

Lesson 1: Quick Teacher Guide: Capturing Kennedy

Documentary: *Capturing Kennedy*

Director: Steele Burrow

Recommended Grades: 6–12

Run Time: 85 minutes

Please note the use of offensive language at 30:50



Overview

Capturing Kennedy tells the story of Jacques Lowe, the personal photographer of President John F. Kennedy. Through candid photographs and historical commentary, the documentary explores how Lowe's images shaped the public image of JFK and helped define the “Camelot” era. The film also examines Lowe's background as a Jewish refugee, the ethics of photographing public figures, and the lasting impact—and loss—of historical records.

Key Themes

- Power of photography and visual media
- Public image vs. private life of leaders
- Ethics of journalism and photography
- Immigration, resilience, and perspective
- Historical memory and preservation

Curriculum Connections

- U.S. History: Cold War era, JFK presidency, 1960s America
- Media Literacy: How images influence public opinion
- ELA: Analyzing nonfiction media, point of view, biography
- Civics: Leadership, public trust, and transparency

Essential Questions

- How do photographs influence the way history is remembered?
- What responsibilities do photographers have when documenting powerful people?
- How can personal experiences shape the way someone tells a story?

Before Viewing

- Ask students: How do photos shape how we see leaders today?
- Show one famous JFK photograph and discuss what it communicates.

During Viewing

- Use guided notes or follow-along questions to help students track key ideas.
- Encourage students to note moments where photography feels personal rather than political.

After Viewing - Use for discussion or writing prompts

- Should the public see private moments of leaders? Why or why not?
- How might JFK be remembered differently without Jacques Lowe's photographs?
- Compare a posed political photo with one candid image from the film.

Assessment Ideas

- Short reflection paragraph
- Exit ticket answering one essential question
- Photo analysis worksheet

Name:

Date:



Lesson 2: Capturing Kennedy

Directions: Answer each question in complete sentences. Use examples from the documentary whenever possible.

1. Why did Jacques Lowe focus on photographing everyday moments of President Kennedy, not just major events?
2. How do photographs help tell a story differently from words or speeches?
3. Do you think Jacques Lowe's photos changed how people saw President Kennedy? Why or why not?
4. Jacques Lowe survived challenging experiences before coming to the United States. How might those experiences have affected the way he viewed freedom or leadership?
5. Some photos show private moments of the Kennedy family. Do you think it's okay for the public to see these images? Explain your opinion.
6. Many of Lowe's photos were lost on September 11, 2001. Why is it essential to protect and preserve historical images and documents?

Bonus:

Choose one photo from the documentary and explain what story it tells about President Kennedy or the time period.