



# THE RESCUE LIST

GRADES 6 - 12  
CLASSROOM GUIDE

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## TEACHING THE FILM:

**The Rescue List** is a feature documentary that takes an intimate look at the lives of two boys, Peter & Edem living in a Ghanaian safehouse, recovering and preparing to reunify with their families, after being enslaved to fishermen on Lake Volta, in Ghana. The story also follows the unfolding drama of Kwame, a 30-year old Ghanaian man, a former child slave, who leads a team to rescue children enslaved on the lake. The lives of the Peter, Edem, and Kwame are intertwined, as Kwame and his team, care for and work with the children at the safehouse to prepare them to return home. It is a story of love, survival, and friendship. Taught in conjunction with this guide, **The Rescue List** will challenge students to think critically about the impact of cultural, economic, and social factors that contribute to the child slavery market in Ghana and how to build communities capacity to combat slavery. Additionally, students will have an opportunity to reflect on the themes of hope and healing. Discussion questions and supplementary materials facilitate further research into related topics such as human trafficking, human rights, social movements, and the power of education, art/film to affect positive social change.

All SFFILM Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy. SFFILM Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials.

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## USING THIS GUIDE

This study guide is intended to flexibly support educators in preparing for and following up on a class screening of **The Rescue List**.

Support materials are intended to facilitate group discussion, individual and collaborative creative exercises, subject-based learning and access to resources for further investigation of material. Educators are encouraged to adapt and abridge the content as necessary to meet their unique learning objectives and circumstances.

## ABOUT THE FILM

Lake Volta in Ghana is the largest man-made lake in the world; it is also notorious as a locale for forced child labor. Bay Area filmmakers Zachary Fink and Alyssa Fedele's beautifully shot documentary charts the courageous efforts of a local safe house to rescue the kids, give them schooling and therapy, and prepare them for reintegration into their families. Though it contains many intimate and moving moments with the children, the star of the film is real life hero Kwame, who initiates several dramatic rescues and is a former child slave himself.

*English and African dialects with English subtitles.*

{ Alyssa Fedele and Zachary Fink  
 (USA/Ghana, 2018) 80 min }

### Recommended Subject Areas:

- Anthropology
- Cultural Studies
- Ethics
- Humanities
- International Development
- International Relations
- Social Studies
- Social Sciences
- Political Science
- World Affairs

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### PRE-VIEWING TOPICS AND DISCUSSION:

This guide can be used to tap into breadth and depth of subjects relating to local, national, or international issues, depending on the best fit for your class.

Themes directly related to the film include social, economic, and cultural factors that contribute to child trafficking in Ghana; what is being done to eradicate child trafficking in Ghana, and more emotionally based themes such as the power of friendship, love, courage, resilience, hope, and healing.

The Rescue List can also be used to explore broader themes in your classroom and tie them in with current and historical events that directly impact your students locally, nationally, and internationally.

These themes include Universal Human Rights, Human/Child Trafficking, Social Movements/ Youth-Led Social Movements, and the power of education and art/film to affect social change.

Many of these topics are delicate and require some time to prepare for a discussion. The post-discussion questions and supplemental materials will provide information to assist you in developing your lessons/ discussions/ and projects related to these topics. Topics related to human rights and human trafficking should not be a one-off lesson and be incorporated thoughtfully into the curriculum.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN A CHILD IS TRAFFICKED?

To begin, students will take more from the film if they have an understanding of Ghana' location and the history of the man-made Lake Volta, and the impact of the Lake Volta and the fishing industry on Ghana. Additionally, it is important for students to understand what child/human trafficking and slavery is and that it is a global problem. Child trafficking is affecting children all over the world and in the United States. See supplementary resources for more information.

- Where is Ghana located?
- What is child slavery?
- What impact does the man-made Lake Volta have on the child slavery industry in Ghana?
- Is child trafficking illegal in Ghana?
- What does it mean when a child or human is trafficked?
- Is child slavery/child trafficking only a third-world problem? Does it occur in the United States?
- Approximately how many children are trafficked globally and in the United States each year?

