullying online? To what extent have we become desensitized to the effects? What can be done to stop it?



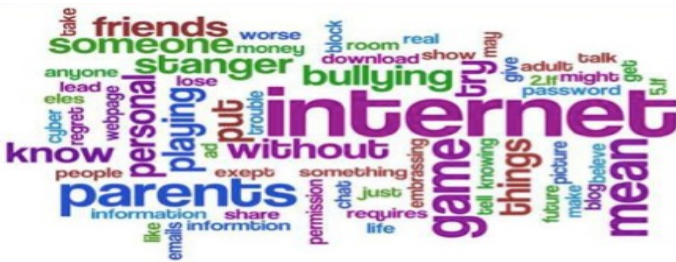
www.behance.net

Introduction:

Cyber Bullying is the use of modern communication technologies (such as the Internet and cell phones) to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or intimidate individuals in an attempt to gain power and control over them. Examples of Cyber Bullying include creating forums for harassing an individual on a website, sending harassing, threatening messages via e-mail or text or spreading rumors on a social networking site such as Facebook or Twitter.

This study guide has been developed to be applicable to a broad range of subject areas and grade levels (8-10). Through it, students will examine their knowledge of cyber bullying and how it affects them. Students will examine the impact that media plays as a platform for bullying in the online playground we call cyberspace.

This guide will focus on two major television movies, *Cyberbully* and *Odd Girl Out* as a means to showcase this important issue and engage students in critical discussions.



Learning Outcomes

Alberta ICT Program of Studies

Students will understand the role of technology as it applies to self, work and society.

Students will practice the concepts of ergonomics and safety when using technology.

Students will use technology to investigate and/or solve problems.

Further: Identify the characteristics of cyber bullying from the perspective of the bully, bystander and victim.

"What you do online isn't exactly private." From the movie *Cyberbully*

"Words
can hurt."

"I just feel
so alone."

Cyberbully Synopsis:

Cyberbully was directed by Charles Biname and written by Teena Booth. It stars Emily Osment, Kay Panabaker, Kelly Rowan, Jon McLaren, Meaghan Rush and Natassia Markiewicz. The movie won two awards and was nominated for six.

This is a TV movie of some note, *Cyberbully*, as the title suggests, deals with the prevalent problem of on line bullying. Story has Osment as Taylor Hillridge, your everyday high school teenager who's pretty, has good friends and is getting interested in boys. Finally deciding to join the Internet revolution, she signs up to a site called Cliquester, a place where cool kids hang and chat. Things are going well. The boy she fancies in school is reciprocating her advances and she's met a guy pal on Cliquester who seems to really dig her. But then the guy she's chatting with turns nasty and pretty soon Taylor's life at school becomes a living hell...



Key Terms and Concepts:

Aggression/Physical and Verbal

Aggressor (Bully)

Target (Victim)

Bystander

Empathy

Cyber Stalking

Revenge

Question for Inquiry
#1:

How does media and technology play a role in creating and changing relationships?

Question for Inquiry
#2:

Are there blurred lines between face-to-face reality and media reality? Explain.

Pre-Viewing Activity:

In groups of 3-4 students, develop a definition using your prior knowledge of what cyber bullying is. When developing the definition, consider how media and technology influence the bully and the victim.

Each group will share their definition with the class in a round table discussion. Consider the similarities and differences between each group's definitions. Consider what factors influence collective and individual beliefs.

During Viewing Activity:

Identify the seven types of bullies in the movie:

The Confident Bully – feels good by making him/herself feel superior to others.

The Social Bully – rumor, gossip, verbal taunts and exclusion are weapons of choice.

Fully Armored Bully – flat affect characterizes this one – cold and emotionless.

Hyperactive Bully – usually suffers from some form of learning disability.

The Bullied Bully (aka the Bully Victim) – is both a target of bullies (adults or older kids) and a bully himself (towards smaller, weaker kids).

The Bunch of Bullies – group mentality, which leads good kids to collectively bully

Gang of Bullies – group of allies, not friends, banded together power, control and domination.

Question for Inquiry #3

Is media an addiction or the devices we use to communicate?

Question for Inquiry #4

How has technology provided a platform for bullying?

Pause and Reflect

In the movie *Cyberbully*, the principal states, “Schools can’t control the Internet or what students do on their private computers.” How can schools use technology to intervene in or prevent cyber bullying incidents?

In the movie *Samantha* speaks from the bully’s perspective and states: “It doesn’t feel real when you are bullying online.” and “You can’t see the other person so it doesn’t matter.” How would you respond to someone if they said this to you? Post your thoughts on our class blog.

Odd Girl Out Synopsis:

The 2005 movie *Odd Girl Out* is based on the book *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* by Rachel Simmons. It focuses on the subject of teenage girls' hostility and bullying. Alexa Vega plays Vanessa Snyder, a popular eighth grader who is part of the in crowd at her high school. Academically and socially successful, Vanessa is thrown into a world of verbal abuse, depression and confusion at the hands of one of her friends when her jealousy over Vanessa’s relationship with her best friend takes a vicious turn.



Key Terms and Concepts

Psychological Warfare

Hidden Culture

Taunting

Social Exclusion

Jealousy

Harassment

Betrayal

"The secret life of girls...it's not pretty."

"She used to be in."

References and Further Food For thought:

Pre-Viewing Activity

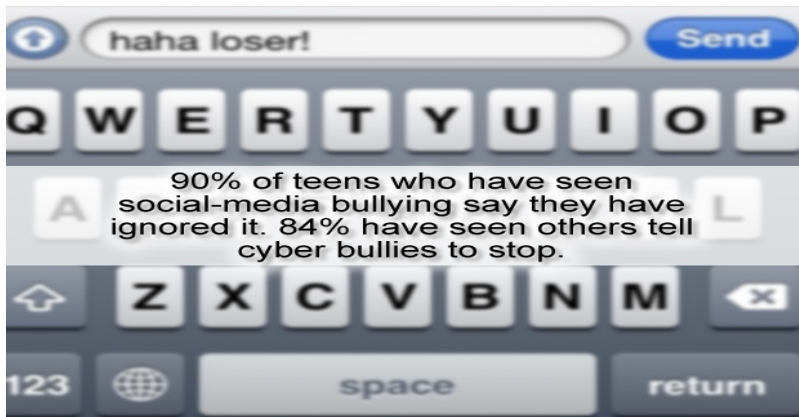
Cruelty can escalate quickly online because people are anonymous and posts spread quickly. Identify the factors that contribute to online cruelty and cyber bullying. Discuss these factors as well as intervention strategies with a partner.



During Viewing Activity

Examine the different forms of technology portrayed in this movie and how they are used to communicate forms of media. What devices do you use daily to communicate? Consider how greater access may lead to greater challenges.

Pause and Reflect



What will you do to change this statistic? How can you be the change?

Bullying Prevention Project Reaches Out to Youth (2013) Retrieved October 6, 2014 from <http://www.redcross.ca/who-we-are/red-cross-stories/2013/bullying-prevention-project-reaches-out-to-youth>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/social-media-affecting-teens-concepts-of-friendship-intimacy-1.2543158>

Cyberbullying (2014) Common Sense Media. Retrieved October 8, 2014 from <https://www.common Sense Media.org/cyberbullying>.

<http://www.cyberbullyhotline.com/anonymous-school-reporting.html>

<http://globalnews.ca/news/656142/youth-suicides-linked-to-cyberbullying-on-the-rise-study/>

Protecting Canadians from Bullying and Cyberbullying. Retrieved October 6, 2014 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/nws/nws-rlss/2013/20131118-1-eng.aspx>

Seven Types of Bullies Retrieved October 7, 2014 from <https://antibullyingsoftware.com/seven-different-types-of-bullies/>

<http://socialshield.com>

<http://stompoutbullying.org>

The Social Lives of Networked Teens. Retrieved October 6, 2014 from <http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Spark/ID/2436121296/>

Working Together to Protect Children from Cyberbullying (2013) Retrieved October 14, 2014 from https://www.protectchildren.ca/app/en/media_release_cyberbullying_round_table



