



An American Girl: Discover Your World

Curriculum Guide

A facilitator's guide for youth workers, leaders, and educators and families to accompany the movie, *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl*.



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

NOTE TO FACILITATOR

Dear Group Facilitator:

The year is 1934 and people throughout the U.S. are struggling to make ends meet as a result of the Great Depression. Bright, inquisitive and compassionate, Kit Kittredge (Abigail Breslin) is a natural born leader. But her life changes abruptly, interrupted when her father (Chris O'Donnell) loses his car dealership and must leave Cincinnati to look for work. Kit and her mother Margaret (Julia Ormond) are left to manage on their own, growing vegetables, selling eggs and taking in an assortment of boarders, including an itinerant magician (Stanley Tucci), a vivacious dance instructor on the prowl for a husband (Jane Krakowski) and a zany mobile librarian (Joan Cusack).

When a crime spree sweeps Cincinnati, all signs point to the “hobo jungle,” where Will (Max Theriot) and Countee (Willow Smith), new friends of Kit’s, live with a group of their impoverished companions. Kit, who always has her antennae out for a good news story, convinces Will to take her to the hobo jungle, and she writes an article that is a sympathetic portrait of the camp’s residents.

But when Kit’s mother and their boarders become the latest victims in a string of robberies, Kit’s loyalties are tested. Will is accused of the crimes and, with all of their savings gone, the Kittredges face losing their house to foreclosure. Determined to recover the stolen money—and believing Will is innocent—Kit recruits her friends Ruthie (Madison Davenport) and Stirling (Zach Mills) to help her track down the real culprit.

This FILM curriculum, *American Girl: Discover Your World*, is structured for use after youth have read one or more of Kit’s stories and viewed the movie. The guide offers discussion topics, activities and service-project ideas for youth ages 8–12. Exploring journalism as a career plays a central role in the curriculum themes.

FILM curriculum is made possible through the partnership of Heartland Truly Moving Pictures and the National Collaboration for Youth. Heartland is a nonprofit organization that seeks to recognize and honor filmmakers whose work explores the human journey. The National Collaboration for Youth is a nonprofit organization providing a unified voice for its coalition of more than 50 national, nonprofit, youth development organizations, and concentrates on improving the conditions of youth in the United States and enabling youth to realize their full capabilities.





AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Steps for Youth to Take with
An American Girl: Discover Your World

OBJECTIVES FOR YOUTH

- Learn more about the Great Depression
- Discover the world of journalism
- Explore the importance of community and family
- Partake in activities about avoiding judgment
- Take part in service projects that advocate for those who are hungry or live in poverty

Step 1) Read the books and see the movie

The movie, *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl*, presented by Picturehouse and New Line Cinema, opens in theatres nationwide on July 2, 2008. It is rated G.

The Books:

Kit Kittredge is based on the American Girl character and doll named Kit, a clever, resourceful girl facing the Great Depression with spirit and determination.

Kit's story is told in a series of books written by Valerie Tripp for American Girl:

Meet Kit

Kit Learns a Lesson

Kit's Surprise

Happy Birthday, Kit!

Kit Saves the Day

Changes for Kit

The movie draws from the core fiction, with the added plot element of a mystery. Kit's journalistic skills lead her on many adventures in both the movie and her books. Kit's mystery books include:

A Thief in the Theater (by Sarah Masters Buckey)

Midnight in Lonesome Hollow (by Kathleen Ernst)

Danger at the Zoo (by Kathleen Ernst)

Each of the books explores a unique facet of Kit's life during the Great Depression.

Many other eras can be explored through the stories of the different American Girl characters. American Girl offers historical characters and their stories from 1764 to 1974. More about each of these historic characters can be found at www.americangirl.com.



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Steps for Youth to Take with
An American Girl: Discover Your World

Step 2) Participate

Take part in meaningful discussions and activities about:

- The impact of the Great Depression in America
- Becoming a journalist
- Cultivating friendships and a sense of community
- Avoiding judgment of others
- Overcoming hardship

Step 3) Take the lead to help others

Engage in a project within your community based on lessons learned in this curriculum. Project ideas are included throughout the curriculum; there is also a free, downloadable service-learning supplement to assist in the planning and managing of *American Girl: Discover Your World* service projects. Please visit www.youthfilmproject.org/resources.htm to download the supplement.

