

# SELMA (2015)

- This lesson aims firstly at presenting a famous and emotional film called Selma. However it can be considered secondly as a pretext to introduce an accurate knowledge about the American Civil Rights and the people who fought for, more precisely Martin Luther King. It echoes another lesson about famous XX<sup>th</sup> century famous speeches among which one of Martin Luther King Jr' s speeches was studied: “I have a dream”.
- Its final task will consist in writing a presentation of the film according to a precise methodology which acquisition is given in the first slides of the presentation in order to give an axis to the lesson right from the beginning. Some criteria will be mentioned in the end to help the evaluation of the final production. The final written production will be told in front of the class. So it's a double final job: a written one and then an oral one.

# The Political Context

C:\Users\patricia\Documents\selma\Selma - Voting Rights Act Explained - Animated Infographic-1.mp4

<https://www.facebook.com/SelmaMovie/videos/vb.452786068197071/598621940280149/?type=2&theater>

# Act n°1: understanding the video

- Before the American Civil Rights Act of 1965, all African Americans who wanted to vote were blocked by literacy test and poll taxes. So they were rejected.
- After the Voting Rights Act literacy and other discrimination tactics were made illegal.
- Before the Voting Rights Act in 1961, only about 1% of eligible African American voters were registered in Dallas County, Alabama.
- After the Civil Rights Act, 67% of them had registered to vote in Dallas County Alabama
- Televised attacks on peaceful protesters drew 25,000 people who marched from Selma to Montgomery with Dr King. National Media attention made the Voting Right Act priority legislation
- It passed in Congress with 80% of the votes just five months after the march
- After the Civil Rights Act in 1965, African Americans registered quickly. In the South between 1965 and 1975, 1.5 million African Americans were registered to vote. And representation to public office increased from 72 to 1,587.
- To celebrate that message of equality and on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the march, Paramount gave to each high school in America a dvd of the movie SELMA

Useful vocabulary: with the help of a dictionary find definition and the translation of the following words

- To be blocked
- Literacy
- Poll tax
- To be registered
- peaceful
- Protesters
- Equality
- Public office

# Useful vocabulary: with the help of a dictionary find the definitions and the translations of the following words

- To be blocked: to be prevented from doing something that is arranged to be done
- Literacy: ability to read and write
- Poll tax: amount of money paid to get the right to vote
- To be registered: to put someone's name on a list in order to get a right or to access a service
- Peaceful: without violence or any disorder
- Protesters: people who say or show publicly their objection to something
- Equality: same status, rights, and responsibilities for all the members of a society, group, or family
- Public office: is a work organized by the government or an official body in order to benefit all the people in a particular society or community.

# And now translate in French

ENGLISH	FRENCH
TO BE BLOCKED	
LITERACY	
POLL TAX	
TO BE REGISTERED	
PEACEFUL	
PROTESTERS	
EQUALITY	
PUBLIC OFFICE	

# And now translate in French

ENGLISH	FRENCH
TO BE BLOCKED	Être empêché de
LITERACY	alphabétisme
POLL TAX	Sufrage censitaire
TO BE REGISTERED	Être inscrit
PEACEFUL	paisible
PROTESTERS	manifestants
EQUALITY	égalité
PUBLIC OFFICE	Poste de fonctionnaire

# Act n° 1 (SUITE) Fill the following grid

Percentage of African Americans registered to vote in 1961	
Discrimination measures to prevent black people from voting	
Date of the Civil Rights Act	
Measures made illegal by the Act	
Percentage of registered African Americans after 1965	
Number of people who marched from Selma to Montgomery	
Famous pastor who joined the march	
Media which promoted civil rights to priority legislation	
Percentage of vote in Congress	
Number of registered African Americans who registered in 10 years	
Number of African Americans in charge of public office in 1975	



# Act n° 1 (SUITE) Fill the following grid

Percentage of African Americans registered to vote in 1961	1%
Discrimination measures to prevent black people from voting	Literacy test Poll taxes
Date of the Civil rights act	1965
Measures made illegal by the Act	Discrimination tactics Literacy tests
Percentage of registered African Americans after 1965	67%
Number of people who marched from Selma to Montgomery	25,000
Famous pastor who joined the march	Dr King
Media which promoted civil rights to priority legislation	TV
Percentage of vote in Congress	80%
Number of registered African Americans who registered in 10 years	1,500,000
Number of African Americans in charge of public office in 1975	1,587

## Act n°2: With the help of the grid , write a summary of the video

- Before 1965, the African Americans were subjected to segregationist laws which forbade them from voting as some literacy tests and poll taxes were implemented in order to prevent them from getting registered on voting lists.
- On September 1965, the Civil Rights Act ended these practices so that 1.5 million African Americans could register which represents 67% of the eligible people instead of 1% in 1961 and 1,587 of them could be in charge of public offices.
- In April 1965, a famous march gathering 25,000 people from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama ended in the blood in front of the tv cameras. This tragic event made the Civil Rights a priority legislation which was voted by the Congress by 80% of voters.

# Act n° 3 : Presenting a movie: methodology

- First step: you must write an introduction. It aims at telling the title of the film, its director and the year it was issued. You may also speak about the theme and the time it deals with if it's important for the understanding of the whole.
- Second step: the development should be in two or three parts. Don't forget to put a link word at each beginning of the paragraphs
  - you speak about the historical context of the movie
  - you quote the main characters and if you know the actors, it's the right time to quote them
  - Then you tell the story in a short summary

Third step: it's the conclusion. You have to speak about the posterity of this film, saying if it was awarded and if the told story changed something in the real life. It 's also time to quote another masterpiece, film or book about the same subject. You can also give your opinion about a character or the whole movie



<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=44326920>

# Describe the poster of the film

In the middle of the picture, I can see a black man's neck whose is Martin Luther king's , I can suppose according to the theme of the film.