PAY IT FORWARD MEDIA GUIDE

ETEC 531 64A

CHRISTINE HULME

RIA ELDER

GURPREET KOONAR

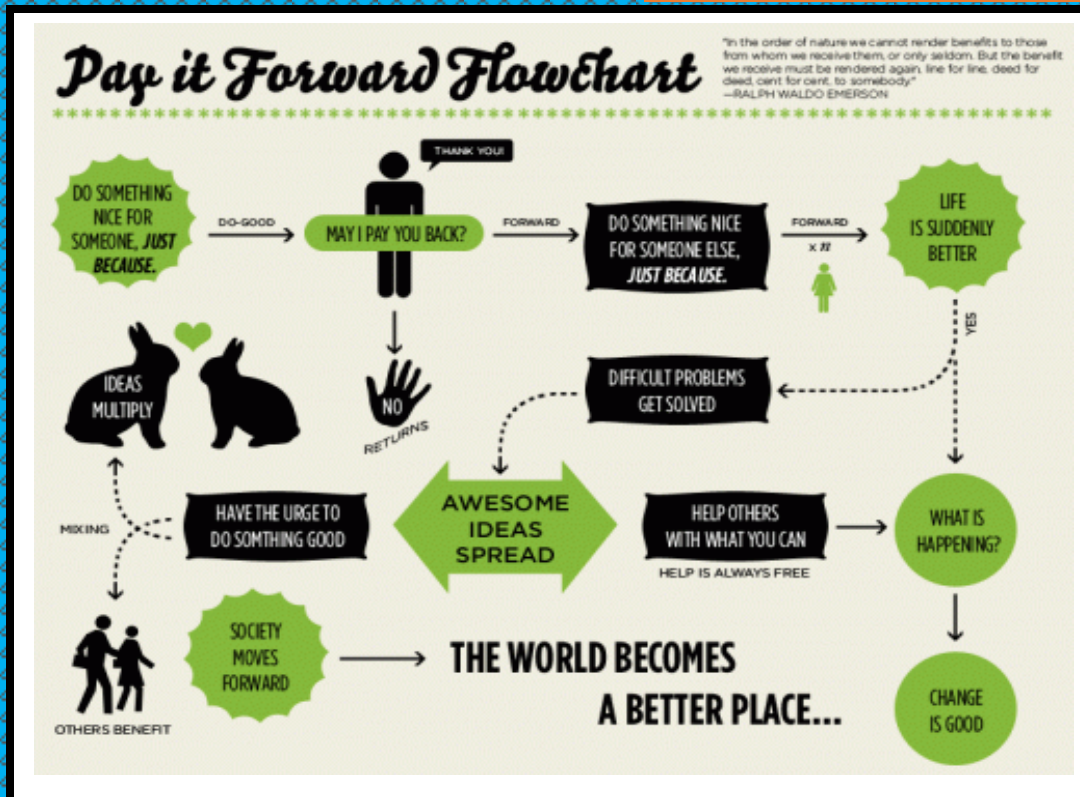
Introduction



Pay it forward is a movie drama which stars Trevor, an eleven year old boy who becomes inspired by his Social Studies teacher Mr. Simonet. Trevor's teacher introduces a challenging assignment to his students on the first day of class. The chalkboard reads...

Think of an idea to change our world---and put it into action!

Trevor comes from a troubled home where his mother suffers from alcohol addiction, trying to make ends meet by working two jobs. Trevor's father is in and out of the picture leading him to believe that happiness is not possible in the world. Mr. Simonet inspires Trevor to develop the notion of paying a favor forward; that is, repaying good deeds with new good deeds done to three people. Trevor's efforts to revolutionize this idea begins with his mother, teacher, and strangers.



Learning Outcomes

- Students will understand the importance of helping others, how to show they care, and the impact it has on their own lives.
- Students will develop strategies to create a positive and respectful school culture.
- Students will be able to make others feel welcome and included in their school by using pro-social behaviour skills

KEY CONCEPTS

- What is kindness?
- Why is giving back to the community important?
- How can you make a difference?
- What does it mean to Pay it Forward?
- Values:
 - Sacrifice
 - Compassion
 - Courtesy
 - Caring
 - Empathy

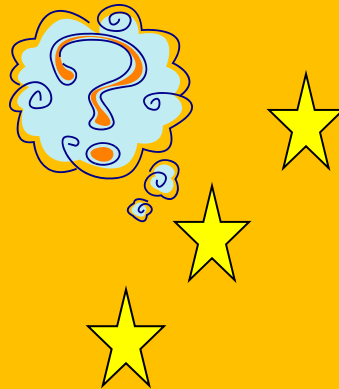
Inspirational Video - Pay It Forward



CLICK YELLOW BOX TO WATCH



Focus Questions



Before viewing:

What do you think it means to "Pay it Forward"?

Do you think paying it forward is the same or different from paying someone back? Explain.

What do you think might result from people paying forward kind deeds and acts of service?

Describe a time when either you or someone you know applied the principles of paying it forward.

Do you think the act of paying it forward is self-serving rather than truly altruistic in that there is a sense of accomplishment and acknowledgement when a good deed is performed?

View This Clip

Apple Motion "Pay it Forward"

A boy begins

to dream

CLICK YELLOW BOX TO WATCH



The assignment states: "Think of an idea to change our world—and put it into action". Do you think the assignment is within the "realm of possibility" [Do you think Pay it Forward could work in the world we live in today, starting in our own school?] Why or why not?

- Explain Trevor's idea. Do you agree with the class that Trevor's idea is "overly utopian"?
- Did Trevor succeed in helping Jerry the homeless guy?
- What was it that you think made Trevor strike to make the world a more positive place despite his difficult home situation?



How are the Kielburger brothers and Trevor alike?



In this scene Trevor gets hurt when he helps a friend who is getting bullied. Do you think the movie should have a different ending to promote the idea that helping others is a good thing?

What did you learn from Trevor's story? How will you use what you learned in your life?



Activities

- ❖ Create a website using Weebly [or any other user friendly platform] to enlist student help to complete projects that better the community such as cleaning up garbage, organizing food drives, etc.
- ❖ Record an act of service then nominate 3 people to accept the challenge of paying it forward [similar to the ALS ice bucket challenge] and post on social media. The 3 people you nominate will also have to do an act of service, record a video and nominate 3 other people.
 - Things to think about:
 - How did you choose the act of service? Why did you choose it?
 - What do you think the reaction of the people will be when you do the act of service?
 - What was the reaction of the people when you did the act of service? Was it what you expected?
 - How did you feel after doing the act of service?
 - Why did you choose the 3 people for the challenge? [Are they friends? Most likely to accept the challenge?
- ❖ Create a Pay it Forward PSA to explain the idea and ask the other students in your school to accept the challenge.
- ❖ On Facebook post [insert "Pay an Encouragement/Inspiration Forward" logo or pic] on three friend's wall with one thing that you appreciate about them and ask them to do the same on three of their friend's wall. Let's see how far this post goes.
- ❖ Going Above and Beyond
 - Watch the video Muffin Men <http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-videos/4491-the-muffin-men>
 - Research organizations within your community or school that you can volunteer your time to make an impact. List the organizations and see if they are looking for volunteers. What are the needs? How many people do they serve? How can you help?
- ❖ Things to think about:
 - Why do the Muffin Men do what they do? Do you share the same feelings when you helped as the Muffin Men?
 - Why did you choose the organization? When you researched organizations, were you surprised at the needs?

Sources for Further Study

1. Charley Johnson brings Pay it Forward Movement to reality:
<http://www.pifexperience.org/bracelets/>
2. Pay it Forward Day: April 30, 2015 <http://payitforwardday.com/>
3. The Science of "Paying it Forward"
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/the-science-of-paying-it-forward.html?_r=1



References

- (2012). Pay it forward. *Kaleidoscope life coaching* [Image]. Retrieved from <http://kaleidoscopelifecoaching.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/payitforward.jpg>
- (2000). Pay it forward (2000). *DVDs ReleaseDates* [Image]. Retrieved from <http://www.dvdsreleasedates.com/covers/pay-it-forward-dvd-cover-56.jpg>
- (2013). Pay it forward flowchart. *Tourist attitude* [Image]. Retrieved from <https://s-media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/originals/39/4b/2a/394b2ad61bb7937a7f551c220110ca68.jpg>
- (2013). Pay it forward cures the blahs. *Szumski says* [Image]. Retrieved from https://cdn.empowernetwork.com/user_images/post/2013/09/01/07d/4e3e/540_293_resize_20130901_07d4e3ea9812d3f7ebbc2ec5786b7d0e.jpg.jpg
- FreeTheChildrenIntl. (2014, May 18). *Meet Craig and March Kielburger* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://youtu.be/ig5v_EydNGs
- IChoosePeople. (2012, June 25). *Pay it Forward Bully Scene* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Eew2snX1XY
- ItsLilpeanut (2013, January 15). *Be the change you want to see in this world* [Image]. Retrieved from https://c1.staticflickr.com/9/8232/8384002527_b44dce561c_z.jpg
- MotivationUS. (2013, September 15). *Inspirational Video-PayIt Forward* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJeWFoKZ63U&feature=player_embedded
- Sayer, L. (Photographer). (2007). *Nurse log*. [Digital image]. Retrieved from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/riss/368673880>
- StaffWriter (2011). *NUS launches 'I am the Change'* [Image]. Retrieved from <http://www.thedrum.com/news/2011/12/06/nus-launches-i-am-change-campaign>
- TechguyAllen. (2008, May 18). *Apple Motion "Pay it Forward" Clip* [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://youtu.be/N0HTheOLrEc>
- Vezzali, V (2014). *Handprints from the heart* [Image]. Retrieved from <http://media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/31/bf/9e/31bf9e5fd888a11e81727a95b9cfd188.jpg>

