FURTHER INFORMATION

There is a companion post for this presentation on my blog, which contains more information, examples, rubrics, reflections, links and more. Please visit http://tiny.utk.edu/ARC.

Academic Reading Circles (ARCs) is an intensive reading approach aimed at improving learner engagement with and understanding of concepts in non-fiction texts, like those encountered in higher education courses. ARCs combine individual investigation about specific aspects of a text with collaborative construction of knowledge about that text in groups.
"Birth of a Nation" takes Sundance by storm

By Steven Zeitchik, Los Angeles Times 02.01.16

PARK CITY, Utah — There’s good timing. There’s great timing. Then there’s “The Birth of a Nation” at Sundance.

In one of the most charged-up festival screenings in recent memory, the new film about the Nat Turner slave rebellion of 1831 by actor-director Nate Parker played to a rapturous response Monday evening. In the dawn hours of Tuesday, the reaction reached a new plateau when Fox Searchlight won world rights to the film for an estimated $17.5 million, the highest in the festival’s history.

Searchlight outmaneuvered a number of other players, including the Weinstein Co. and Netflix, the latter of which the filmmakers passed on, despite reports of the company’s willingness to pay as much as $20 million. With the acquisition, Parker’s film will now get a major Oscar push and a presumptive fall release.

The movie, which leads a group of Sundance entries featuring black characters — including Spike Lee’s “Michael Jackson’s Journey from Motown to Off the Wall” and Anna Farrell’s “The Fits” — arrives in the heat of multiple discussions about race in America, including Hollywood’s "#OscarsSoWhite" movement. Its big festival response and subsequent commercial push has the potential to change the debate and address its concerns, even as the film was made with little mainstream Hollywood investment.

The result of seven years of sweat by Parker (who also wrote, stars and serves as a producer), “Nation” is inspired by a true story that saw a small group of slaves, starting out with rudimentary weapons, eventually take on white slave owners and their families, killing about 60 of them.
# CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

## 1. Knowledge
**Identification and recall of information**
- Who ________________?  
- What ________________?  
- Where ________________?  
- When ________________?

- How ________________?  
- Describe ________________.  
- What is ________________.  
- State ________________.

- Fill in the blank
- List
- Identify
- Label
- Locate
- Match
- Memorize
- Name
- Recall
- Spell
- State
- Tell
- Underline

## 2. Comprehension
**Organization and selection of facts and ideas**
- Re-tell ______ in your own words.  
- What is the main idea of ________?

- What differences exist between ________?  
- Can you write a brief outline?

- Convert
- Describe
- Explain
- Interpret
- Paraphrase
- Put in order
- Restate
- Retell in your own words
- Trace
- Summarize
- Trace
- Translate

## 3. Application
**Use of facts, rules, and principles**
- How is ____ an example of ____?  
- How is ____ related to ____?  
- Why is ____ significant?

- Do you know of another instance where ____?  
- Could this have happened in ____?

- Apply
- Compute
- Conclude
- Construct
- Demonstrate
- Determine
- Draw
- Find out
- Give an example
- Illustrate
- Make
- Operate
- Show
- Solve
- State a rule or principle
- Use

## 4. Analysis
**Separating a whole into component parts**
- What are the parts or features of ____?  
- Classify ____ according to ____.

- Outline/diagram/web/map ________.

- How does ____ compare/contrast with ____?  
- What evidence can you present for ____?

- Analyze
- Categorize
- Classify
- Compare
- Contrast
- Debate
- Deduct
- Determine the factors
- Diagram
- Differentiate
- Dissect
- Distinguish
- Examine
- Infer
- Specify

## 5. Synthesis
**Combining ideas to form a new whole**
- What would you predict/infer from ____?  
- What ideas can you add to ____?  
- How would you create/design a new ____?

- What solutions would you suggest for ____?  
- What might happen if you combined ____ with ____?

- Change
- Combine
- Compose
- Construct
- Create
- Design
- Find an unusual way
- Formulate
- Generate
- Invent
- Originate
- Plan
- Predict
- Pretend
- Produce
- Rearrange
- Reconstruct
- Reorganize
- Revise
- Suggest
- Suppose
- Visualize
- Write

## 6. Evaluation
**Developing opinions, judgements, or decisions**
- Do you agree that ____? Explain.
- What do you think about ____?
- What is most important?

- Prioritize ____ according to ____?
- How would you decide about ____?
- What criteria would you use to assess ____?

- Appraise
- Choose
- Compare
- Conclude
- Decide
- Defend
- Evaluate
- Give your opinion
- Judge
- Justify
- Prioritize
- Rank
- Rate
- Select
- Support
- Value
REFERENCES and FURTHER READING


Further Reading on Academic Reading Circles

tiny.utk.edu/ARC
www.anthonyteacher.com
arc.fourc.ca
areadingcircle.wordpress.com
facebook.com/arcshare
# Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is the name of the movie and the main actor mentioned in the article?
2. Why is this movie related to the movement against the racism?
3. How does compare "The Birth of a Nation" with "Django Unchained" and "12 years a Slave"?

