

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FRIDAY MARCH 8<sup>th</sup> 2013

### INTRODUCTION

March 8th marks International Women's Day ([www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)), an annual event to promote the achievements of women worldwide and to support the advancement of women and their struggle for equality.

Film can provide teachers with an excellent stimulus to raise a range of issues including those underpinning International Women's Day. This resource suggests how teachers might use film in a variety of subject areas to raise the subject of women's role in society.

Use these questions to start students reflecting on the significance of film in promoting the advancement of women:

- What do you think is the purpose of International Women's Day? Take a look at the official website [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com) for ideas.
- What films have you seen most recently either at the cinema or on TV? Which, if any, of these represent strong female characters in a central role? Explain what you believe makes these female characters strong.
- Make a list of the most famous actors (male and female) you know of. For each one, jot down the names of the characters who in your opinion they most vividly portrayed. For example, Daniel Craig as James Bond in *Skyfall*; Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games* etc. In your group, focus your discussion now on the portrayal of the female characters you have listed. To what extent, do these characters 'promote the advancement of women'? Explain your answer.



From: *The Hunger Games* – All rights reserved Lionsgate

## WOMEN AND FILM

The Bechdel Test, developed by Alison Bechdel in 1985, is a useful measure to start analysing the representation of women in films and identifying gender bias. In order for a film to pass the test, it must feature at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man. Here is a list of ten well-known films that fail this test and why.

As well as exploring the representation of female characters in film, another way to commemorate International Women's Day is to celebrate the successes of individual, high-achieving women who offer students positive role models and inspiration. Here are some ideas from the world of film to get you started:

### ACTORS

- Helena Bonham Carter
- Judi Dench
- Keira Knightley
- Helen Mirran
- Sophie Okonedo
- Freida Pinto
- Kristin Scott Thomas
- Emma Thompson
- Kate Winslet



### FILMMAKERS

- Andrea Arnold
- Kathryn Bigelow
- Jane Campion
- Gurinder Chadha
- Lynne Ramsay
- Sam Taylor-Wood



Activities could include:

- Researching and presenting biographical information about one or more of these individuals and emphasising their achievements.
- Writing a letter to one or more of these people explaining how you are learning about them during International Women's Day and inviting them to visit your school to share their story in a whole school assembly.
- Presenting findings on the Bechdel Test to your class, or a whole school or year assembly. Perhaps include recommendations of films that pass the test.

**RESOURCE IDEAS**

Film Education has produced resources on all the following films which have been selected for inclusion here because they either represent strong female characters, have been written or directed by a woman or deal with themes and ideas that are relevant to International Women's Day. Any of these films will provide interesting stimulus material to include in your celebration of the day.

If you choose to watch one or more of these films in their entirety, keep the Bechdel test in mind: does the film 'pass' or 'fail' according to the criteria (link back to Bechdel test on page 2)?

- Amelie** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/Amelie.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/Amelie.pdf)
- Anita and me** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/AnitaMe.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/AnitaMe.pdf)
- Arrietty** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/primary/Arrietty.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/primary/Arrietty.pdf)
- Bend it Like Beckham** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/BILB.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/BILB.pdf)
- Brave** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/primary/Brave.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/primary/Brave.pdf)
- Bride and Prejudice** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Bride\\_and\\_Prejudice.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Bride_and_Prejudice.pdf)
- Broken Embraces** - [www.filmeducation.org/brokenembraces/representation.html](http://www.filmeducation.org/brokenembraces/representation.html)
- Elizabeth** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/rephist.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/rephist.pdf)
- The Extraordinary Adventures of Adele Blanc Sec** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/AdeleBlancSec.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/AdeleBlancSec.pdf)
- The Help** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/TheHelp.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/TheHelp.pdf)
- Howards End** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/HowardsEnd.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/HowardsEnd.pdf)
- The Hours** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/thehours-4.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/thehours-4.pdf)
- Hunger Games** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/The%20Hunger%20Games.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/The%20Hunger%20Games.pdf)
- Hurt Locker** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/The\\_Hurt\\_Locker.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/The_Hurt_Locker.pdf)
- Jane Eyre** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/JANE%20EYRE.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/JANE%20EYRE.pdf)
- Made in Dagenham** - [www.filmeducation.org/madeindagenham/](http://www.filmeducation.org/madeindagenham/)
- Matilda** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/matilda.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/matilda.pdf)
- Miss Bala** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Miss%20Bala%20Resource.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Miss%20Bala%20Resource.pdf)

- Miral** - [www.filmeducation.org/screenings/previous\\_events/miral/event\\_feedback/](http://www.filmeducation.org/screenings/previous_events/miral/event_feedback/)  
[www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Miral.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Miral.pdf)
- Sket** - [www.filmeducation.org/sket/](http://www.filmeducation.org/sket/)
- Persepolis** - [www.filmeducation.org/persepolis/](http://www.filmeducation.org/persepolis/)
- Precious** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Precious.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/resources/secondary/Precious.pdf)
- Fast Girls** - [www.filmeducation.org/fastgirls/](http://www.filmeducation.org/fastgirls/)
- Tomorrow When the War Began** -  
[www.filmeducation.org/screenings/previous\\_events/tomorrow\\_when\\_the\\_war\\_began/event\\_qa/](http://www.filmeducation.org/screenings/previous_events/tomorrow_when_the_war_began/event_qa/)
- Trishna** - [www.filmeducation.org/trishna/](http://www.filmeducation.org/trishna/)
- Whale Rider** - [www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/WhaleRider.pdf](http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/WhaleRider.pdf)
- Wuthering Heights** - [www.filmeducation.org/resources/film\\_library/getfilm.php?film=1742](http://www.filmeducation.org/resources/film_library/getfilm.php?film=1742)



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