THE FAULT IN OUR STARS

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this assignment is for learners to explore how the soundtrack, cinematography and story are deliberately created to support the themes and motifs of the film. After the learners reflect upon the use of these various mediums to support the message in *The Fault in Our Stars* they must apply these mediums to support a fictional narrative symbolic of their own life.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES 10-12 LANGUAGE ARTS

GENERAL OUTCOME 2

STUDENTS WILL LISTEN, SPEAK, READ, WRITE, VIEW AND REPRESENT TO COMPREHEND LITERATURE AND OTHER TEXTS IN ORAL, PRINT, VISUAL AND MULTIMEDIA FORMS, AND RESPOND PERSONALLY, CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY.

and based on the novel (of the same title) by author John Green. The story is about Hazel Grace Lancaster, a seventeen year old American girl, who has terminal thyroid cancer, and the boy she meets, Augustus Waters, an eighteen year old boy, who has lost a leg because of bone cancer. The two teens meet at a support group meeting and become friends and eventually fall in love.

"I WILL NOT TELL YOU OUR LOVE STORY, BECAUSE – LIKE ALL REAL LOVE STORIES – IT WILL DIE WITH US, AS IT SHOULD."

Hazel's favorite book, *An Imperial Affliction*, is authored by a man named Peter van Houten who lives in Amsterdam. After Hazel shares the book with Augustus, both characters yearn to know the ending of the book, which van Houten has left to the unknown. After communication with the author, Hazel, Augustus, and Hazel's mother, travel to Amsterdam to meet van Houten, in the hopes of hearing the end of the story or what happens to the characters in *An Imperial Affliction*.

Augustus discovers that his bone cancer returns and that he has very little time left to live. When Augustus dies, Hazel speaks at his funeral.¹

THE MARKS HUMANS
LEAVE ARE TOO OFTEN
SCARS



1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fault_in_Our_Stars_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fault_in_Our_Stars_(film))

KEY CONCEPTS

Throughout the movie several themes are supported through the use of music, cinematography and story. These themes include finding meaning and purpose in life and making sense out of pain and death. The movie focuses on the motif of existentialism, a field of philosophy that deals with the nature of the human condition.¹

With regards to finding meaning and purpose in life, the film suggests several values. One of these values is that quality of life is more important than quantity. This value is expressed through a fascinating mathematical concept that, “there are infinite numbers between 0 and 1. There’s .1 and .12 and .112 and an infinite collection of others. Of course, there is a bigger infinite set of numbers between 0 and 2, or between 0 and a million. Some infinities are bigger than other infinities. A writer we used to like taught us that. There are days, many of them, when I resent the size of my unbounded set. I want more numbers than I’m likely to get, and God, I want more numbers for Augustus Waters than he got. But, Gus, my love, I cannot tell you how thankful I am for our little infinity. I wouldn’t trade it for the world. You gave me a forever within the numbered days, and I’m grateful.” It is not the number of days that you live that matters, it is the quality of those days.

Another value that is supported is that a meaningful life is not found in being remembered for something significant you did, but is found in being deeply loved. Throughout the movie Gus is fixated on doing something significant that he will be remembered for. It is his way of dealing with his fear of oblivion. Hazel addresses Gus’s desire to be remembered by stating, “guess what Gus, this is your life. This is all you get. You get me and you get your family and you get this world, and that’s it. And if that’s not enough for you, then I am sorry, but it’s not nothing. Because I love you, and I am gonna remember you.”

Pain and death play a central role throughout the film. Pain and suffering are portrayed as necessary parts of life. In some ways pain and suffering are seen as being desired. Gus refers to the “scar” he has left on Hazel, a deep hurt that he will be remembered by. In response to Hazel’s reluctance to be Gus’s girlfriend, for fear of the pain it may cause, Gus replies, “Oh, I wouldn’t mind, Hazel Grace. It would be a privilege to have my heart broken by you.” The value of suffering is further revealed in the quote “Without pain, how could we know joy?”

Finally, the movie spends a significant amount of effort addressing the characters attitudes and feelings towards death. Hazel approaches death with a sense of resignation and inevitability.

“There will come a time when all of us are dead. All of us. There will come a time when there are no human beings remaining to remember that anyone ever existed or that our species ever did anything. There will be no one left to remember Aristotle or Cleopatra, let alone you. Everything that we did and built and wrote and thought and discovered will be forgotten and all of this will have been for naught. Maybe that time is coming soon and maybe it is millions of years away, but even if we survive the collapse of our sun, we will not survive forever. There was time before organisms experienced consciousness, and there will be time after. . And if the inevitability of human oblivion worries you, I encourage you to ignore it. God knows that’s what everyone else does.”

At the same time, Hazel is transfixed with finding out what happens to the characters in the novel *An Imperial Affliction* after the main character dies. This obsession mirrors her own fear about what will happen to her parents when she dies. In the film, these fears are somewhat relieved when she discovers that her mom has been earning a social work degree and that her life will go on.

For Gus, his greatest fear in death revolves around his fear that he will not accomplish anything significant in his life; that he won’t be remembered. As mentioned earlier, the film



supports the message that being loved deeply by a few is significant even if leaves the ones they love with scars.

As you work through this media study guide, you will further explore how these themes are developed and will practice using media production techniques to portray a message which stems from your own life story and your values.

1. Burnham, D. "Existentialism [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy]." 2011. <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/existent/>>

QUESTIONS

PRE-VIEWING

1. After reading through the overview of this film, are there any other stories that you are familiar with that share similarities with *The Fault in Our Stars* in terms of plot or storyline?
2. Consider the context of this film as its original storyline is based on a novel. How might the director of the *The Fault in Our Stars* have to adapt the film so that it remains true to the original story? Do all film versions of books stay true to their novel forms? Why not?
3. Think about a recent film you have seen. What role did the soundtrack play in conveying meaning and communicating the plot of the story?
4. In what ways do directors make use of images and visual symbols to support the themes of a movie? Can you think of some examples of symbolic imagery in films you are familiar with?

POST-VIEWING

1. Throughout the movie, though the main characters are very sick, they are not presented to the audience as being 'victims'. Why is this and why do you think it is important?
2. Relating to the first question, do you agree that sick people are often treated as 'the other'? What is 'the other'? Is this present in the film?
3. Many parents and several schools have expressed concern over the viewing of this film within the classroom. Some schools have even gone so far as to ban the book and film from the school curriculum. What aspects of this film might be considered challenging or controversial? Do you agree with this ban? Why or why not?
4. What themes do you see being expressed in the film? How does the music score and the cinematography support these themes.



""THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF FAULT TO BE FOUND AMID OUR STARS""

ACTIVITY 1

MUSIC AND SOUNDTRACK

Music is a powerful force that can change our emotions in an instant. Movie soundtracks are carefully assembled, and are in no way an accidental collection of songs which accompany movie images. Rather, soundtracks are collections of songs which are meant to bring about specific reactions from movie viewers. Directors and music supervisors create soundtracks which will bring about an intended reaction in the movie's audience. Director Josh Boone and music supervisor Season Kent carefully selected each song on the soundtrack to *The Fault in Our Stars*.

"MUSIC GIVES A SOUL TO THE UNIVERSE, WINGS TO THE MIND, FLIGHT TO THE IMAGINATION, AND LIFE TO EVERYTHING" - PLATO

The power of stories, especially when spoken orally or accompanied by music, help us as humans to connect to one another. Consider some of the main themes in *The Fault in Our Stars*, such as the fears around death, as well as being loved deeply instead of broadly. Almost all the characters in the movie display their own fears around death. For Hazel, this means leaving her parents behind when she dies. She is most afraid of the pain she will cause her



- 01 - All of the Stars - Ed Sheeran
- 02 - Simple as This - Jake Bugg
- 03 - Let Me In - Grouplove
- 04 - Tee Shirt - Birdy
- 05 - All I Want - Kodakline
- 06 - Long Way Down - Tom Odell
- 07 - Boom Clap - Charli XCX
- 08 - While I'm Alive - STRFKR
- 09 - Oblivion - Indians
- 10 - Strange Things Will Happen - The Radio Dept.
- 11 - Bomfalleralla - Afasi & Filthy
- 12 - Without Words - Ray LaMontagne
- 13 - Not About Angels - Birdy
- 14 - No One Ever Loved - Lykke Li

parents. This is evident in her statement that "the only thing worse than biting it from cancer is having a kid bite it from cancer". After Gus's funeral she comments that "funerals, I've decided, are not for the dead. They are for the living". For Augustus, this fear of death is displayed in his angst around being remembered.