### POST VIEWING DISCUSSION:

#### Characters and Story

1. Kwame states that he feels that he has been called to do what he is doing (rescue children enslaved on Lake Volta).
  - Why do you think he feels this way?
  - How has Kwame taken the trauma he has faced in life to do something good?
2. Kwame says "That there is one particular child somewhere that I need to rescue, until that child is rescued, I continue doing this work"
  - What does he mean by this?
  - Do you think he will find this one child?
3. Friendship is a key theme in the film. Why do you think friendships are so important to the boys?



4. Challenging Heights, the safehouse for children, provide children with an education and tools to help them heal and recover?
  - Why is this important to focus on both academic and emotional healing?
  - Give three examples of how the team supports the children's healing and recovery at the safehouse.
  - How does the Challenging Heights team support the children's integration back with their families?
5. Kwame adds Teye to The Rescue List, and asks Peter if Teye will go with him willing.
  - Why do some of the children enslaved run away from Kwame when tried to rescue them?
  - Do you think Kwame would have changed his approach to rescuing Teye if he was not willing to go with him.
6. Kwame, talks about re-trafficking.
  - What is re-trafficking?
  - What are some factors that contribute to re-trafficking?
  - Why is it challenging when the children are reintegrated with their families?
  - How does Kwame and his team help prepare the children for these challenges?
  - How does Kwame and his team prepare for the families/communities for these challenges?

## WHAT DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE TO STOP CHILD SLAVERY IN GHANA?

### POST VIEWING DISCUSSION:

#### Context

1. Why does Peter and Edem's mothers sell them into slavery?
  - Were they aware of what was happening?
  - Do you feel their mothers are to blame?
2. Despite anti-trafficking laws, there is an estimated

20,000 children enslaved on the lake. Based on the information in the film, why do you think this still exists?

- Give three possible reasons
3. What do you think needs to be done to stop child slavery in Ghana?
  4. Besides rescuing children, what are other ways that Kwame and his team are combating children slavery on Lake Volta?
  5. How are Kwame and his team educating families and communities about what is happening?
  6. When was the film made? Since then, have there been any changes to the problem of child slavery in Ghana.
  7. Is child slavery just a third world problem?

#### Style and Message/Reading the Film for Media Literacy

1. What do you think were the directors purpose of making this film?
2. What creative techniques are used to grab your attention? ( e.g., sound, images).
3. Why do you think that the directors chose not to focus a lot of attention on all the brutality that the boys faced while enslaved or the dangers that Kwame faced with rescuing the boys and instead focused on the friendships that they formed while they were enslaved & their healing at the safe house?
4. What have you learned from this film? Why might the film's messages matter to you?
5. What is your reaction to this film and what did you learn about yourself from your reaction or interpretation?
6. How might others see this film in a way that differs from the way you see it? How and why might different types of people interpret this film in divergent ways?



## HUMAN RIGHTS & THE POWER OF EDUCATION

### HUMAN RIGHTS

Peter says that his master said he was an animal, not human.

- What are human rights?
- What are examples of human rights?
- How were Peter and Edem's human rights taken away from them?
- What are Kwame and his team doing to protect children's human rights in Ghana?
- In Ghana, trafficking of children is illegal. However, there are there still 20,000 children enslaved on Lake Volta. Why aren't the laws enough? What else needs to be done to protect children's human rights?

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Have you heard about modern slavery and human trafficking before today? If so, where/in what context?
- What is human trafficking?
- Is human trafficking and slavery the same thing?
- How does trafficking happen in a community?
- In the film, how did the traffickers recruit children? What promises did they make to their families?
- In what ways could the communities in Ghana use their influence to discourage slave labor and trafficking?
- What do you think those that escape enslavement need to heal and reintegrate into society?

