



Black Actors in American Cinema

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.03.13
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This curriculum unit, *Black Actors in American Cinema*, is designed for acting students at the Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School. These students have very little knowledge of the stereotyping of the black actor in film. They also have little knowledge of the history of black actors and their films. The unit objective is to study the contribution of the black actor to American cinema from the era of silent film to the present. Special emphasis is placed on actors and films before 1970. I have also chosen actors and films that I believe will relate directly to the study of acting. The strategy for studying black actors will consist of viewing films and segments of films intended to acquaint students with the work of individual actors. Short biographies of actors, suggested films, play scripts, acting exercises, and some acting terms are included in this unit.

Included for study in this unit are the following actors and their films:

Paul Robeson / *The Emperor Jones*

Nina Mae McKinney / *Hallelujah*

Hattie McDaniels / *Alice Adams*

Ethel Waters / *Pinky* / *The Member of the Wedding*

Dorothy Dandridge / *Carmen Jones* / *Porgy and Bess*

Lena Horn / *Stormy Weather*

Ivan Dixon / *Nothing but a Man*

Sidney Poitier / *A Raisin in the Sun*

Laurence Fishburn / *Othello*

Denzel Washington / *Malcolm X*

(Recommended for Drama, grades 9-11)

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