

Film guide

Selma

US | 2014 | Cert. 12 | 125mins
 Director: Ava DuVernay

This absorbing drama focuses on a few months in 1965 and Martin Luther King’s involvement in the campaign to secure voting rights for black Americans. David Oyelowo’s gripping performance emphasizes King’s weaknesses, doubts and pressures as well as his charisma and skilled oratory. Scenes of brutality during the protest also provide a timely reminder of the urgency of King’s campaign, as well as society’s continuing distance from his ideals.



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You will like this film if you liked

Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom (2013, 12)



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Watch next

Fruitvale Station (2013, 15)



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Talk about it (before the film)

What do you know about Martin Luther King? What did he campaign for? What methods did he use to protest? Can you quote anything he said?

Talk about it (after the film)

- Why do you think the film focuses on a small period in King’s life? Why this period in particular? What would be different if the film covered his entire life?
- Director Ava DuVernay has said that she wanted to go beyond the well-known facts and show King as a real person - <http://bit.ly/Selmabehindthescenes>. How successful is the film in doing this? Can you think of particular moments. What qualities did you see in King that were unexpected?
- What method did King and others use to protest? What disagreements do they have over when, where and how to carry out their campaign?
- Think about the protest scenes in the film, particularly the first march across the bridge. How are camera and sound used to give the viewer a sense of chaos and violence?

Write about it

Bring your ideas together in a review and share it on our Into Film clubs’ website. You could include a summary of the story, mention other films that it’s similar to, describe what you particularly liked or disliked and give it your star rating.

Extension Activities

Think about the beginning of the film, what real events does it depict? Had you heard about this incident before? Research how the bombing happened and the consequences it had – you could use Spike Lee’s film *Four Little Girls* (1997, PG) to start. Write up your findings in the style of a newspaper report from the time.