## Summary

1. **The Birth of a Nation at the Sundance Film Festival**
   - Film about the Nat Turner slave rebellion.
   - Film by actor-director Nate Parker with an overwhelmingly positive response.
   - Arrives in the heat of multiple discussions about race in America.
   - Made with little mainstream Hollywood investment.

2. **The content and purpose of the movie**
   - Inspired by a true story about slavery and racism.
   - Purpose of this film: “hope of creating change agents”.

3. **Comparison of this movie with others related to the topic (slavery and racism)**
   - “Django unchained”, set in the world of revenge.
   - “12 years a slave”, ends with liberation.

4. **Audience reactions at Sundance Festival as indicators of success**
   - Moviegoers go out of their seats.
   - Audience members deeply moved.
   - It’s almost certainly the nomination at the Oscars.

5. **The conviction of the director to make this movie**
   - Raise the money for the film.
   - Remained undeterred.

## Discussion questions

1. What do you think about the topic of the movie “The Birth of a Nation”?
2. Do you agree with the director about these types of movies could help creating change agents about the slavery and racism?
3. What is most important for the director of this movie? The success and the awards (Oscars nomination) or the attempt to change the audience perception about slavery and racism.
**Topical Vocabulary: Slavery**

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**Keywords and Important Vocabulary**

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**Language Usage**

1. Why does the author use the word “jolt” on line 31: “But the movie may also jolt viewers into debate”?

2. What is the meaning of the quote on line 37-39: “The reality is there are people in their benevolence who thought they were doing good even though they were doing bad. And in 2016 I think that echoes.”

3. Interesting grammar: “ever-so-slightly” (line 24): “Nat Turner and his wife, Cherry (Aja Naomi King), endure an ever-so-slightly better life than their fellow slaves”

**Side-by-side comparison of 1831 woodcut (from Wikipedia) and from the move Birth of a Nation**

**2. Line 15 - Hollywood’s “#OscarsSoWhite” movement**

These tweets show that some people were upset a movie that earned a lot of money and was critically acclaimed, Straight Outta Compton, did not get any nominations.
**Article**


**Connection with Textbook Article “Gimmicks”**

- How to make movies successfully. There are two different way. First one is using gimmicks, Second one is True story.
- Making movies costs a lot of money.
- Movie can affect social issue because many people watch movies.

**Current events**

- This article is about Racial discrimination and Slavery.
- A couple weeks ago, There is a robbery with gun. One black guy threaten people near the library around 11pm.
- We can watch news about whites and blacks. White cops become more aggressive when they catching blacks. Sometimes angry blacks kill white cops.
- Black people’s life of quality have been improved, but there are many black homeless around us.
- Racial discrimination is still exist(not clearly)

**Personal experience**

- I think there are conflicts between white people and black people. When I go to Trecs for playing basketball, I can see the weird situation. Blacks and Whites are separately playing game.
- When I went to NY, I just took $20 from my wallet, One black guy came to me and took my $20 and ran out. I think some black people are still poor, so they commit crime.

### How to Introduce ARC Perspectives

The following example worksheet can be used to introduce students to the different roles and perspectives of Academic Reading Circles. This worksheet would be used once and based on a text students are already familiar with.

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→ **Line 2: Nat Turner slave rebellion of 1831**

- It was also known as the Southampton Insurrection
- It took place in Southampton County, Virginia.
- Turner was highly religious and was often seen fasting visions, which he interpreted as messages from God. One of its message was that he had to rebel against slavery. So he began to see the scope of slavery and decided to become the leader of the rebellion.

This article is about Nate Parker’s film about Nat Turner’s rebellion and the impact it has shown in the audience.

→ **Line 3: Sundance film festival**

- The Sundance Film Festival is an international festival which takes place annually in Utah
- It is organized by the Sundance Institute, that is a non-profit organization founded by Redford in 1981.
- The Institute provides creative and financial support to emerging and aspiring filmmakers, directors, producers, film composers, screenwriters, playwrights and theater artists.

As we can see in the article, Nate Parker is an independent director, who made the film with little mainstream Hollywood investment. That’s why the Sundance Film Festival gave him support to promote “The Birth of a Nation”.

→ **Line 14: Multiple discussions about race in America**

- Donald Trump is against Mexican immigrants and he says that if he wins the US presidential, he is going to order the construction of a wall between Mexico and the USA so that illegal immigrants won’t be able to get into the US. But he’s also against Asians, Arabs, and Afro Americans.
  - Battles between white people and Afro Americans:

The Police in the US is against Afro Americans. The last Wednesday, two white agents killed an Afro American for no reason in Louisiana, the 122nd since 2016 started. And as in revenge, an Afro American killed five white police agents in Dallas.

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