



STUDY GUIDE
Women Make Movies

Escuela, A film by Hannah Weyer

LESSON: Students will **conduct a debate** on a related topic raised in the documentary, **Escuela**. Students will view the documentary, discuss related topics raised in the film, conduct research and debate the chosen topic in class. Extension activities include research projects and a **letter-writing campaign**.

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

SUBJECTS: Government, Sociology, Social Problems, Civics, Communications, Speech, Language Arts

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION: five days to 3 weeks

For many years, social activists, politicians and educators have debated several proposals to improve the lives of migrant workers and their families. The P.O.V. program, *Escuela* can be used to introduce and heighten awareness of several of these issues. In *Escuela*, Liliana and Elizabeth Luis - two Mexican-American migrant sisters - try to make their way in 21st century America. For Liliana, who begins her freshman year in high school, this means dealing with the harsh demands of work in the fields, constant travel and endlessly changing schools, classes and friends as she migrates with her farm-worker family between California, Texas and Mexico. For Elizabeth, a limited education and the struggle to secure citizenship for her husband combine to create an uncertain economic outlook. In this compassionate portrait, *Escuela* tells the story of one Mexican-American family's drive towards a better future.

In this lesson, teams of four students will research and debate a series of proposals of change in the status quo. The students will use established debate formats and are judged using a standard rubric.

As a result of the lesson, the students will:

1. learn about conflicting views regarding life and education for migrant families.

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STUDY GUIDE

Women Make Movies

2. recognize the contributions of migrant farm worker families and gain an appreciation for their way of life.
3. develop persuasive speaking and argumentation skills.
4. develop proper research skills (both online and using print media).
5. develop an appreciation for the impact on American culture of immigrant groups, their culture, and language.

- video copy of the POV program *Escuela*
- computers enabled with internet access
- television and VCR

procedure

A) Suggested Pre-Screening Questions:

Before viewing the film, discuss with students the excitement, anticipation and anxiety of the first day of high school. Consider how it would feel if you were entering high school in a different community without any of your friends. Imagine if your first language was different from that of the new school (i.e., you were entering school in Japan, France, or Spain with only one year of foreign language study.) Now, imagine entering a new school four different times in a school year.

As they watch the film, ask students to pay attention to depictions of values as they relate to work, family and education. Take note of Liliana's experience as she and her family move from one state to the next. Focus on her emotional experience as it relates to re-enrolling in school, home life and the move itself. Also take note of Elizabeth's reflections on her high school experience as they relate to her current economic situation.

B) View the film together as a whole class.

C) Using cooperative learning groups of 3-4 students, answer the questions suggested in the film guide.

D) After small group discussions, the class should reconvene to share their conclusions.

E) Choose a Debate Topic from the list provided.

Prepare students for developing concepts and ideas for the debate. The teacher should mention that a debate is a "peaceful argument," and that the purpose of a debate is

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STUDY GUIDE

Women Make Movies

for the contestants to prove their point and sway a judge or judges to their view through the use of logic and evidence. The teacher also needs to ensure that students are aware that debates, while often adversarial in nature, should be friendly in nature.

DEBATE TOPICS:

1. Resolved: The United States Government should enact legislation banning bilingual education and institute an "English-only" policy in all US schools.
 2. Resolved: The US Congress should pass Senate Resolution 1291 allowing undocumented migrant students who have graduated from a US high school to pay in-state tuition at state universities.
 3. Resolved: The Texas system of TAAS testing should be used as a model for all states and school districts as a means to raise student scholastic achievement, particularly in areas with large populations of migrant students.
 4. Resolved: Growers who employ migrant workers should be required to provide adequate housing.
 5. Resolved: All migrant workers should be included under the National Labor Relations Act.
- Click here to access a guide to a standard debate format.

F) Require that students use individual case studies or incidents from the various videos as evidence in their debate.

G) Encourage students to supplement their evidence with their own research. A sample list of resources that can be used is included below. One of the more complete search engines that students can use to gather information online is Google. Students may also utilize traditional forms of information, such as encyclopedias, books, magazines, etc.

H) Develop a rubric to judge the debate (or to allow the class to judge the debate) based on criteria including speaking style, development of logical arguments, questioning skills, and evidence. The best way to do this would be to develop a grid of some sort with a 1-5 scale for each category (1= poor; 5= excellent). The teacher should also add a space for comments on what they felt as far as a critique of the debate. If the school offers an interscholastic debate program, the school's forensics coach may have ballots that may be utilized. A sample rubric that can either be used "as is" or adapted to fit a

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STUDY GUIDE

Women Make Movies

specific class instance can be found at
<http://7-12educators.about.com/education/7-12educators/blrubricdebate.htm>.

This rubric is fairly "straightforward" in that it simplifies the evaluation of the debate and makes it easy for both sides to understand the criteria. It can easily be used by the teacher, students in the class, or others to effectively judge the debate.

The teacher can judge the debate or have students act as judges. Generally, the winner of the debate is determined by which team scores higher in the rubric. Traditionally, since the negative (those opposed to the resolution) represents the status quo and it is the affirmative's view that change is needed, the negative wins any tie.

If the teacher desires to involve more students, they may elect to change the debate format into one of a panel discussion. While the issue under consideration is the same, the format and outcome are somewhat different. In a discussion, the group works together in order to reach a consensus decision.

In interscholastic forensics competitions, discussion groups usually run six to seven students, but the teacher may decide to increase or decrease the number to fit their class situation. The teacher may also elect to divide the debate topic into smaller, discussible subtopics, such as "Should bilingual education be allowed on the elementary level, and phased out on the secondary level?" or "Should students demonstrate a proficiency in English as a requirement for high school graduation?"

