

The Help – Auseinandersetzung mit dem „Black American Dream“ anhand eines Romans und seiner Verfilmung (S II)

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II/B2



Abiturthema!

Black maids and "white Southern ladies" – spannungsreiche Beziehungen vor dem Hintergrund des Civil Rights Movement erörtern.

„The other side of *Gone with the Wind* – and just as unputdownable“ (*Sunday Times*)

Der US-Bestseller „*The Help*“ beleuchtet vornehmlich aus der Sicht von *maids*, den Nannys der 60er-Jahre, den zu der Zeit vorherrschenden alltäglichen Rassismus in Jackson, Mississippi. Wechselnde Erzählperspektiven sowie ein trotz erlebter Diskriminierung oftmals humorvoller Erzählstil im Roman bieten eine sehr anschauliche Darstellung der Thematik, die entsprechend auch in der Verfilmung ernsthafte wie amüsante Momente enthält, sowie historische Bezüge. Anhand von schülerorientierten, analytischen und kreativen Verfahren schulen die Lernenden ihre kommunikativen Kompetenzen und setzen sich auf vielfältige Weise mit Auszügen des Romans und des Films sowie mit Texten (Reden) zum historischen Hintergrund auseinander.

Klassenstufe: 10–12 (G8), 11–13 (G9)



Dauer: ca. 14–16 Unterrichtsstunden

Bereich: Literatur, inhaltliche Filmanalyse; (*Black*) *American Dream*


Kompetenzen: 1. Text- und Medienkompetenz: Erschließung, Analyse und Kommentierung von unterschiedlich medial vermittelten Texten;

2. Kommunikative Kompetenzen: Leseverstehen / Hör-Seh-Verstehen / Sprechen / Schreiben (*comments + creative writing*)


Materialübersicht**1./2. Stunde: The “(Black) American Dream” in the 1960s – Introduction to the topics of the novel and reading the first chapter**

M 1	(Ab)	Quotations from the novel – First ideas about characters, plot and setting
M 2	(Ab)	Telling stories by visual means
M 3	(Ab)	Reading the first chapter – First impressions
M 4	(Ab/Ha)	Reading grid – Answering wh-questions
ZM 1	(Ta)	Complete reading grid as editable Word template 
ZM 2	(Lö)	Solutions for M 4 (reading grid) 

3. Stunde: Chapter 1: Upper class ladies and maids in Jackson – Analysis of the introduction of characters, setting and conflicts

M 5	(Ab)	A saint’s point of view? – Aibileen’s story
M 6	(Ab/Ha)	Creating character profiles with the help of a word bank – Characters 1 and 2
ZM 3	(Ab)	Info box: Narrator / narrative techniques 
M 7	(Ab/Ha)	Depicting the constellation of characters – Who loves / hates whom?

4./5. Stunde: Chapter 2: Racism in Jackson? The different characters as presented from Aibileen’s point of view

ZM 4	(Bd)	The constellation of characters as presented in a drawing (digitalised) 
M 8	(Ab)	“The rules for working in a White Lady’s house”
M 9	(Ab/Ha)	Minnie’s point of view



6. Stunde: Chapter 3: How Minny copes with her situation and with the other characters

M 10	(Im)	Hot seat discussion – Minny’s encounter with Celia
M 11	(Ab/Ha)	Skeeter – ambitious future writer or fighter for the rights of maids?


7. Stunde: Chapter 5: Skeeter: an ambitious white woman trying to become a serious writer? – Analysing her point of view / Pre-viewing activity

M 12	(Ab)	Skeeter and the people around her – Who says what?
M 13	(Ab)	Imagine being a producer ...

8. Stunde: Just telling stories? Discussing the beginning of the film version of *The Help*: Aibileen and Skeeter

M 14	(Ab)	Viewing and discussing the first three scenes from the film 
ZM 5	(Ab/Ta)	Complete viewing grid as editable Word template 


9./10. Stunde: Racism versus friendly relationships between the maids and the white ladies they work for – Analysis of scenes from the film

M 15 (Ab) The maids – servants, slaves, mother figures or friends to the white ladies? 


11. Stunde: The killing of Medgar Evers and other historical references as presented in the film (and in the novel) – Viewing the scenes and discussing their effects

M 16 (Ab) Historical references as presented in the film 

12. Stunde: The ending of the film: a step towards equal rights and justice? – Discussion

M 17 (Ab) The ending of the film – pathway towards equal rights and justice? 

Erweiterungsmöglichkeit

ZM 6 (Ab/Hw) *The Help*: Post-viewing/reading activities 

13. Stunde: Martin Luther King and the “Black American Dream” – Analysis of the *Montgomery Bus Boycott* speech

M 18 (Ab) Martin Luther King in fact and fiction

M 19 (Ab/Tx) Analysing a speech delivered by Martin Luther King

14./15. Stunde: The (Black) American Dream in the 21st century – Analysis of a cartoon and of a speech by Barack Obama

M 20 (Ab/Bd) Obama – saviour of the black people? Analysing a cartoon

M 21 (Ab/Tx) Obama’s farewell address – his legacy? Analysing a speech



Dieses Material finden Sie auf der beiliegenden **CD 24 bzw. in der Zip-Datei.**



Für den Einsatz dieses Materials wird ein **DVD-Player** oder **Beamer** benötigt.

