



SILVER SLING LESSON PLAN

FUTURESTATES



[C] COMMUNITY CLASSROOM
ENGAGING STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS THROUGH FILM

PRESENTED BY:
cpb [ITVS]

FUTURESTATES.TV



COMMUNITY CLASSROOM

Independent Television Service (ITVS)

651 Brannan Street, Suite 410

San Francisco, CA 94107

E-mail: outreach@itvs.org

<http://www.itvs.org/classroom>

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is an innovative education resource providing short documentary video content and accompanying curricular materials, lesson plans, and homework assignments to high school and community college instructors and youth-serving community-based organizations. Film modules are drawn from documentaries scheduled for broadcast on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. Content is grouped into subject specific segments that correspond to lesson plans and educational activities. All COMMUNITY CLASSROOM lesson plans are designed with key education standards in mind, and are available free of charge online, along with the film modules.

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is a program of the Independent Television Service, created with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Lesson plans were developed with guidance from the American Association of Community Colleges, KQED Education Network, National Association for Media Literacy Education, National Council for the Social Studies, National State Teachers of the Year, and PBS Teachers.

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Lesson Plan Overview

In the past, science fiction writers have predicted or inspired later technological developments in the real world. They were able to respond creatively to perceived future needs and desires. This lesson pairs the exploration of a specific need – the need for surrogate mothers – with an imaginative look at the future.

Students will watch *Silver Sling*, a film in which a young, impoverished woman considers becoming a surrogate despite possible long-term consequences. After discussing the film, students will read a nonfiction article about American and European couples who travel to India to find surrogate mothers. Students will consider the advantages and disadvantages of this practice.

Students will compare and contrast the film with the article. In the closing activity, students will consider creatively where our current situation might lead.

(Note to teachers: some students may see a connection between traveling abroad to find a surrogate mother and traveling abroad to adopt a child. They are not the same, of course, but this could become a sensitive issue to a student who was adopted from a foreign country by an American couple. Teachers should be prepared to work with students for whom this is an issue.)

Target Audience

This lesson is designed for high school students of all ability levels.

Total Duration

This lesson should take 2-3 days, depending on the class length. In the first activity (day one), students will analyze the film to determine which aspects of the story appear to be possible now and which aspects do not. In the second activity (day two), they will read and respond to an article about surrogate mothers.

Educational Standards

This lesson addresses the following Common Core standards in literature:

For grades 9-10

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

For grades 11-12

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.



Procedures (Day 1)

Teacher Preparation

- Preview the film, which is about 10 minutes long.
- Set up web access to view the film online.
- Have a projector available so that all students can view the film.

Lesson Structure

Beginning (Mixed large/small group activity, 5-10 minutes)

Present students with the following question. Give them a few minutes to talk to a partner before asking for their response. Compile answers at the front of the room.

Question

All of the following statements are true except one. Which statement is false?

- The word “robot” was invented by Karel Capek, a Czechoslovakian playwright, in 1921.
- Geostationary communications satellites were first proposed by science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke in 1945.
- Author Philip K. Dick included the first computer touch screens in his short story “Minority Report” in 1956.
- Flip phones were inspired by the Gene Roddenberry TV series *Star Trek*.
- After reading about an Invisibility Cloak in J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, Department of Defense researchers developed invisibility uniforms for the United States Army.

(Answer: the last one is false. An invisibility cloak has been developed, but so far it only works on something about the size of a strand of hair. All of the other statements are true.)

Discussion

In each of the examples above, creative writers were able to envision a technological development before scientists and engineers could make it happen. What technology would you like to see developed to address a current need? (Answers will vary. Encourage students to think in terms of current issues, like a nonpolluting fuel or vaccines for cancer or AIDS.)

Follow up the brainstorming by asking if students could envision any drawbacks to the development of these technologies. (Answers will vary. We have already seen problems with pollution from millions of discarded cell phones and computers. We have also seen problems with bacteria that resist even our strongest medications.)

Middle and End (Time needed will vary.)

Remind students of the initial activity, in which science fiction writers envisioned technological developments to meet specific needs. Tell students that they will now watch a short fictional film set in a future in which top female corporate executives are encouraged to hire surrogates rather than to take time off from their jobs to have babies.

As they view the film, ask students to watch for two specific things:

- What technology exists in the film that we don't have now?
- What unintended consequences have developed because of this technology?

Then show the film *Silver Sling*, which lasts about 10 minutes. Discuss student responses to the film in a large group briefly. Then divide students into small groups to discuss one more question:

- Are the young women who are hired as surrogates treated fairly? Why do you think that they are or are not treated fairly?

After a few minutes of discussion, compile the main ideas from the student responses and save them for tomorrow's lesson.