The format is somewhat different, also. In a discussion, one student is selected as "leader." It is their job to keep the discussion going smoothly, maintain order, allow all participants an opportunity to speak, and summarize each of the discussion segments. In some discussion formats, the leader is scored and assessed separately from the other participants. The leader has the right to add comments and participate in the discussion, as do the other participants.

Once the leader is selected (either by the teacher or the other participants), the following format is maintained (within the scope of the class period):

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- Definition of terms
- History of the situation/problem
- Problems with the current system
- Solutions to the problems identified by the group

Again, there is no set time frame for any one segment; however, the teacher and group should recognize that if this is a one class period activity, enough time must be set aside for each segment as well as the summaries by the group leader.

Once the discussion is completed, participants can be evaluated in a rubric created by the teacher. While the teacher may wish to develop his or her own assessment tool, a sample rubric is included as an example.

ALTERNATIVE LESSON ASSESSMENT:

1. Knowledge of the subject material (20 points): How much research did the participant do toward the discussion? How effective was the research used?
2. Participation (20 points): How often did the participant speak? Was the participation worthwhile?
3. Development of logic skills (20 points): How well did the participant utilize logic skills in making points and demonstrating viewpoints?
4. Speaking ability (20 points): Did the participant make points well? Use correct grammar? Were they able to be heard by the audience?
5. Cooperation (20 points): Did the participant act in a manner of cooperation toward the leader and other members of the group? Did the participant tend to monopolize the discussion, or did they contribute significantly to the final solution?

Extension Activities

1. RESEARCH PROJECTS

The teacher may desire to have students research current trends toward (or against) the following related topics. Using information they acquire, they can write editorials either supporting or rejecting their ideas.

- a. Investigate contributions of migrants to the U.S. economy
- b. Study the role of Agribusiness in the third world and the US. (benefits and harms)
- c. Study the history of the United Farm Workers movement.

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Women Make Movies

- d. Study issues and controversies of the World Trade Organization.
- e. Study the effects of standardized tests on raising student achievement levels i.e., what is the relationship between high-test scores and a well-rounded education.
- f. Research current policies concerning bilingual education.

2. LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

After researching the issues, teachers may elect to have students use the information they gather to write letters or petitions to the editorial page of local newspapers, to state and national legislators or to their local school board.

Resource Links

- PBS News Hour - forum page dealing with the plusses and minuses of bilingual education.
(http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/september97/bilingual_9-29.html)
- National Association of School Administrators - discussing some of the problems and ideas regarding developing programs teaching non-English speakers to speak and read English.
(http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa/1997_09/honig_sidebar_dealing.htm)
- Washington Post - article which noted that Maryland teachers are being encouraged to include many non-English speaking students in "high-stakes" testing in an attempt to get them involved in actual classroom work and learning English. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A54392-2002Apr2>)
- Saskatchewan Education - discussing ideas and practice for a successful kindergarten program for students for whom English is a second language.
(<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/kindergarten/kindlang.html>)
- San Jose Mercury News - article that states that many school officials in the Bay Area oppose the elimination bilingual classes.
(<http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/linguistics/people/grads/macswan/SJMN10.htm>)

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- PBS Online News Hour - transcript from a broadcast in which reporter Gwen Iffil discusses the future of bilingual education with two California school superintendents.
(http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/education/july-dec00/biling_ed_backgrd-8-23.html)
- Migrant Education - this educational clearinghouse offers online and print versions of publications addressing resources and strategies for assisting in the education of migrant children.
(<http://www.ael.org/page2.htm?&index=751&pd=1&scope=mi&pub=x&pv=x>)
- National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education - official site. (<http://www.nasdme.org/>)
- Texas Education Agency's Division of Migrant Education - provides resources for leadership in the field regarding programs and services that promote academic excellence and equity for the migrant and immigrant students of Texas.
(<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/migrant/index.html>)
- National Labor Relations Board - provides information on the enforcement of the National Labor Relations Act. Start by going to the Help Desk page.
(<http://www.nlr.gov/nlr/home/default.asp>)
- National Labor Relations Act - provides a description and purpose of the Act.
(<http://home.earthlink.net/~local1613/nlra.html>)
- Immigration Links News - provides a list of immigration-related bills introduced during the 107th Congress.
(<http://www.immigrationlinks.com/news/news1262.htm>)
- Sacks & Kolken, Immigration Lawyers - many articles concerning immigration law, policy and advocacy opportunities.
(http://www.sackskolken.com/Advocacy/August3_2001.html)



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Women Make Movies

Standards

This lesson addresses the following national content standards established by McREL.

- Understands the impact of major demographic trends on the United States (e.g., population growth, increase in immigration and refugees).
- Understands the effects that significant American political developments have on other nations (e.g., immigration policies; opposition to communism; promotion of human rights; foreign trade; economic, military, and humanitarian aid).
- Understands major contemporary social issues and the groups involved (e.g., the current debate over affirmative action and to what degree affirmative action policies have reached their goals; the evolution of government support for the rights of the disabled; the emergence of the Gay Liberation Movement and civil rights of gay Americans; continuing debates over multiculturalism, bilingual education, and group identity and rights vs. individual rights and identity; successes and failures of the modern feminist movement).
- Uses criteria to evaluate own and others' effectiveness in group discussions and formal presentations (e.g., accuracy, relevance, and organization of information; clarity of delivery; relationships among purpose, audience, and content; types of arguments used; effectiveness of own contributions).
- Adjusts message wording and delivery to particular audiences and for particular purposes (e.g., to defend a position, to entertain, to inform, to persuade).