Death brings about emotions of fear in almost all humans. Some people wish to leave their mark on the world. To live a life of purpose, and perhaps, to be remembered by others. Throughout the movie, Augustus expresses an intensity towards wanting to be remembered by others. That somehow, his very existence is dependent on how he is remembered and by whom. This is displayed in a discussion between Augustus and Hazel

Augustus: "I intend to lead an extraordinary life. To be remembered . . . I always thought I would be a hero . . . I was supposed to be special".

Hazel: "This obsession you have with being remembered . . . I am mad because I think you are special. Is that not enough? You think that the only way to lead a meaningful life is for everyone to remember you, for everyone to

love you. Guess what Gus, this is your life. This is all you get. You get me and you get your family and you get this world, and that's it. And if that's not enough for you, then I am sorry, but it's not nothing. Because I love you, and I am gonna remember you".

Consider this theme and its connection to the music chosen to accompany the film. What songs on the soundtrack might exude this feeling of sadness and fear concerning death and being remembered? Listen to Birdy's "Tee Shirt" on the soundtrack and read through the lyrics. How does this song speak to the theme of death and remembrance?

The movie's theme or message of being loved deeply by others, rather than being loved broadly, is evident throughout the film. Augustus directly speaks to this theme towards the end of the movie when Hazel reads the letter written by Augustus to van Houten, in which he is describing Hazel:

"She wasn't loved widely, but she was loved deeply. And isn't that more than most of us get?"

How does Kodakline's song "All I Want" speak to this theme?

All human experience is made up of stories. They are what connect us to ourselves and others. Our own story depends on how we perceive the world around us and how we think others perceive us. Create your own soundtrack (about 5 songs long) for your life. Choose songs that connect you with key moments in your life and that have great meaning to how you view yourself.



between his lips but never lights. The cigarette is a metaphor for Augustus. "They don't kill you unless you light them, and I've never lit one. It's a metaphor, see: You put

the killing thing right between your teeth, but you don't give it the power to do its killing." For Augustus, the unlit cigarette is his way of feeling like he has control over something. It is his way of feeling like cancer does not have the finally say.

Another example is the poignant scene of Hazel fighting with every step as she makes her way up a narrow staircase to the top floor of the Anne Frank house. This powerful imagery is representative of Hazel's struggle to find meaning and purpose amongst all the suffering², a theme which runs throughout the film.

The swing set is another example of an image being used to convey meaning. Although the swing set plays a more significant role in the book, in the movie it is used to represent a more innocent time in the life of Hazel; a carefree, worry free time when life seemed to be more simple. In the book it is eventually put up for sale, representing that the innocence of that time of life has past.

Many other significant images such as the smashing of Gus's trophies by his friend Isaac

and the bone playground prior to Gus's death are also used to support themes in the movie. Take a few minutes and discuss with a classmate the role these images serve.



After spending some time reflecting on the role of images in the movie, put together a slide presentation of images that represent the narrative of your life. These images should not be actual pictures of your life, but should be symbolic of themes or significant events in your life. Your slide presentation should be between 5 and 10 slides long. While you are constructing your slide presentation reflect upon the soundtrack you created for Activity 1 and, like a film director, try to create alignment between your soundtrack and the images.

"IT'S A METAPHOR, SEE: YOU PUT THE KILLING THING RIGHT BETWEEN YOUR TEETH, BUT YOU DON'T GIVE IT THE POWER TO DO ITS KILLING."



ACTIVITY 2

(CINEMATOGRAPHY)

Cinematography is the art or science of motion picture photography¹. It is not simply a recording of the events of the movie, but is used to convey meaning and to support various themes. Throughout *The Fault in Our Stars* symbolic images are frequently used to support the story.

One example is the imagery of the cigarette that Augustus puts

¹"Cinematography - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia." 2003. 21 Oct. 2014
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinematography>>

²<http://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/movies/the-fault-in-our-stars-review-a-terrific-addition-to-the-canon-of-doomed-young-love/2014/06/04/6e35c38e-eb8-11e3-b98c-72cef4a00499_story.html>

ACTIVITY 3

THE VALUE OF FICTION

Before starting this activity spend a few minutes reflecting on the following 2 questions.

Why do authors write fictional stories and why do people enjoy reading them?

Why were Hazel and Augustus so connected to the novel *An Imperial Affliction*?

Perhaps the most prominent symbol in the movie is the book *An Imperial Affliction*. Both Augustus and Hazel are obsessed with it. "Sometimes, you read a book and it fills you with this weird evangelical zeal, and you become convinced that the shattered world will never be put back together unless and until all living humans read the book." In many ways this

"THAT'S PART OF WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THE BOOK IN SOME WAYS. IT PORTRAYS DEATH TRUTHFULLY. YOU DIE IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR LIFE, IN THE MIDDLE OF A

book is a reflection of their lives and helps them to deal with their own mortality.

The book *An Imperial Affliction* highlights the question, what purpose does fiction serve? In the movie Hazel refers to the book as

her bible. It is a reflection of her own life and provides her with some guidance.

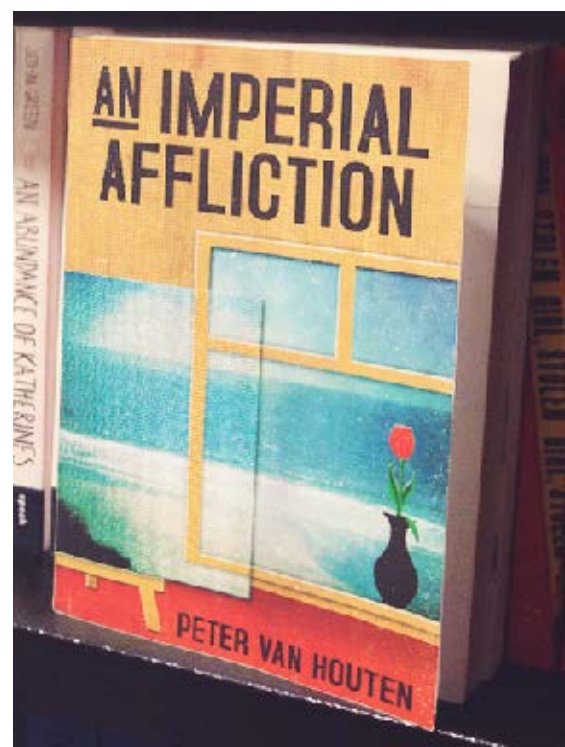
The book is unique in that it does not provide simple answers to questions related to life's meaning and purpose. Augustus and Hazel find this refreshing. "That's part of what I like about the book in some ways. It portrays death truthfully. You die in the middle of your life, in the middle of a sentence." Although Hazel likes this honest portrayal of life and death in the book, the sudden ending leads her and Gus to pursue a meeting with the author Peter van Houten to find some sort of closure. Hazel needs to find out what happened to Anna's mother after Anna dies. She wants to know that Anna's mother carries on. In the same way Hazel needs to know that her parents will move forward after her impending death. Hazel would also like to see that she will carry on in the memories of her parents.

So does fiction serve a purpose? Perhaps writers feel they have a message they need to communicate. Maybe authors use writing to help themselves synthesis and make sense of their own life experience. Writers may even believe they can change the world for the better through their stories. In John Green's author's note at the beginning of the book the movie is based on he states as a reminder, "Neither novels nor their readers benefit from attempts to divine whether facts



hide inside a story. Such efforts attack the very idea that made-up stories can matter, which is sort of the foundational assumption of our species."

Now that you have spent some time thinking about the role of fictional novels in the movie *The Fault in Our Stars* think back to the soundtracks and slide presentations you created in the first two activities. Pick a section from your slide presentation, along with the corresponding soundtrack, and right a short piece of fiction (about 5 pages long) which fits with the images and music.



SOURCES OF FURTHER STUDY

1. Because of its intense and emotionally charged content, many people have questioned the suitability of *The Fault in our Stars* for teens and young adults. There are websites that parents and teachers can view, which describe the basic outline of movies for kids and teens, which address possible issues within the film. Do you think this information can be applied to everyone (of a particular age category) or does it depend on the individual?

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-fault-in-our-stars>

2. The title of the film is taken from the following:

"THE FAULT, DEAR BRUTUS, IS NOT IN OUR STARS,
BUT IN OURSELVES, THAT WE ARE UNDERLINGS"

Spoken by Cassius, in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, (I, ii, 140-141).

What is the meaning of these lines? How do they relate to the film *The Fault in our Stars*?

