

12 Years A Slave Viewing Guide

As you view the film, please write responses to prompts.

This is a serious and mature film. If you have objections to viewing it, please voice these to me. That said, the value of the film to our US History course is obvious: How do we avoid repeating historical injustices, and how do individual's actions contribute to ending injustice? This is one such true story.

1) Describe the motives for the men who sell Solomon into slavery. How is it even possible to sell a free citizen? How do they convince Solomon to come with them?

2) What experiences discourage Solomon from repeated attempts to explain his situation, and to try escaping slavery?

3) Describe the variety in treatment that Solomon and other slaves receive from different masters, and note what details are most surprising to you.

4) Describe some aspects of slave culture that you find interesting or surprising (religion, relationships, behavior, dress, labor, etc.)

5) Describe your reaction to the end of the film. What feelings are you left with? How else could the film have ended? Why would the director choose to close the film as he did?