



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume I: The Use and Abuse of History in Film and Video

Parenting in the Movies: Examining Responsibilities in Modern American Films

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.01.11
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This unit employs film and video as means of showing people of historical significance as parents. Materials cited span American history, from colonial times to modern day. Students will be guided to examine important people, specific incidences in their lives, and the effect of major historical events on their roles as parents. Segments of videos focusing on mate selection, infancy and young children, single parenting are among the materials to be used. While the unit is designed for young people in urban classrooms, the methods and materials may be adapted for any classroom. The unit also addresses the use of "block" scheduling or longer class periods. The lesson plans offer ideas for a variety of activities to be used in 90 rather than the traditional 45 minutes. There can be no denial of the fact that today's high school students are visually oriented. Local video stores and libraries often feature high quality products at low cost or free. Use of these films offer opportunity for the teacher to present positive role models in the classroom and the activity can be extended to the homes of the students because of the availability and attractiveness of the films. In fact, the lessons may center on people in history who should be familiar to older family members. The initiation of this conversation in the homes of the students is a prominent goal of the unit.

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