3. Check out Nerdfighters, a video blogging space created by John Green and his brother (vlogbrothers):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyQi79aYfxU#t=139>

4. John Green quoted the following:

"SOME PEOPLE HAVE LIVES. SOME
PEOPLE HAVE MUSIC" - John Green

What do you think he meant by this? Do you agree or disagree?

5. There is a Bollywood version of *The Fault in our Stars* currently being made. How do you think this might differ from the original Josh Boone version? Will the message of the film be different? How do you think these two versions might compare and contrast culturally?



THEODYKSTRA



ROCHELLE LAMOUREUX

INTRODUCTION

The Fault in Our Stars (film). (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fault_in_Our_Stars_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fault_in_Our_Stars_(film))

KEY CONCEPTS

Burnham, D. (n.d.). Existentialism. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/existent/>

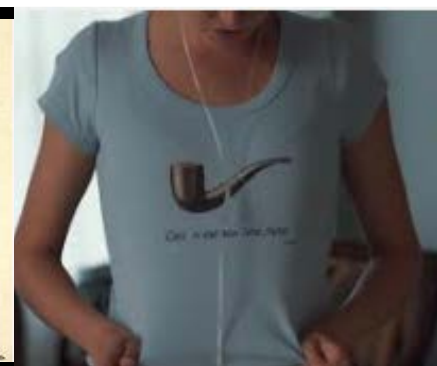
ACTIVITY 2

Cinematography . (n.d.). Wikipedia,. Retrieved October 21, 2014, from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinematography>

Hornaday, Ann. (2014, June 5). 'The Fault in Our Stars' review: A terrific addition to the canon of doomed young love. The Washington Post. Retrieved October 21, 2014 from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/movies/the-fault-in-our-stars-review-a-terrific-addition-to-the-canon-of-doomed-young-love/2014/06/04/6e35c38e-ebe8-11e3-b98c-72cef4a00499_story.html

IMAGES

The Treachery of Images. Wikipedia. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Treachery_of_Images



THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES

Belgian surrealist painter Rene Magritte, created this work (image on the left; printed T-shirt worn by Hazel before she visits van Houten, on the right) in the late 1920's. Magritte explained that the painting itself is not a pipe, it is simply an image of a pipe (Wikipedia). What does this say about images and their meaning? How can these ideas and concepts relate to *The Fault in Our Stars*?

HANDOUT FOR ACTIVITY 1

"Tee Shirt" - Birdy

In the morning when you wake up
I like to believe you are thinking of me
And when the sun comes through your window
I like to believe you've been dreaming of me

Dreaming mmm mmm

I know
'cause I'd spend half this morning
Thinking about the t-shirt you sleep in

I should know
'cause I'd spend all the whole day
Listening to your message I'm keeping and never deleting

When I saw you,
Everyone knew
I liked the effect that you had on my eyes

But no one else heard
The weight of your words
Or felt the effect that they have on my mind

Falling mmm mmm

I know
'cause I'd spend half this morning
Thinking about the t-shirt you sleep in

I should know
'cause I'd spend all the whole day
Listening to your message I'm keeping and never deleting

"All I Want" - Kodakline

All I want is nothing more
To hear you knocking at my door
'Cause if I could see your face once more
I could die a happy man I'm sure
When you said your last goodbye

I died a little bit inside
I lay in tears in bed all night
Alone without you by my side

But if you loved me
Why'd you leave me?

Take my body

Take my body

All I want is,

And all I need is

To find somebody.

I'll find somebody like you.

Oh oh

So you brought out the best of me,

A part of me I've never seen.

You took my soul and wiped it clean.

Our love was made for movie screens.

But if you loved me

Why'd you leave me?

Take my body,

Take my body.

All I want is,

And all I need is

To find somebody.

I'll find somebody.

Oh

If you loved me

Why'd you leave me?

Take my body,

Take my body.

All I want is,

All I need is

To find somebody.

I'll find somebody like you.

oh

THE BOOK THIEF

An exploration into living conditions during the Holocaust

Introduction

The film *The Book Thief* is set in Germany during World War II. Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich, manages to endure the onerous times by stealing books. With the help of her foster father, she learns to read and secretly shares her stolen books with her community during bombing raids.

Content Advisory

Parents should be aware that this movie presents an intense portrayal of life under the Nazis. Characters suffer cruel fates but also are great examples of the power of sacrifice, friendship, courage and heroism.

Learning Outcomes

This course considers cinema as a springboard for critical reflection about interpretations of history. It is expected that the students of our course will assist students as they analyze the significance of the Holocaust under the PLOs of History 12.



Previewing Questions

This media study guide will push students become active, critical, interpretive, aware viewers of World War Two cinema. Before the movie the students will begin by brainstorming everything they know about this topic while using a pre-established Google Document. The objective of these pre-viewing questions is for students to begin to access their prior knowledge of World War II and Nazi Germany.

The setting for *The Book Thief* is a sad, bleak neighbourhood on Himmel Street. Himmel Street is located in the fictional town of Molching, Germany. Molching was located close to Munich,



Key Concepts



Throughout the media project, students should enrich their understanding of the past as they apply the concepts of historical thinking:

- The Holocaust
- Nazi implementation of racial policies
- Kristallnacht
- Ghettos

Additional Resources

Other resources that the students can access for ideas of the living conditions.

- Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. Random House.
- Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*. New York: Pantheon Books. 1991.
- Zapruder, Alexandra. *Salvaged pages : young writers' diaries of the Holocaust*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2004.

Germany. The story starts in 1939 at the beginning of World War II and the story continues on into the war years. Nine-year-old Liesel Meminger lives in the deserted neighbourhood with her parents, Rosa and Hans Huberman. All of the Jewish people are gone and their stores, homes, and neighbourhoods have been burned to the ground. The Hubermans are suffering and struggling to make ends meet. Rosa does laundry and Hans is a painter.

Answer the following questions:

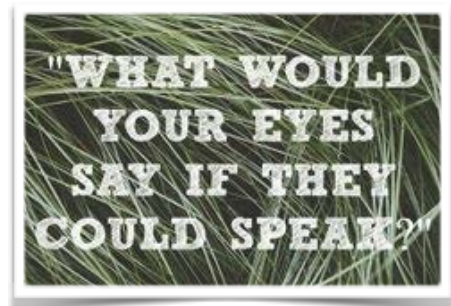
1. How would you imagine a Jewish person, or child would live while growing up in Molching during this particular time in history.
2. Describe your current neighbourhood/city.

Activity One

Form a discussion to show how people felt in these environments. Students should focus on the physical and emotional conditions. To encourage discussion, work in a small team and brainstorm. For assessment, students must write down their responses in their journal and submit to the teacher.

Consider the following questions:

1. In your own words, describe the conditions of the living conditions portrayed in the movie. What noises might you hear? What would you see? What would you smell?



2. What were the difficulties that Liesel and others faced?

Lead a classroom wide discussion and add or update their thoughts in the Google Document.

Finally, ask the students to individually reflect on what they have studied and learned during this lesson and document that reflection in a journal.

Activity Two

Present the class with additional photographs from the Warsaw Ghetto talk about the physical and emotional conditions there. Explain to the students that they will produce a photo journal comparison (Google Document) of three things. The students are to compare and contrast life in:



1. Their own neighbourhood/ city
2. The conditions portrayed in the movie and
3. Conditions during the Warsaw Ghettos.

Students must use internet images (Google Street View, various galleries in student links) to create this document. The following items will be used for assessment:

- The document compares and contrasts items clearly
- Images used are clear, relevant and labelled correctly
- It follows a consistent order when discussing the comparison
- Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content



References

- Gallery of Holocaust Images (2014). In Gallery of Holocaust Images. Retrieved on Oct. 12, 2014 from <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/gallery/gallery1.htm>
- Student Achievement: History 12 (2006). In British Columbia. Retrieved on Oct. 10, 2014 from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social_studies/2006history12.pdf
- Warsaw Ghetto Gallery (2014). In Jewish Virtual Library. Retrieved on Oct 12, 2014 from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/warsawpictoc.html>
- Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (2014). In Wikipedia. Retrieved on Oct. 12, 2014 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw_Ghetto_Uprising





Food Inc.

Media Study Guide

Sarah Rowe

Introduction

Using the Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you make connections between the issues examined in *Food, Inc.*, a documentary film, and the society in which you live.

1. Read the **Plot Synopsis**.
2. Complete the **Pre-Viewing** questions, and read through the sections **Controversy in Food, Inc.**, **Food Economics**, and **Health, Safety, & Ethics**. The sections provide additional background information on the topics in *Food, Inc.*, but in a Canadian context. They also contain focus questions that will help you concentrate on key issues in the film.
3. Watch *Food, Inc.*
4. Complete the activities in **Food Economics and Health, Safety, & Ethics**. You may wish to do these activities in two separate class periods.
5. Complete the **Post-Viewing** section and activities. You may wish to follow up with the **Additional Learning and Resources** links provided in each section.