Exploring the Topics Further:

- Is child trafficking a topic that people speak about in your community?
- Are you aware that it exists and why it exists in your community?
- Could it happen to someone like you? How?

### THE POWER OF EDUCATION

- Peter and Edem deeply value education. Why is education so important to them?
- Do you think you or students in your class think about education in the same way?
- What is your understanding/knowledge of child trafficking and how is it relevant to your own life?
- Why is education a powerful tool to end child trafficking?
- Who needs to be educated about child trafficking?
- How will education create and reinforce capacities of communities to prevent trafficking?

### SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

When laws aren't enough, how to empower learners to positively transform their community.

- What is Kwame and the Challenging Heights staff doing to affect social change in Ghana?
- Can one person make a difference?
- How can communities work together to promote change?
- Why is it important for each of you to be aware of what is happening in our community and throughout the world and to make it known when you disagree w/something or feel your rights or someone else's rights have been violated?
- In what ways can we spread awareness about problems in our schools? In our communities? In our country?
- What role can film/art play in changing culture and society?



## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

KNOWLEDGE  
MAKES A MAN UNFIT  
TO BE A SLAVE  
-FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Education is a powerful theme in **The Rescue List**. In addition to the overall theme of education, these post-viewing activities support further inquiry of the themes of human rights and affecting positive change through art, music, and film, and taking action.

### Activity 1: Take time to journal and reflect

- What have you learned from this film?
- Why might the film's messages matter to you?
- What type of actions might you take in response to this film?

### Activity 2: Listen, Watch, and Discuss: Art and Film to Affect Positive Social Change

**The Rescue List** beautifully focuses on the themes of friendship, courage, and healing, instead of focusing on the victimization of the child slaves. Art, music, and film are examples of powerful mediums used to affect positive social change and to instill hope and promote healing.

Project the lyrics to Jason Miraz's Freedom Song. Have students listen to the song and ask:

- How does the song relate to the film?
- What do they feel after listening to the song?
- Why does the song fit in with the work of Kwame and his team at Challenging Heights?

Jason Miraz's Freedom Song & Lyrics

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV43mn3B-1M>

Next, watch the video for the song, The Journey of The Freedom song: <https://vimeo.com/54540135>

More information on Jason Miraz and The Freedom Song: <https://www.freetheslaves.net/jason-miraz-the-power-of-music-in-the-fight-against-slavery/>

### Activity 3: Understanding Human Rights and Using Art to Affect Social Change

To be used in conjunction with the Human Rights questions in post-discussion.

Watch the following videos:

- The Story of Human Rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oh3BbLk5UIQ>
- 30 Article of the Universal Human Rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36CUlaqmFi4>
- UNITED music video ( with its strong anti-bullying message): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4KW99ZyJW4>

Have students reflect/journal on which Human Rights speaks most to them.

- Which human rights are being violated in their community/in their state/country?
- Ask students to create their own art (video, painting, song, poem, photos, creative essay) using messages of hope and healing to teach other students about the Universal Human Rights.

## California Media Literacy Standards Addressed In This Lesson

- Grade 7: Standard 1.8 Analyze the effect on the viewer of images, text, and sound in electronic journalism; identify the techniques used to achieve the effects in each instance studied.
- Grade 8: Standard 1.9 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, illustrators, news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.
- Grades 9 & 10: Standard 1.14 Identify the aesthetic effects of a media presentation and evaluate the techniques used to create them (e.g., compare Shakespeare's Henry V with Kenneth Branagh's 1990 film version).
- Grades 9 & 10: Standard 1.2 Compare and contrast the ways in which media genres (e.g., televised news, news magazines, documentaries, online information) cover the same event.
- Grades 11 & 12: Standard 1.1 Recognize strategies used by the media to inform, persuade, entertain, and transmit culture (e.g., advertisements; perpetuation of stereotypes; use of visual representations, special effects, language); Standard 1.3 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which events are presented and information is communicated by visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, documentary filmmakers, illustrators, news photographers).