He is facing a crowd of armed policemen who are ready to fight the crowd they are facing. It refers to the Selma march against segregation and favouring equality and civil rights.

It's a black and white picture which refers to the real time of the events when coloured photos were rare;Moreover it's a visual way to increase the contrast between blacks and whites. It increases the effect done by the blood coloured title of the film which is "Selma" written in red.

His massive feature is an allegory of his strength which is embodied by his figure against the numerous crowd of the white armed forces who are small, numerous against Martin Luther king's non-violent movement

He is standing in front of them which shows his strength (moral and physical presence) against oppression and his courage facing armed and determined segregationists

Film Selma

# Step one: you gather information in order to write an interesting introduction

TITLE	
DIRECTOR	
DATE OF ISSUE AND CELEBRATION	
TIME OF THE STORY	
THEME	

# Step one: you gather information in order to write an interesting introduction

TITLE	SELMA: is the city in Alabama in the South of the USA
DIRECTOR	AVA DUVERNAY
DATE OF ISSUE AND CELEBRATION	2015: anniversary of the event
TIME OF THE STORY	1960's
THEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Struggle for the African Americans' civil rights in the USA</li><li>- Martin Luther King's life seen through the American Civil Rights struggles</li></ul>



## Step one: write the introduction using the former grid

- Selma is an emblematic film which was issued in 2015. It was directed by Ava DuVernay. This special year is in fact the fiftieth anniversary of the famous March which took place from Selma to Montgomery Alabama. The 1960's were a time of rough struggles in the USA because African Americans wanted civil equality including the right to vote. Dr King was one of the main characters of this political protest and this event is one of the climax of his political life. Selma was the stage of a real slaughter of African Americans who were only peacefully protesting against this main discrimination.

# Step 2: development. Fill the following grids in order to classify your paragraphs

MAIN CHARACTER	
MAIN ACTORS	
CONTEXT OF THE EVENT	
SUMMARY OR PLOT OF THE STORY	
CONSEQUENCES OF THE EVENT	
POSTERITY OF THE MARCH	

## Step 2: development. Fill the following grids in order to classify your paragraphs (answers)

MAIN CHARACTER	MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr
MAIN ACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- David Oyelowo as Martin Luther King Jr</li><li>- Oprah Winfrey: Annie lee Cooper who was denied to vote by sheriff Clark</li><li>- Cuba Gooding Jr: civil right attorney and activist : Fred Gray</li><li>- Tom Wilkinson: President Lyndon Johnson</li><li>- Carmen Ojega: Coretta King</li><li>- Tim roth: Alabama governor George Wallace</li></ul>
CONTEXT OF THE EVENT	Before the 1965 Civil Rights Act African Americans were denied to vote unless they performed literacy tests and paid a poll tax
SUMMARY OR PLOT OF THE STORY	Annie Lee Cooper, an African American woman is once again denied to register on the voting list of Selma Alabama in spite of all her effort to satisfy Sheriff Clark demands.

## Step 2: development. Fill the following grids in order to classify your paragraphs (answers)

<b>SUMMARY OR PLOT OF THE STORY</b>	<p>King meets with President Lyndon B. Johnson and asks for federal legislation to allow black citizens to register to vote unencumbered. Johnson says he has more important projects. Many violent troubles occurred in Selma which decided black people to march to Montgomery. The first march ended tragically: bloody Sunday. Gathering thousand of people, the second march ended at king's initiative to avoid another slaughter. The third march was a success and worldwide broadcast It ended in the Congress vote in favour of civil rights five months later</p>
<b>CONSEQUENCES OF THE EVENT</b>	<p>Five months after the Selma March, the Congress voted the Civil Rights Act which abolished civil discrimination against African Americans. They got the full right to be registered on the voting lists</p>
<b>POSTERITY OF THE MARCH</b>	<p>Many singers used this theme to honour the victim of Selma. The film music "Glory" gathered John Legend and the rapper Common as a symbol of mixed genre as well as mixed races. The famous group U2 sang 'bloody Sunday", one of their most important success. And finally, President Obama went back to Selma to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the March.</p>

## Step 3: Write a conclusion

- You should use the last row of the former grid. It should help you to quote some other masterpieces and the following video showing President Obama celebrating the march and some more information given.

## Step 3: Some information.

- Jason Moran composed the music for the film, marking his debut in the field. Common (who plays James Bevel) and John Legend released the accompanying track "Glory" in December 2014, ahead of the film's theatrical release. A protest anthem, "Glory" references the 2014 Ferguson protests and earned a Golden Globe for Best Original Song as well as an Academy Award for Best Original Song
- All Martin Luther King Jr' s speech were rewritten because all the rights were sold to "Dreamworks". So the screenwriter rewrote all the speeches, taking in account the Pastor's style (anaphora)
- Selma had four Golden Globe Award nominations, including Best Motion Picture – Drama, Best Director, and Best Actor, and won for Best Original Song. It was also nominated for Best Picture.

Final task: write a full presentation of the film  
SELMA

The Obama's March

Final Task: write a complete presentation of the film following the former advise

- Final Task: using all the given information and all the former steps of our lesson. You should write the final document respecting the whole explained process.
- Remember the last thing your reader will remember is the conclusion. It must be precise and complete.
- However , the introduction is very important as it announces the whole development and helps the reader understanding the final document which is going on.