Plot Synopsis

Food production in America has led the way for much of the world. Agricultural advances have allowed farmers and other food producers to make more food, more quickly and for less money than ever before. Is there a cost to this? These practices also force us to consider a number of different topics: animal welfare, childhood obesity, environmental decline, poverty and political power, and more. They affect Canada and other western countries as well.

Food, Inc., a documentary released in 2008, exposes a number of "secret practices" of the so-called commercial agriculture industry, including food lobbying (the use of paid government regulators and lawmakers, who are supposed to pass favourable legislation for the food industry), the "growing" of food animals (livestock) in increasingly poor conditions, and the subsidization of commodity crops that harm the livelihoods of small farmers.

Some of the groups and companies featured in *Food, Inc.*, accuse the filmmakers of bias, sensationalism, and one-sidedness. Still others commend them for exposing unfair and unsafe practices.



Curriculum Learning Objectives for this Chapter

Ontario: Food and Nutrition Sciences, Grade 12 College/University (HFA4M)

- ✓ describe the sociocultural importance of food in social interactions,
- ✓ describe the economic factors that have an impact on food choices of individuals and families
- ✓ describe the effects of various economic factors on food production and supply
- ✓ investigate the impact of a variety of political factors on food quality, production, and supply
- ✓ identify the impact of biotechnology on food production and safety
- ✓ investigate the extent of hunger in the world today
- ✓ summarize the causes of food insecurity and the economic and social policies that influence it
- ✓ describe policies necessary to protect the health and safety of food producers and protect land, water, and biodiversity

Other suitable courses: BC Food & Nutrition Grade 12, other senior health, nutrition, politics, or home economics courses.

1. Pre-Viewing

Pre-Viewing sets the stage for viewing the movie. Before viewing the film, have keep a record of your responses. You may choose to do so in any number of ways – written word, audio recording, or video, etc.

1. Think about your day-to-day food choices. Who or what influences what food items you purchase and what you choose to eat?

Consider any personal or external reason for buying and eating types of foods. Some reasons include:

Personal: Taste, health benefits, familiarity, ethical or religious beliefs.

External: Availability, price, choices of others like family, friends, or co-workers.

2. How often do you make decisions about purchasing food?

Consider if you do so each day, several times each day, weekly, or rarely. Describe your individual scenario however you wish.

KEY CONCEPTS FOR THIS SECTION

- ✓ Who determines what you eat?
- ✓ Do you use food socially?
- ✓ Where does food come from in Canada?

2. How do you, your friends, and your family use food and eating in a social sense?

This question encourages you not only to think of food as a means of sustenance, but also as a means of connecting and sharing with others. You may indicate things such as being able to converse with family over dinner, celebrate at a restaurant with friends, or a special religious festival with certain foods as social benefits/aspects of food and eating.

3. Where does your food come from? Write a short summary of how one of your favourite foods ends up on your plate. What people are involved? Modes of processing and transportation?

You may be unaware of the amount of work it takes before a food item is available for purchase at the grocery store or on the table for consumption at a restaurant. Is the apple you ate for lunch Canadian? Grown in your own province? Imported from another country?



KEY TERMS FOR THIS CHAPTER

- ✓ **Food Insecurity:** Lack of consistent access to nutritious food
- ✓ **Income Assistance:** Money paid by the government to those unable to find work or whose work pays little
- ✓ **Food Inflation:** Rise in the prices of food
- ✓ **Industrialization:** Use of large-scale production practices
- ✓ **Family Farms:** Farms owned and operated by one or more families
- ✓ **Traditional Farming:** Smaller-scale farming practices to conserve resources while producing crops/livestock
- ✓ **Industrial Farming:** Use of large-scale production to produce livestock/crops
- ✓ **Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA):** A government agency that oversees various stages of food production
- ✓ **Organic Food:** Food that has been produced and/or processed in accordance with CFIA Organic guidelines.

Controversy in Food, Inc.

Themes: There are a number of main themes in the film. These include: Poverty, Social Assistance, Workplace Health and Safety, Obesity Epidemic, Animal Rights, Genetic Engineering, Intellectual Property Rights. Many of these are controversial. Why? Do any of these issues appear in your day-to-day life?

Bias: Bias is a tendency to feel strongly for or against someone or something. Often, the media is criticized for showing bias (sometimes based on politics, the desire to avoid controversy or start controversy, personal opinion, etc.). Do you see bias in media coverage of events that affect you? How could the producers of Food, Inc., use bias in their film? Do you think this would be intentional or unintentional?

What, in your mind, could change the responses you made in the Pre-Viewing section? Would one of these scenarios have to happen to you personally or to a close friend or family member? Would hearing about it in the news be enough?

Throughout the study guide, you will find **Controversy Alerts**. These are topics, methods, or ideas that might be considered controversial by some people. The material presented in the film may contradict your values or make you or others feel uncomfortable. When discussing these ideas with the class, it is important to express your views, but also be open-minded to the views of others.



2. Food Economics



KEY CONCEPTS FOR THIS SECTION

- ✓ Who decides what foods people should eat?
- ✓ Who may be affected by food insecurity?
- ✓ How do living/social situations and economic outlooks affect food access?

Food Economics in Canada

Food Inc. includes a number of interviews with Americans who do not have affordable access to healthy foods. This is called **food insecurity** or a lack of food security. In the film, a family states that it is more affordable to buy a fast food meal for four people, including beverages and desserts, than it is to buy vegetables for those same four people for one meal.

In Canada, many groups of people face food insecurity. These often include people on social assistance, newcomers to Canada, and those from First Nations/Inuit/Metis groups. However, people from any group or background can experience food insecurity from time to time. Canadian Community Health Survey estimates that 12.2% of Canadian households experienced food insecurity in 2011 (Heart and Stroke Foundation, 2014).

In 1948, access to food was established as a human right. Since then, Canada has established and reestablished programs to assist those in need in obtaining essentials for living, including food (**income assistance** or **welfare**). However, the amount of basic social assistance spending has not changed since 1989 (Rideout, 2006).

Focus Questions

1. Who decides what is an affordable price to pay for a week's worth of groceries in Canada?
2. How does this decision influence what foods people buy and eat?
3. How does a family decide what foods they buy and eat?

Activity

Choose one of the family scenarios. Using newspaper flyers or the Internet, research the average weekly food costs for your family of choice. Then, present your budgets to the class or a small group.

Family 1: A family of three. Both parents work, have an above-average income, and have a four-year-old daughter, who has severe food allergies. They live in a major urban centre in BC. They eat meat 4-5 times per week. They choose **organic fruits and vegetables** most of the time.

Family 2: A family of five, who lives in a suburban town in Manitoba. The father works for an average income. There are three children, a 13-year-old girl, 6 year-old boy, and 2 year-old girl. The mother is pregnant. The eldest daughter has decided to become a vegetarian and enjoys going out to eat with her friends at school and on weekends.

Family 3: A family of four. They are of the Dokis First Nation and live on the reserve in Northern Ontario. They earn a below average income

and have been on income assistance twice in the last two years. They prefer to eat meat instead of vegetarian dishes.

Family 4: A family of four. There are two children, a 14-year-old boy and a 17-year-old boy. They live in a suburban town in PEI. The father has recently been laid off from work. The mother is unable to work due to a disability. They rely on social assistance and food banks often and sometimes eat fast food when other foods are too expensive.

Discussion Questions

1. People make decisions about what to eat based on age, personal preference, health, and ethical considerations. Should income assistance or food programs be responsible for accommodating personal choices such as:

- vegetarianism/veganism?
- food allergies?
- traditional food preferences?
- pregnancy/nursing?
- desire for organic foods?
- location of living/cost of food?

2. Consider what may happen to Family 1 if both parents were to lose their incomes.

3. Does income assistance provide enough for the weekly budgets of Families 3 and 4? What would you do if you lived with one of these families to ensure everyone had adequate amounts of healthy foods?

4. Do people in large urban centres make decisions about how food becomes available for smaller areas and/or First Nations reserves? Why or why not?

Controversy Alert

What controversial ideas come across in the film at this point? Detail some specific examples in your notes.

