

DVD LESSON PLAN: *ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN*

Title: *All the President's Men*

Content: Directed by Alan J. Pakula. Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman star as the *Washington Post* reporters whose persistent investigation broke open the Watergate cover-up. Based on Bernstein and Woodward's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, the story traces key events from the break-in of June 1972 to Nixon's resignation in August 1974.

Special Features of this DVD:

Interactive menus
 Casting notes
 On location
 Who was deep throat?
 Chronology of Watergate
 Subtitles-English, French, and Spanish
 Scene index

Suggested Grade Level: Grade 11 and up.

Time: 1 to 2 periods. Should you choose to show the entire movie, running time is 135 minutes.

Outcomes:

Students will:

- identify at least 3 government officials involved in the Watergate affair, and 2 investigative reporters who uncovered the scandal
- identify 2 criminal acts committed in the Watergate affair
- write a brief explanation of the role of a free press in a democracy using evidence from the Watergate incident to support their explanation.

Prior Knowledge Required:

Students may need to review the powers of the president and know the chronology of presidents from 1945 to 1974.

Lesson format/ strategies:

1. Opening question: "If a president breaks the law, is he liable for punishment?"

Discuss this issue to determine that the students do understand the workings of the constitution and the limits to presidential power.

2. Review the election of Nixon in 1968, and the re-election in 1972.

3. Using the DVD:

Go to menu and select “Special Features”, then “Chronology of Watergate”. Have students take turns reading the sequence out loud.

If you intend to show the entire movie, hand out **Film Analysis Sheet** and play DVD from the beginning.

If you wish to use excerpts, hand out the **Film Analysis Sheet** and return to menu and select “Jump to scene”.

- A. Select 1-6, then 2-Burglary discovered. Play 2:10 to 8:06.
- B. Select 5, H.H. at W.H, and play to 19:10.
- C. Select 10, Deep throat, and play to 40:54.
- D. Select 15, Target, and play from 1:03:19 to 18:1:23:00
- E. Select 22, play from 22:1:35 to 1:37 (**Note: one profanity**)
- F. Select 24, play 1:44 to 1:46 and 28:2:08:04 to 28:2:09:25
- G. Select 30, play 30:2:13:34 (Oath of Office) to end

Culminating Activity: Have students write a short essay on the role of the press in a democracy using the film as one source of evidence, and one example of their own.

FILM ANALYSIS SHEET—*All the President's Men*

1. Describe the burglary, and arrest.
2. Who are Woodward and Bernstein?
3. How did Woodward establish a link between the burglars and White House? List the people he identified, and the positions they held.
4. Who was Deep Throat? As of 2002, Woodward and Bernstein have not identified him. What is the importance of newspaper reporters keeping their sources confidential? What are the problems with it?
5. What can you learn about the way a reporter gathers information based on the sequence in scenes 15 to 16? How do people react to the reporters?
6. What did Bernstein learn from “the accountant”?
7. Who was John Mitchell? What was his role? How did Deep Throat verify Mitchell’s involvement?
8. Why do the reporters think Haldeman is the 5th man? How do they get verification?
9. In the Oath of Office, what does the President swear to do?
10. What happened to those involved in the cover-up? What happened to Nixon?