Procedures (Day 2)

Teacher Preparation

Students need access to the article found here:

<http://www.marieclaire.com/world-reports/news/international/surrogate-mothers-india>.

(Teachers may wish to print the article to avoid commercial content and unrelated links.)

Lesson Structure

Beginning (5-10 minutes)

Open class by reviewing students' statements from the end of yesterday's lesson. Tell them that today they will read an article about modern surrogate mothers in India.

Middle (Time needed will vary.)

Distribute a copy of the article "Surrogate Mothers: Womb for Rent" and the discussion questions (see handout). As a pre-reading activity, read the discussion questions aloud together. Then encourage students to read the article with a partner and work together to answer the questions. When everyone has finished, discuss the questions from the handout together.

(Note to teachers: some students may need additional support for this activity. Consider giving them the article in advance or giving them a copy that has the passages containing key concepts highlighted. The T-Chart Graphic Organizer included in the supplemental documents may also be useful.)

End (Time needed will vary.)

Ask students to respond to these questions:

- What attitude does the writer of the article seem to have toward surrogacy? What attitude does the filmmaker of *Silver Sling* seem to have?
- What details in the article and the film best reveal attitude or tone?
- A topic becomes controversial when both sides have a good point, and the topic lacks a middle ground on which people can agree. What facts or beliefs might make a person favor surrogacy? What facts or beliefs might make a person oppose surrogacy? Which side do you agree with more, and why?

Informal Assessment

As an informal assessment, students could contribute a prediction to the Predict-O-Meter. (See page 8.)

Additional Resources

Additional information on the surrogacy that made Dr. Patel famous:

- <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/01/30/1075340823076.html>
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3441939.stm>
- <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Reunited%3A+grandmother+and+her+surrogate+twins%3B+First+picture+together...-a0121652011>



Discussion Questions

“Surrogate Mothers: Womb for Rent”

By Abigail Haworth

<http://www.marieclaire.com/world-reports/news/international/surrogate-mothers-india>

Directions: As you read the article, respond to these questions.

1. What does “reproductive tourism” mean?

2. What issues might cause an American woman to seek an Indian surrogate?

3. What risks and benefits exist for the surrogate mothers in India?

4. What risks and benefits exist for the women who hire a surrogate?

5. Do you agree with the people who believe that the Indian women are being exploited? Why or why not?



Discussion Questions (Teacher's Edition)

“Surrogate Mothers: Womb for Rent”

By Abigail Haworth

<http://www.marieclaire.com/world-reports/news/international/surrogate-mothers-india>

Directions: As you read the article, respond to these questions.

1. What does “reproductive tourism” mean?

“Reproductive tourism” refers to people traveling to another country for the purpose of conceiving children.

2. What issues might cause an American woman to seek an Indian surrogate?

Frustration and lack of success with American medical practice and laws.

A much cheaper cost in India.

Publicity surrounding the success at Dr. Patel’s clinic in Gujarat.

India’s good health care system.

India’s doctors speak English.

3. What risks and benefits exist for the surrogate mothers in India?

Risks include health issues related to the pregnancy and disapproval from the community.

Because the practice is not well regulated, a chance exists that the surrogates could be exploited.

Some surrogates may become attached to the baby and find it difficult to give it up.

Benefits include money to provide a better future for the family or to meet immediate family needs.

Some Americans send gifts to the surrogates and try to keep in touch with them.

Intangible benefits include a sense of helping someone else have a child.

4. What risks and benefits exist for the women who hire a surrogate?

The women have to travel to India and endure the heat and living conditions.

They have to trust that the surrogate is healthy and takes good care of herself during her pregnancy.

The benefit is that they have a child.

5. Do you agree with the people who believe that the Indian women are being exploited? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Focus on the reasons that students give.



T-Chart Graphic Organizer

Directions: The film *Silver Sling* is about surrogate mothers. In what ways is it similar to and different from the situation described in the magazine article? Use the chart below to help organize your thoughts.

The film is similar to the article because...	The film differs from the article because...
<p><i>Both are about surrogacy.</i></p> <p><i>Both take place in urban areas.</i></p> <p><i>Poor women are the surrogates; wealthy women hire them.</i></p> <p><i>The wealthy women seem genuinely appreciative of the surrogate's help.</i></p> <p><i>The surrogates make this choice to help their families.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term consequences exist for the surrogates.</i></p>	<p><i>Lydia is not married.</i></p> <p><i>Lydia feels she does not have a choice about becoming a surrogate.</i></p> <p><i>The long-term consequence in the film is physical (sterility) rather than social (shunning).</i></p> <p><i>The wealthy women in the film hire the surrogates for convenience rather than because of physical problems. This makes them seem more selfish.</i></p>



T-Chart Graphic Organizer

Teachers Edition

Directions: The film *Silver Slings* is about surrogate mothers. In what ways is it similar to and different from the situation described in the magazine article? Use the chart below to help organize your thoughts.

