



The Mirror Boy

Directed by: Obi Emelonye

Certificate: PG

Running Time: 1h27m

Production Year: 2010

Country: Nigeria

Genre: Fiction

Language: English

Synopsis

The Mirror Boy is an enthralling journey through the small West African country of The Gambia, as seen through the eyes of a London-born 12-year-old boy, Tijani. When Tijani gets involved in a street fight, his mother decides to take him to The Gambia to rediscover discipline and become a man. After many exhilarating adventures with a little boy called Mirror Boy, Tijani discovers that the lines between reality and fantasy, between the physical and the spiritual, are blurred. Tijani must unravel the mystery of the Mirror Boy: who is he and where does he come from? Why is Tijani the only one who can see him?



Before watching the film

Activity 1

Consider these questions:

1. Do you know where your ancestors came from? Do you know any family stories from their past?
2. How many cultural backgrounds are represented in your school? How do these cultures differ in their habits and traditions (food, celebrations, religion, etc)?
3. What do you know about British colonisation? Which African countries did Britain colonise? When did British colonisation end?
4. Which countries have you travelled to? What did you find similar to and different from life in the UK?

Divide into groups and provide the answers to the questions above by preparing a colourful poster to share with your class.

Activity 2

Using information available to us from online sources create a Glow Wiki entry on The Gambia. Make sure to include information on where in Africa this country is located, what languages are spoken, what is the population, what music do young people listen to, what spiritual practices people follow, etc.



Activity 3

What does it mean to be black?

Black British is a term often used to describe British people of Black African or African-Caribbean descent. The term has been in use since the 1950s to describe a resident of the United Kingdom who is of sub-Saharan African or of British West Indian ancestry, and who considers them self to be British.

The term 'black' has historically had racial and political connotations, and has often been used in a wider socio-political context to encompass a broader range of non-European ethnic minority populations in Britain. This use of the term is controversial and has been widely contested.

Black British is now primarily used as an official category in UK national statistics for ethnicity classification, where it is then sub-divided into 'Caribbean', 'African' and 'Other Black' groups.

Discussion Points:

- Think of the colours Black and White and how they are used in an ideological and symbolic sense. For example, Black often has negative connotations such as 'black market', 'blacklist', or 'black death'. White, on the other hand is associated with more positive meanings. Look for more examples of this and discuss the existing concepts and your own ideas on the subject.
- Black is also a very mysterious colour associated with fear of the unknown. One of its manifestations is racism. Discuss why racism should be unacceptable in British society.