NOTES

- Food inflation from Aug 2013 to Aug 2014 in Canada was 2.2%. This means the average household cost to buy staple food items rose by 2.2%.
- The average household income in Canada is \$38 700.
- Income assistance varies by province, from \$200 in PEI to about \$4000 in Manitoba.
- In 2012, the average household in Canada spent about \$8000 a year on food. Organic produce and meats can cost up to 4x that of non-organic items.
- Pregnant women require an additional 300 calories per day; nursing mothers require an additional 500. This is about one extra small meal.
- Because of Canada's large size and relatively small population, voting districts are spread over large distances. The same district may include urban, suburban, and rural populations.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING AND RESOURCES

- <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/csto1/cpiso8a-eng.htm>
- <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/personal-finance/household-finances/is-organic-food-too-costly/article4401420/>
- <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=ces&document=part1&lang=e#ces11>
- <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1031ENG.pdf>
- <http://www.canoe.ca/Canoe/Money/News/2014/06/21/meat1000.jpg>



3. Health, Safety, & Ethics

KEY CONCEPTS FOR THIS SECTION

- ✓ How does demand affect farming practices in Canada?
- ✓ How do farming practices in Canada affect different groups of people and animals?
- ✓ Who decides the rights of people and animals in the farming industry?

Health, Safety, & Ethics in Canada

Food, Inc. examines the health and safety of farmers and agricultural workers, and the health and welfare of livestock. The film argues that the **industrialization** or commercialization of the food system in America promotes:

- decline in health and ethical treatment of livestock (and quality of food product) due to high demand and poor conditions
- decreases in pay and ability to find safe work for agricultural workers (e.g., slaughterhouse workers)
- decline in **family farms** and loss of **traditional farming practices**

In Canada, the number of family farms are declining as the younger generation decides not to do that type of work (Statistics Canada, 2006). This may be because many farms, especially small scale farms, experience progressive declines in revenue. To try and meet demand, farms have resorted to **industrial farming practices** such as confinement of livestock. Slaughterhouse workers have to rush through their work and may work in unsanitary or unsafe conditions. The **Canadian Food Inspection Agency** is responsible for inspection of slaughterhouses, food packaging plants and setting standards for treatment of livestock.

Focus Questions

1. Why would a family farmer decide to upgrade his or her farm to accommodate industrial practices?
2. How does this decision affect the other living things on the farm (including livestock, workers, and the environment)?
3. How does this affect the food you buy?

Activity

1. Complete the table as you watch Food, Inc.

Scenario	People & Animals Affected	Positive Outcomes	Negative Outcomes
Monsanto patent claims for soybeans			
Chicken farmers increase the number of chickens they produce			
Consumers demand more organic livestock and produce			
FDA closes the number of slaughterhouses in the US and enlarges existing ones			

Controversy Alert

Do you notice bias in this section of the film? On whose part? Jot down specific examples in your notes.

2. Form groups for debate. One group will be **PRO industrial farming**, and one will be **PRO traditional/family farming**. Prepare responses to the following questions, based on your group's perspective:

- Should farmers use genetically modified seeds/crops? Why or why not?
- Are farmers responsible for the welfare of livestock that will eventually be consumed? Why or why not?
- Is food that is prepared without Canadian Food Inspection Agency oversight (such as raw/unpasteurized milk, home-butchered meats) safe for people to eat? Should there be restrictions on these practices? Why or why not?

3. Present your responses in a creative format (e.g., video, multi-media, song, poster, etc.) to the other group.

4. Consider the responses of both groups, and your responses to the focus questions for this section. Did your responses change? How?

NOTES

- Agriculture and related industries provided 1 out of every 8 jobs in Canada (about 2.1 million people).
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has Acts governing dairy products, eggs, fruits and vegetables, honey, icewine, maple products, livestock, and organic products. They also have Acts for animal feed, farm fertilizers, health of animals and bees, and drugs.
- There are fines of up to \$50 000 or 6 months of imprisonment for violating the Acts.
- Ontario has the largest number of family farms in Canada (57 211).
- From 2000 to 2005, inflation for items required to run a farm rose 8.6% - the products sold by the farm only rose 1.7% in the same period.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING AND RESOURCES

- <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/eng/1297964599443/1297965645317>
- <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/articles/finpicture-portrait-eng.htm>
- <http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/home/?id=1395690825741>
- <http://www.aqpal.ca/>

Controversy Alert

Choose a controversial issue or statement from your notes. Research the issue in the Canadian context, using news media (print and online). Does the viewpoint expressed in the story differ because it is Canadian? Because it is expressed in the media? How and why do you think that is?

4. Post-Viewing

KEY CONCEPTS FOR THIS SECTION

Review your responses from the Pre-Viewing section

- ✓ Who determines what you eat?
- ✓ Do you use food socially?
- ✓ Where does food come from in Canada?

These additional activities can be done to increase your awareness of the themes of the film and how they affect the food system in Canada.

Who Determines What You Eat? Where Does Food Come From in Canada?

There are a number of policy-makers in both Canada and the United States that determine how food is grown, prepared, shipped, and made available to consumers.

Think of a food item you eat or buy often and particularly enjoy. Do you think the system that produces the item needs to be changed?

Activity

Write a letter to a food producer, farmer, or legislator. In your letter, state the food item you are concerned about, and why. Ask them to consider another production method or to make other choices available to consumers. You may wish to make an open video letter and post it online.



Activity

Many of the themes and issues in this film are intertwined. Create a concept map as a class of how the themes, issues, people, and organizations are related.

How Do You Use Food Socially?

Different cultures and families place different levels of importance on food. For some families, it may be very important that they have a vegetarian diet. Others may desire organic foods, or those purchased from local farmers' markets. Certain foods may be part of religious ceremonies or have special significance to a group of people.

Activity

Organize a class pot-luck lunch after viewing the film. Each member of the class can bring a dish that has particular importance to them, with



enough for the class to share. Ask each student to include a small note about how the dish is important to them, or ask them to share with the class.

You may wish to put together a recipe book or blog with the class' recipes and the background of each dish. You could turn the printed book into a fundraiser for a cause related to the film.

Activity

Think about the types of people who may be experiencing food insecurity in your community. How can you help them? As a class, consider organizing a charity fundraiser, food drive, or other creative idea to help those in need around you? You may be surprised that local restaurants and grocery stores are happy to make food donations for community causes.

REFERENCES

Statistics Canada. (2014). Consumer price index by province. Accessed from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/cpiso8a-eng.htm>

Jackson, S.K. (2012). Is organic food too costly? *The Globe and Mail*, July 10. Accessed from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/personal-finance/household-finances/is-organic-food-too-costly/article4401420/>

Elections Canada. (2011). The electoral system in Canada. Accessed from <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=ces&document=part1&lang=e#ces11>

Tweddle, A., Battle, K., and Torjman, S. (2013). Welfare in Canada in 2012. Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Accessed from <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1031ENG.pdf>

Statistics Canada. (2006). The financial picture of farms in Canada. Accessed from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/articles/finpicture-portrait-eng.htm>

All photos courtesy of MS Office Clipart Gallery.

An Inconvenient Truth

Study Guide



Introduction:

This study guide focuses on the interrelationship between media and environmental issues through the study of the documentary film “An Inconvenient Truth”. It is designed for grades 11-12.

Key persons:

Al Gore

Davis Guggenheim Director

Laurie David Producer

Lawrence Bender Producer

Scott Z. Burns Producer

Jeff Skoll Executive Producer

Lesley Chilcott Co-Producer

Learning Outcomes:

By engaging in the activities in this study guide, students will be able to:

- Critically analyze a media production using a holistic framework
- Use digital technology to produce a media production of their choice
- Understand and express their bias
- Engage in the discussion of a controversial issue using the de-mystification strategy
- Participate in a debate around a controversial issue
- Form an informed opinion about global warming



Image retrieved from: https://ca.movieposter.com/poster/MPW-18038/Inconvenient_Truth.html

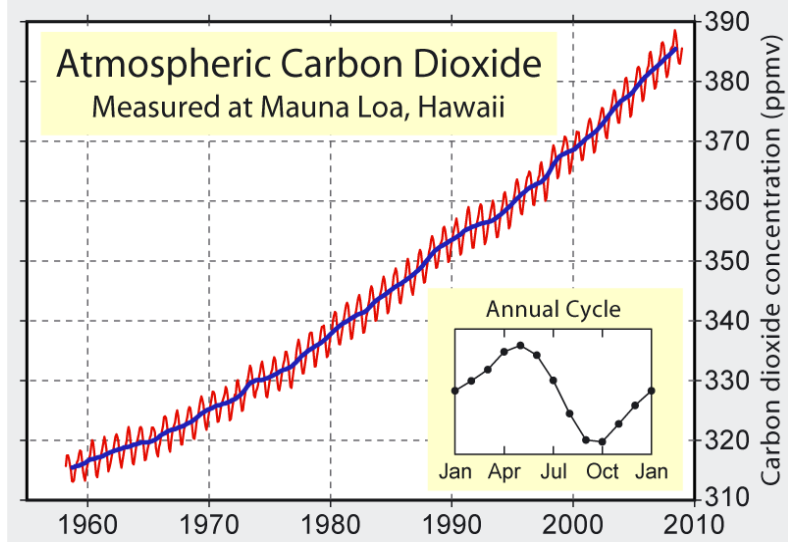
Poster Analysis: Introductory Activity

Analyze the poster as follows:

- Draw a table with two columns headed denotation and connotation.
- In the denotation column describe the images and text (title and taglines).
- In the connotation column write down the connotations of each element.
- Write down the overall meaning of the poster by completing this sentence “See this film and ...”

