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Restricted Audiences Only: Censorship and Movie Ratings

Synopsis

This unit focuses on teaching students about censorship and First Amendment Rights in the context of film ratings. Students will gain a solid understanding of the role of censorship—what it is, who does it, and why. They will learn the background of what movie ratings are and how they are a form of private, media censorship. Students will analyze the purpose of movie ratings, why they exist today, and look at video clips to categorize films into rating. Then, they will analyze if ratings are appropriate and how they help to prevent inappropriate material from reaching the wrong audiences. This unit focuses a lot on classroom discussions of these topics to relate them to their own lives. The unit culminates with a writing task focused on their opinion of the movie ratings system. This unit incorporates common core standards in Social Studies focusing on the First Amendment; and incorporate English Language Arts standards by incorporating opinion writing with support.