For more information about media literacy standards in your state, visit:

MediaLiteracy.com: resources for advancing media education, United States Standards for media literacy education. <http://www.medialiteracy.com/standards.htm>

Frank W Baker's guide to State Standards Which Include Elements of Media Literacy.  
[http://frankwbaker.com/state\\_lit.htm](http://frankwbaker.com/state_lit.htm)

## California Core Standards Addressed In This Lesson

This lesson addresses the English and Language Arts standards for Reading Informational Texts grades 9-12. Additional specific standard applications are listed below:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.



## MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES

### SCREENING WITH MEANING

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. Every projected image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the medium, through the language of the device. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Most students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive.

Analysis of a media message—or any piece of mass media content—can best be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

- (1) Medium: the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
- (2) Author: the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
- (3) Content: the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
- (4) Audience: the target audience to whom it is delivered
- (5) Purpose: the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active citizens and critical thinkers.

### CORE CONCEPTS OF MEDIA ANALYSIS

#### MEDIUM

##### All Media Is Constructed.

- How is the message delivered and in what format?
- What technologies are used to present the message?
- What visual and auditory elements are used?
- What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?

#### AUTHOR

##### All Media Is Constructed by Someone.

- Who is delivering the message?
- Who originally constructed the message?
- What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?

#### CONTENT

##### Media Is A Language For Information.

- What is the subject of the media message?
- What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content?
- What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response?
- To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?

#### AUDIENCE

##### All Media Messages Reach an Audience.

- Who receives the message?
- For whom is the message intended?
- What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- How might others perceive this message differently? Why?

#### PURPOSE

##### All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.

- Why was the message constructed?
- Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How?
- To what extent does the message achieve its purpose?
- What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?



## THE NON-FICTION FILM WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY?

A documentary is a film whose goal is to capture truth, fact or reality as seen through the lens of the camera. But there are many kinds of documentaries, and not everyone's idea of truth is the same. The Scottish filmmaker John Grierson coined the term "documentary" in 1926 to describe American filmmaker Robert Flaherty's romanticized culture studies, but nonfiction filmmaking dates back to the earliest motion picture reels.

The definition of documentary expanded as filmmakers experimented with technology and the goals of nonfiction. Avant-garde documentarians, like Dziga Vertov in the 1920s, believed that the mechanical eye of the camera gave a truer image of reality than the human eye and pointed his lens at newly industrialized cities. Leni Reifenstahl's propaganda films from Nazi Germany used the nonfiction form to convey a political message, a slanted truth. The international cinema vérité or observational movements of the 1960s attempted to remove authorship from the documentary. The observational filmmaker hovered like a "fly on the wall" watching the world without commentary. Modern documentaries often seek to raise awareness about a social, environmental or political issue, guiding their audiences toward civic participation and activism.

While watching a documentary, it is important to remember the core concepts of media analysis: who made the film, for what audience and why? The nonfiction format can be deceptively subjective, as all filmmaking involves an inherent selection process: in the images that are shot, the music and narration that accompanies them and, most significantly, the way in which they are all edited together. Media literacy means always analyzing a documentary for its message and authorial intent.

## A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE DOCUMENTARY

**1895** The Lumiere brothers developed the first motion picture film reels, capturing brief, unedited clips of life around them called "actualities" (e.g., *Train Arriving at the Station*)

**1900-1920** Travelogue or "Scenic" films became popular, showcasing exoticised images from around the globe.

**1926** John Grierson coined the term "documentary" to describe Robert Flaherty's romantic nonfiction film, *Moana*.

**1929** Dziga Vertov, with the Soviet Kino-Pravda movement, released the experimental nonfiction film, *Man With a Movie Camera*.

**1935** Leni Reifenstahl released *Triumph of the Will*, the infamous propaganda film that chronicled the 1934 Nazi Party Congress.

**1939** John Grierson collaborated with the Canadian government to form the National Film Board of Canada, with the initial goal of creating Allied propaganda in support of the war.