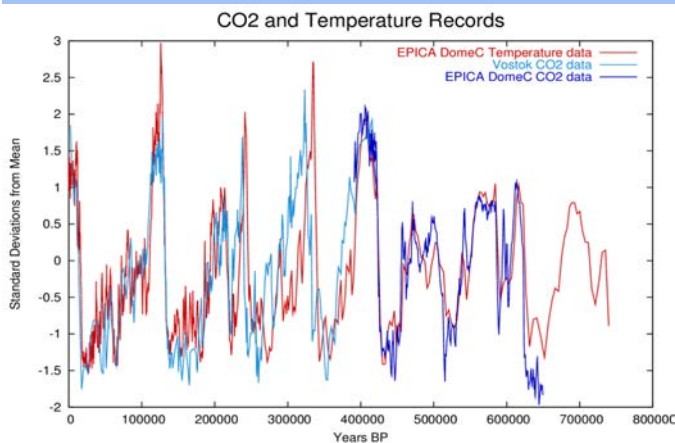
Film Synopsis:

An Inconvenient Truth is a documentary film released in 2006 discussing global warming through intertwining Al Gore's global show with his personal life story. The show, which Al Gore presented throughout the globe focuses on the scientific proofs of global warming and its present and future effects. The film mixes parts of the presentation with Al Gore telling different incidents in his life like his first encounter with global warming while studying in Harvard, his work as a senator, the near death experience of his son, the death of his sister due to lung cancer and losing US elections in. After introducing the scientific proofs, the film highlights and refutes the three main myths about global warming : 1) it is controversial, 2) it is a choice between the environment and the economy, and 3) If it is real, it is too big to do anything about. The film ends with different suggestions of how to improve the situation like recycling, and raising



Film background:

Al Gore's interest in environmental issues started as he was studying in Harvard. In his political career, he focused on environmental issues and helped broker a couple of treaties till his defeat in the presidential election in 2000. After that he refocused on global warming, edited the slide show and started touring the world. Turning the slide show into a film was Laurie David's idea. She assembled a team to convince Al Gore, who was skeptical at the beginning. Davis Guggenheim, the director introduced the idea of a narrative thread by Al Gore, so the audience can connect with the character as in a live performance. The film is credited for raising public awareness on global warming and is being integrated in curricula across the globe. The film received many awards, the most prominent of them are Academy Award for Best Documentary & Best Song.



Before Watching the Movie



Individual concept map

Each student will design a concept map about what they know about global warming. They can draw the concept map or use of the freely available software like [Spiderscribe](#) or [stormboard](#) to design it digitally.

Group concept map

In groups of 3, students will compare their individual concept maps and synthesize them into 1 concept map.

Revised Concept maps

Each group updates its concept map based on what they learnt from the movie

Film Critical Analysis Activity:

This media critical analysis is based on Bazalgette (1992) key aspects of Media Education. The purpose of this activity is to develop a holistic deeper understanding of the film and its message instead of just focusing on what the film says. Students will be divided into 6 groups and each group will focus on one area, research it and present their research results to the rest of the class in a format of their choice: orally, presentation, film, etc...

- **Agency:: Who made this film and why?**
- **Category: What sort of media is it?**
- **Technology: How was the film produced?**
- **Language: How do you make sense of the film?**
- **Audience: who is the intended audience?**
- **Representation: What does it say about different categories of people?**

The Great Debate:

Students will be divided into 4 groups: 2 advocating that global warming is man-made, while the other 2 groups against this and view it as a myth. A date for the debate will be set with 2 weeks of preparation preceding it. During preparation, students are encouraged to use the de-mystification strategy and answer the following questions:

- What is the issue about? Identifying the key point.
- What are the arguments? What is being said & if there is enough support for the claims being made what criteria are used to make a judgement?
- What is assumed?
- How are the arguments manipulated? (How media is involved?)

Students are encouraged to seek other resources supporting and arguing against global warming to formulate solid arguments



On the day of the debate: A pro group and an against group will be grouped together to form the judges.

Structure of the debate:

- The affirmative group will be given 10 minutes uninterrupted to present its argument
- The against group will be given 10 minutes uninterrupted to present its argument
- Break for 10 minutes for group members to consult
- The against group will be given 5 minutes for rebuttal and conclusion
- The affirmative group will be given 5 minutes for rebuttal and conclusion
- Break for 15 minutes for the judges to discuss their decision
- The judges will present their decision in 5 minutes explaining why the arguments were more convincing



Focus Questions

1. Media texts can have a variety of purposes: entertainment, information, education, artistic expression, persuasion, propaganda, profit, etc. Which of these purposes do you think motivated the makers of An Inconvenient Truth? Use evidence from the film to justify your answer.
2. A documentary can have different tones: serious, light-hearted, optimistic, pessimistic, celebratory, condemnatory, resigned, critical, uncritical, ironic, etc. Identify different tones in An Inconvenient Truth. What are the purposes of the different tones? Identify how these tones are achieved through images, sound and voice.
3. The opening sequence of An Inconvenient Truth is quite powerful in terms of the use of images, sound and music. Analyze the opening sequence to show how images and sound/music construct meaning and mood.
4. The narrative of An Inconvenient Truth alternates between vignettes about Al Gore and lecture segments. Why do you think this was chosen instead of all lecture segments to convey the research?
5. Identify sequences in the film which make an emotional appeal. Then identify sequences in the film which aim for a rational argument. Why is it important to have both in this film?
6. An Inconvenient Truth was co-produced by Participant Productions. Research the company by visiting their website (www.participantproductions.com). Locate their mission statement. In what ways does 'An Inconvenient Truth' reflect the aims of Participant Productions?
7. Do you think that An Inconvenient Truth has influenced how people see and act on climate change?

While Watching the Film

During the movie, use the template below to take notes:

Main Point	Supporting details	Technological effects	Time in the film



After Watching the Film

In groups of three, produce a 5-minute video explaining your stance on global warming. Your video should include the following criteria:

- How you reached this conclusion
- What actions you are planning to take based on your opinion
- At least three examples from the film
- What evidence or sources you used to base your opinion on
- Any further questions you have about global warming

Assessment

A rubric can be used to assess the five-minute media production video. Assessment criteria will be based on how well the student is able to explain their opinion, and back up their opinion with sources and facts.

New Thinking on the Climate Crisis: Al Gore Speech

Al Gore is a very captivating speaker. In this speech for TED, Al Gore gives an update on the global warming situation. He puts forth the idea that global warming is a blessing in disguise because it allows us all to heros. He also conveys the message that global warming is an easier problem to tackle than many other social issues we face today.



The Great Global Warming Swindle

Look at the other side of the global warming debate through the lens of director Martin Durkin. This film was released March 7, 2007 and it suggests that the scientific opinion on global warming has been influenced by the media as well as funding and political factors. The film has been welcomed by skeptics of global warming, but criticized by scientific organizations and individual scientists.

Additional Resources

Bazalgette, C. (1992). Key aspects of media education. In M. Alvarado & O. Boyd-Barrett (Eds.), *Media Education: An introduction* (pp. 199-219). London: Open University Press.

Boykoff, M.T.; [Boykoff, J.M.](#) (2004). "Balance as bias: Global warming and the US prestige press". *Global Environmental Change* (14): 125–136.

Education Scotland. (2011). Exploring Climate Change. Retrieved From: <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/exploringclimatechange/communicate/dvdsandmovies/aninconvenienttruth.asp>

Ereaut, Gill; Segrit, Nat (2006). ["Warm Words: How are we Telling the Climate Story and can we Tell it Better?"](#). London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Gore, Al (2013). "Al Gore: New Thinking on the Climate Crisis." TED: Ideas worth Spreading. http://www.ted.com/talks/al_gore_s_new_thinking_on_the_climate_crisis.html

Moser & Dilling, M., and L. (2007). *Creating a Climate for Change*. Cambridge University Press. [ISBN 978-0-521-86923-2](#).

Nissani, Moti (1999). "Media Coverage of the Green House Effect". *Population and Environment* **21** (1): 27–43, 36. [doi:10.1007/BF02436119](#).

Official Movie Website

<http://www.takepart.com/an-inconvenient-truth>