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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2018 Volume III: Adaptation: Literature, Film and Society

The Miracle Worker: Bridging Drama and Film Study to Build Critical Literacy Skills

Guide for Curriculum Unit 18.03.01, published September 2018
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The Miracle Worker is a text that traces the early life experiences of Helen Keller. Adapted from her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, strategies for exploring both the dramatic and film texts are explored in this unit for middle school English Language Arts classes. In addition to exploring important parts of these texts, considerations for reading both drama and film are made. Also, included in the unit, is a brief exploration of Helen Keller's life beyond the narrow narrative encountered in *The Miracle Worker*. It is hoped that students will understand that Helen Keller is iconic for reasons beyond popular myth captured in *The Miracle Worker* derivations. It is hoped that students will understand that while iconic, Keller is not a saint and that parts of *The Miracle Worker* do not align with historical truth. Despite these tensions and concerns, Helen Keller is an interesting historical figure worth exploring.

(Developed for Reading, grade 6; recommended for Reading and Social Studies, grades 6-8)

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