**1960s** The cinema vérité movement began in Europe, shortly followed by "direct cinema" in the U.S. Portable cameras and sync sound allowed filmmakers to capture intimate footage with minimal intervention.

**1968** The Argentine film, *La Hora de los Hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces)* opened the door to the activist cinema of the 1970s, which used film as a tool to counter capitalist and neo-colonial politics in Latin America.

**1988** The US Congress mandated that the US government support the creation of independent non-commercial media, and the Independent Television Service (ITVS) was founded.

**2000s** The widespread use of digital cameras and editing software made the documentary medium vastly more affordable to independent and amateur filmmakers. Video sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo allowed amateur filmmakers to broadcast their work.

**PRESENT DAY** The term "documentary" has come to encompass a wide range of nonfiction cinema. Contemporary filmmakers continue to push the boundaries of truth in film and to explore new avenues and applications for the medium.



## THE MAKING OF A DOCUMENTARY

### Idea, Issue, Story.

Even though they are nonfiction films, most modern documentaries structure their content around a traditional story arc, with a beginning, middle and end, as well as characters, and a conclusion, theme or thesis to impart to the audience. Documentary filmmakers begin their projects with an idea or an issue that they wish to explore more deeply. Through research and planning, they develop a comprehensive plan before they begin shooting.

### The Production Process.

To capture candid moments on film, modern documentary makers often leave the camera running, collecting far more footage than the final film requires. They may do this during interviews or in observational-style encounters with their subjects. To get increased access and an observational aesthetic, documentary makers often use handheld cameras and natural light, rather than staging a more formal filming environment.

### Post-Production and the Documentary.

Because a documentary film relies upon candid footage, a large part of the film's construction occurs in the editing room, where you work with what you've captured. A documentary editor will sift through long interviews just to find a few phrases that will summarize

the film's message. To emphasize important points and build the story, some documentaries use a voiceover, an interview or a scripted narrative that brings candid footage together into a coherent statement. An original score can work alongside the voiceover to unify the footage and shape the mood of the film. Audiences often underestimate the power of sound to generate an emotional response. Many documentaries also use charts, graphs and historical footage to add context and emphasize key points.

### Distribution.

Once a film is completed, the filmmaker needs to help it find its audience. Many documentaries are made independently on small budgets, but what's the point of all your work if no one hears your message? Some documentaries will be released in theaters around the country or get programmed on public or cable TV channels, but most documentary filmmakers will start by submitting their work to film festivals, in hopes of attracting distributors for the theater and television markets. Filmmakers may also make their films available online and use social media to reach their target audience.



## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

### **The Film's Official Website & Challenging Heights**

<https://www.therescuelist.com/>

<http://challengingheights.org/>

### **Information on Child Slavery in Ghana and Lake Volta**

BBC Lake Volta: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGTbWqcnYfA>

Analytical Study on Child Labor in Volta Lake Fishing in Ghana

[http://challengingheights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ILO\\_Analytical\\_Study\\_CL\\_in\\_Volta\\_Lake\\_Fishing\\_Ghana.pdf](http://challengingheights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ILO_Analytical_Study_CL_in_Volta_Lake_Fishing_Ghana.pdf)

Free the Slaves: <https://www.freetheslaves.net/where-we-work/ghana/>

### **Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery**

*Important to emphasize, human trafficking doesn't always mean that the slaves are taken from their home. See the resources for more information! It's also important to educate students on the dangers of social media in human trafficking recruitment.*

Global Slavery Index: <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/>

<https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/how-talk-your-kids-about-trafficking/29733>

<http://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/facts>

New York Times: What is Slavery? Investigating Human Trafficking (Lesson Plan)

<https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/06/what-is-modern-slavery-investigating-human-trafficking/>

Ted Talk: Kevin Bales- How to combat modern slavery?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUM2rCIUdel>

Human Trafficking: Frequently Asked Questions: <http://humantrafficking.unc.edu/frequently-asked-questions/>