M 6 Creating character profiles with the help of a word bank – Chapters 1 and 2



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Tasks

1. Read chapter 2.
2. Fill in the grid with the relevant information given in chapter 2.
3. Analyse the patterns of behaviour the characters show in chapter 2. Also refer to the results from the last lesson concerning chapter 1. Choose adjectives from the word bank which you think are most appropriate to describe the character(s) mentioned in the list below.

Word bank

loving • affectionate • aggressive • ambitious • bad-tempered • class-conscious • bossy • conceited • prejudiced • extroverted • introverted • industrious • friendly • sociable • open-hearted • condescending • talkative • reliable • hypocritical • humble • modest • empathetic • vindictive • intimidated • brave • dishonest • cunning • obsequious • envious • jealous • hard-working • self-centred • indifferent • wicked • self-controlled • self-confident • insecure • rude • sassy (informal) • energetic • embittered • unscrupulous • rebellious • revengeful • submissive

Now focus on one of the following characters or aspects and note down (preferably on file cards) what you consider important:

- a) **Aibileen**: pp. 1–14; p. 16; pp. 21–27
- b) **The Leefolts and Mae Mobley**: pp. 14/15; pp. 17–19
- c) **Building the new bathroom (Aibileen and Miss Leefolt)**: pp. 19/20; pp. 28/29
- d) **Minnie**: p. 13, p. 17; pp. 20/21; pp. 27/28
- e) **Celia Foote**: pp. 24–26
- f) **Position of the narrator / narrative techniques in chapter 2 (and 1)**

(If you need further help here, your teacher can give you an info box!)

Extra: Comment on the question to what extent humanity, inhumanity, racism, prejudices and/or social pressure are revealed in the extracts you have dealt with.

M 7 Depicting the constellation of characters – Who loves/ hates whom?

Optional: Work out a graphic presentation of the constellation of characters (e.g. a mind map or picture).



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M 12 Skeeter and the people around her – Who says what?



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Explain who makes the following utterances and what the characters mean.

1. “A pretty piece of paper.”
2. “The inevitability of death by no shoes.”
3. “... it’s a skeeter!”
4. “I have to sleep in a wedding cake.”
5. “He’s coming next weekend.”
6. “The bathroom thing?”
7. “Be nice to the little colored girls when you’re down there.”
8. “I realized I actually had a choice in what I could believe.”
9. “... I felt free.”
10. “She would’ve told me such terrible news immediately.”

You may use a table like this one:

(number of) quotation	Who?	What?



M 13 Imagine being a producer ...

... who wants to turn the novel *The Help* into a film.



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Tasks

1. Make a list of relevant aspects.

2. Write down ideas on how to start the film.

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VORANSICHT

M 16 Historical references as presented in the film

Learning about the legal reality of Jim Crow laws and the assassination of Medgar Evers and John F. Kennedy as depicted in the film

- ① **In the following scene** (00:34:42–00:36:26), **Skeeter reads in a book with the title:**

The Laws Governing the Conduct of Nonwhites and other Minorities.



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Tasks

1. Pre-viewing activity: Speculate on what kind of conduct (behaviour) the book demands.
2. While-viewing activity: Note down the laws mentioned in the scene and describe possible consequences.

- ② **Medgar Evers on TV and the reactions of white and black characters**
(1:16:35–ca. 1:20:40)



By Richard Apple – own work, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0

Statue at the Medgar Evers
Boulevard Library in Jackson,
Mississippi

Task: While or after watching the following scenes, take notes to answer the questions below.

First scene (1:16:35–1:17:21)

1. How is Medgar Evers presented, what does he tell the people to do?
2. How do the characters of the film who watch him on TV react?

Second scene (1:17:21–1:20:40)

Focus on one or two of the following questions:

1. What happens?
2. How does Aibileen feel?
3. What is revealed about the background event?
4. Being in Minny's kitchen, how do Minny and Aibileen feel about their situation because of the event?
5. Would you say that Minny's fears are justified?
6. Would you say that they should better give up telling their stories, and if it is only to save Minny's children? Give reasons.

- ③ **Reactions to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy as depicted in the film** (1:31:37–1:32:46)

Task: While or after watching the following scenes, take notes to answer the questions below.

1. How is the event presented? – Compare the way it is presented to that of the assassination of Evers.
2. Describe the characters' reaction to the event.



John F. Kennedy –
funeral prayer card

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M 20 Obama – saviour of the black people?

Examine Obama's importance for the black population in the USA by analysing the cartoon.

Tasks

1. Describe your first impression of the cartoon.
2. Analyse the cartoon in detail by describing it and explaining its message.

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Language support – Describing / analysing cartoons

Description:

In the foreground / background ...

On the right / left ...

In the centre ...

In the top/bottom right-hand/left-hand corner ...

Analysis:

The cartoonist shows / describes / presents ...

The message of the cartoon is ...