The film is similar to the article because...	The film differs from the article because...



Extension Activity: Predict-O-Meter

Objectives

- Investigate and analyze predictions for *Silver Sling* as posted on the FUTURESTATES Predict-O-Meter.
- Formulate and post their prediction on the Predict-O-Meter site.

Beginning (5-7 minutes)

Review the discussions about surrogacy, real and fictional. This introduction is simply to “reactivate prior knowledge.”

Middle (30-35 minutes)

Students will investigate predictions presented on the Predict-O-Meter located on the FUTURESTATES website. After selecting and evaluating three of the predictions using the evaluation rubric, students will develop at least one prediction of their own to post on the website. The proposed prediction will be evaluated by a peer and approved by the instructor before posting. The predictions may alter the course projected in the Predict-O-Meter predictions. Students may require an example of a valid prediction. Using the rubric to instruct the students, prepare a sample prediction and lead the class in an analysis of the statement. The following is an example of a proposed prediction and the evaluation of it using the prepared rubric.

Proposed prediction: “In 2025, the round arm scar of surrogate mothers becomes fashionable, and urban women volunteer to become surrogates just so they can have the scar. Surrogate agencies like Silver Sling see record profits due to a cost decrease.”

- *Is the prediction based on realistic possibilities?*
Yes. Fashion and fads are highly unpredictable.
- *Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?*
Yes. Surrogacy is presented in a very positive light.
- *Do known events in the past support the prediction?*
Yes, the round arm scar can be compared to a tattoo.
- *Is this prediction plausible?*
This depends on the evaluator’s opinion, based on the evidence presented in defense of the prediction.



FUTURESTATES Predict-O-Meter Activity Instructions

Log on to www.futurestates.tv. Go to the Predict-O-Meter. There are three rows of predictions. The row on the far left contains the predictions based on the FUTURESTATES films, including *Silver Sling*. The center row consists of predictions submitted by viewers. The far right row contains dates of known events. For this activity, click on the green FUTURESTATES predictions. The number that appears in each green square is the number of predictions related to the specified year. Be certain to scroll down to see all predictions for a given year. At the end of each prediction is the tag for the film associated with each prediction. Find as many predictions as you can for the *Silver Sling* film. Choose three predictions to evaluate using the rubric below. When the assigned evaluations are finished, create at least one prediction of your own. Your prediction will be evaluated by another student. If the evaluation is at least a "3", you may post it on the FUTURESTATES website.

Film: _____ **Year:** _____

Prediction: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?				
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?				
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?				
Do known events in the past support the prediction?				
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____

Score: $\frac{\text{Overall Total}}{5} =$ _____

Film: _____ **Year:** _____

Prediction: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?				
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?				
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?				
Do known events in the past support the prediction?				
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____

Score: $\frac{\text{Overall Total}}{5} =$ _____



Film: _____ **Year:** _____

Prediction: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?				
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?				
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?				
Do known events in the past support the prediction?				
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____

Score: Overall Total = _____
5

Personal prediction for _____ **(film name)**

Name: _____

Evaluator: _____

Year: _____

Prediction: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?				
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?				
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?				
Do known events in the past support the prediction?				
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____

Score: Overall Total = _____
5

Should this prediction be posted to the website? _____

Teacher's approval _____

Date posted _____

If not posted, explain the reason for declining.



LESSON PLAN CREDITS

CURRICULA WRITER

Carla Beard

Carla Beard teaches high school English in Indiana. She often presents at NCTE and has served as Teacher in Residence for the Indiana Department of Education, where she helped teachers integrate technology into their classrooms. She maintains Web English Teacher, a web-based resource for English Language Arts teachers.

CONTENT MANAGER

Annelise Wunderlich

ITVS

CURRICULUM ADVISORS

Jenny Bradbury

PBS Teachers

Kara Clayton

National Association for Media Literacy Education

Joseph Fatheree

National State Teachers of the Year

John Golden

National Council of Teachers of English

Matthew Lappé

Alliance for Climate Education

LESSON PLAN DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Wilson Ling

ITVS

EDITORIAL REVIEW

Luke Sykora

ITVS

About FUTURESTATES:

Imagining tomorrow's America today, FUTURESTATES is a series of independent mini-features – short narrative films created by experienced filmmakers and emerging talents transforming today's complex social issues into visions about what life in America will be like in decades to come. The first season of FUTURESTATES debuted in March 2010, and is available online at futurestates.tv.

About ITVS:

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

