

Blood Diamond



Synopsis

This story is about an ex-mercenary turned smuggler Danny Archer (Leonard DiCaprio) and a Mende fisherman Soloman Vandy (Djimon Hounsou). Amid the explosive civil war overtaking 1999 Sierra Leone, these men join for two desperate missions: recovering a rare pink diamond of immense value and rescuing the fisherman's son, conscripted as a child soldier into the brutal rebel forces ripping a swath of torture and bloodshed across the alternately beautiful and ravaged countryside.

Introduction

This resource is aimed at GCSE, AS, A2 and Highers students. The questions and points of discussion raised throughout this resource are connected to the official website for the film. Clip references refer to sequences that can be found on the official website: <http://blooddiamondmovie.warnerbros.com/>

In addition to the questions and discussion points raised, there is an existing Amnesty Resource (see link at the end of this document) developed to accompany the film and covers in-depth context and tasks. These materials combined touch on topics that teachers may find useful for Film and Media Studies, Citizenship, Politics and Business Studies.

Trailer Analysis

How is the setting established? Think about the types of shots that are used.

The structure of the trailer shows us the credentials of the director. What does this tell us about the film's potential audience? How important is this to you as a cinemagoer? Does it affect your choice?

The trailer is designed to establish a sense of the story for the widest potential audience.

How do we learn about the three main characters and their relationships to one another? Fill in the table below, thinking carefully about dialogue, voiceover and camera angle. Which devices were used and what information did they convey?

Character Name	Device (voiceover, dialogue, camera angle, etc.)	Character (think about motivation for actions and behaviours)	Expectations (how do you think the narrative will treat this character?)
Danny Archer			
Maddy Bowen			
Solomon Vandy			

Africa and the News Agenda

You will find interviews with the lead actors of the film: DiCaprio and Jennifer Connelly as well as the film's producer Marshall Herskovitz at:

<http://blooddiamondbmovie.warnerbros.com/>

They comment on the role of journalist:

Key questions:

- What for you are the connotations of a 'political journalist'?
- Is Maddy Bowen what you'd expect?
- We also see here the scene between Archer and Bowen, when she talks about the things that she is witnessing as 'nothing new' and 'not enough to make it stop'. What do you think of this statement?
- Can you understand her frustrations?
- Think about your own consumption of news - do you regularly read or watch news?
- Are there some stories that you don't engage with?
- Would a story like the one brought to our attention in the film be something you'd be interested in reading about?
- Had you ever thought about what it must feel like to be a journalist like Maddy Bowen?

The producer Marshall Herskovitz makes reference to the 'corporate control of news divisions' particularly, as he says, 'in America'.

Key questions:

- Explain what you think he means by this.
- Do you think this is true?
- Or is the news objective?
- In terms of the story that Maddy Bowen is covering what kind of difference do you think that the kind of pressure that she is under could make to the story that reaches the public?
- Does the film challenge any of your pre-conceptions of Africa?
- What are the images or phrases that would come to mind if you were asked to describe Africa?
- The film is set in Sierra Leone. Do you get a sense of what this country is like?
- Would you be able to tell if it had been filmed somewhere else?

Throughout the film the Colonel and Archer talk about TIA (This Is Africa).

Key questions:

- What do you think the phrase 'This is Africa' means to them?
- Can you imagine discussing Europe or North America in this way?
- What did you find most memorable about the film?
- What have you learnt from the film?
- Has it changed the way you think about diamonds?

Amnesty International has produced an excellent resource relating to these issues. You can find this through the official website for the film or by clicking on the link below.

http://www.amnestyusa.org/education/pdf/bd_curriculumguide.pdf