

# **Documentary Films in the AP Lang classroom**

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**Purpose  
is key**

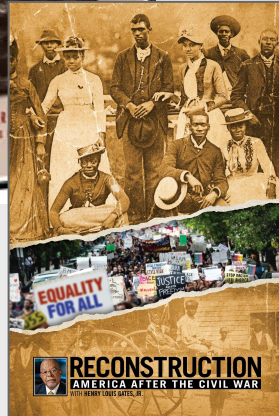
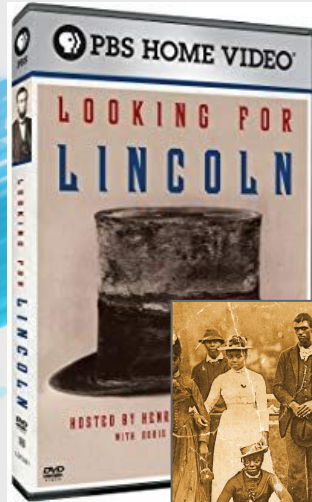
**To inform:** Building background knowledge? Providing context?

**To analyze:** Analyzing technique, rhetoric, rhetorical situation?

**As a source:** Evaluate information & incorporate in own argument

To inform

## Race in America's history



## Civic Engagement



## Environment

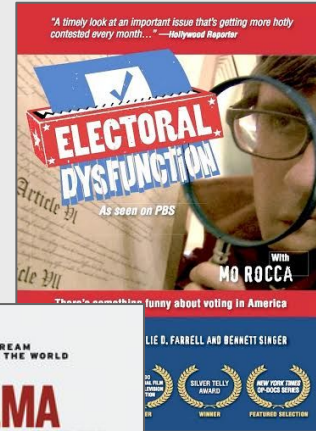


To analyze

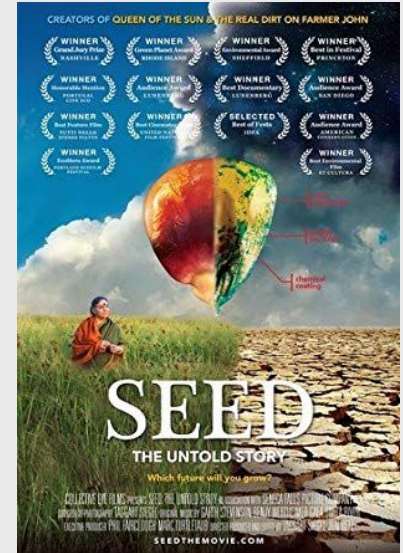
## Race in America's history



## Civic Engagement



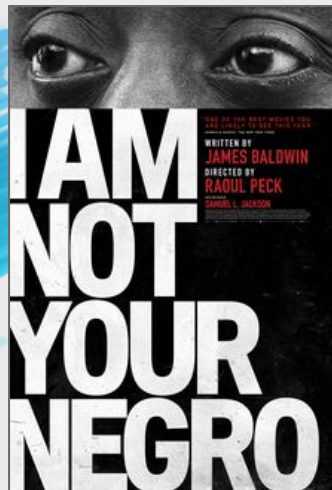
## Environment





As a  
source

## Race in America's history



## Civic Engagement



## Environment



## Purpose of a Trailer

### Observations

- intense visuals
- suspenseful music
- display of awards
- testimonies
- real footage
- quotes
- mood-changes
- hook

### effect/purpose

- establish interest
- keep interest
- build ethos,  
establish  
credability
- keep from being boring
- capture interest

**Pre-watching  
exercise:**

**Analyze the  
movie trailer**

At the beginning of the trailer, the mood comes off as very happy. A man avidly comes out talking about sex within fruits and vegetables, making light of the serious topic of the documentary. The middle of the trailer is very serious, with statistics that appeal to a worrying pathos, and animated shots showing the importance of seeds. Towards the end of the trailer, the mood becomes very hopeful, showing people laughing and a cloudy rainbow. This in the mood sheds light and hope on a serious topic while also expressing the importance of fixing the seed problem. <sup>So people will want to see doc</sup>

While watching

After watching

Analyzing Seed: The Untold Story

Director Name:	<u>Cinematic Elements</u> What are the effects of the director's cinematic choices on the viewer?  <i>shot type/frame, camera angles, lighting, sound, editing, animation</i>	<u>Rhetorical Elements</u> What are the effects of the director's rhetorical choices on the viewer?  <i>Sources, first-hand evidence, second-hand evidence, details</i>	<u>Analysis of strategies</u> How does the director use cinematic and rhetorical elements to achieve their purpose in this particular clip? (NOTE: You must ID the purpose of the clip.)
Clip #1  "Endangered Genetic Diversity"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slow-motion walking</li> <li>- Seeds animation</li> <li>- dramatic cinematic shots</li> <li>- extreme close up of seeds</li> <li>- dramatic/shifting music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will Bonsai's scatter-seed project is a first-hand source.</li> <li>- Photo of family: archival footage</li> <li>- Dr. Chapela's Molecular Biologist</li> <li>- Bowen White</li> <li>- Bill McDorman</li> <li>- Sources interviewed outside</li> </ul>	<p>The Purpose of this clip is to introduce the importance of seeds and set the scene for the rest of the documentary.</p> <p>The use of interviews as first-hand sources provides credible information on seeds as well as different perspectives.</p>



## Resources

*New York Times* short docs

PBS POV films

Doc Academy

National Geographic Short Film Showcase

Highly  
recommend!





# Documentaries are powerful texts.

Storytelling is what makes us human, it is our common currency and as such can be a powerful tool for positive change. **Compelling narratives have the ability to bring us together, to galvanise us into action.** Documentary makers commit years of their lives in an effort to bring us these vital and often complex stories and in doing so they make the issues we face as a society both more tangible and increasingly urgent.

- *Actress Susan Sarandon*

## Thank you!

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