The themes in this movie pave the way for many advocacy opportunities, such as raising awareness about hunger today in the U.S., ending poverty here and abroad and addressing affordable housing concerns. Some other resources that may be helpful are:






- Habitat for Humanity: www.habitat.org
- Project Bread: www.projectbread.org
- America's Second Harvest: www.secondharvest.org
- Meals On Wheels: www.mowaa.org






AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

TABLE OF CONTENTS


MODULE ONE: A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING

 Activity One: A History Lesson.....	6
Activity Two: Living During the Great Depression.....	8
 Activity Three: Necessity vs. Luxury.....	9
 Activity Four: Resourcefulness.....	10
 Activity Five: Activities in Your Backyard	11
Activity Six: Overcoming Difficult Situations	13
 Activity Seven: Problem Solver	14

MODULE TWO: EXPLORING JOURNALISM

Activity One: A Brief History of Journalism in America.....	16
 Activity Two: Famous Journalists	17
Activity Three: Objective Reporting.....	18
 Activity Four: Reporter Characteristics	19
 Activity Five: A Fresh Perspective.....	20
Activity Six: Pursuing Dreams	22

MODULE THREE: DEVELOPING COMMUNITY

Activity One: Finding the Good in People	24
 Activity Two: Avoiding Judgment.....	26
Activity Three: Reaching Out in Your Community.....	27

POST PROGRAM EVALUATION	28
-------------------------------	----



The pencil icon designates pages of the curriculum that can be distributed to the youth in your organization as worksheets.



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Dear Facilitator,

Kit Kittredge: An American Girl introduces young audiences to what it was like to live during the Great Depression. Seeing these hardships onscreen through the eyes of a ten-year-old helps create a better understanding of how life-altering the Great Depression was for families in America.

American Girl has provided information about the Great Depression to help youth understand the far reaching effects of the Great Depression in America. American Girl celebrates a girl's inner star—that little whisper inside that encourages her to stand tall, reach high, and dream big. The organization takes pride and care in helping girls become their very best today, so they'll grow up to be the women who make a difference tomorrow.

The information in the following section comes from American Girl's *Meet Kit* book, which is the first in a series of books about growing up during America's Great Depression. For more information about Kit Kittredge and American Girl, please visit www.americangirl.com.

OBJECTIVES FOR YOUTH:

- Learn about the Great Depression
- Explore resourcefulness
- Explore how to learn from those who lived in different time periods, including the Great Depression and WWII, where it was necessary to ration food and other items



Kit Kittredge: An American Girl ©2008 from HBO Films/A Picturehouse release
Photographer: Cylla von Tiedeman



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity One: A History Lesson

The following is an excerpt from “Looking Back: America in 1934,” which is a section in *Meet Kit*, an American Girl book. Instruct your youth to read this section individually or take turns reading out loud in a group. Words are highlighted throughout the text. Instruct your youth to pay special attention to the highlighted words. At the end of the excerpt the words and their definitions can be found to help them better understand the Great Depression.

There had been depressions in America’s past, but none was as widespread and long-lasting as the Great Depression. Although the start of the Great Depression in 1929 took many Americans by surprise, the causes had been building for many years.

The 1920s had been good years for American business. World War One, the Great War, ended in 1918, and American companies switched from making war supplies to making things like radios, toasters, and cars. Americans supported business growth by buying **stock** in the companies making these and other goods. A stock is a share of a company, and the stock market is a system in which people buy and sell shares. The **stock market** is an important measure of health of America’s financial system, or economy. People **invest** in stocks when they have confidence in the economy and believe they’ll make money.

For a time in the 1920s, stock values went up and people did make lots of money. But some investors bought more stock than they could afford. They bought stock on **credit**, or with borrowed money. They believed their stock would increase in value. They planned to repay their **loans** when they sold their stock at a higher price.

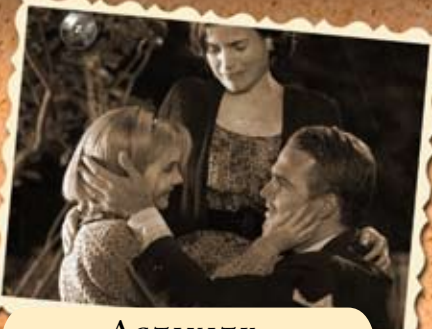
But the economy was getting out of balance as it grew. Business owners and investors were making huge **profits**, but the wages of working people didn’t rise very fast. Many people went into **debt** buying everyday things on credit. Farmers were already in debt from years of struggling with drought and low crop prices.

As people’s debt grew, they stopped buying new things. Companies lost money, so they laid off workers—and then even fewer people could afford new things. Stocks were worth less and less. Confidence in the economy fell. **Investors** began to sell their stocks, but soon the stocks were worth so little that no one wanted to buy them.

Then, on October 29, 1929, a day that became known as Black Tuesday, the stock market “crashed” when stock prices dropped dramatically. Many investors lost everything. They could not pay back the money they had borrowed to buy stocks. The banks that had loaned them money lost everything, too. Within weeks, the entire country started to suffer as businesses and banks shut down and more and more people lost their jobs.

Almost overnight, families who had been comfortable found themselves with nothing. When a bank closed, people were sometimes left with only the money they had at home. Even children who had put their pennies and nickels into school-sponsored savings programs lost their money. Many people had nowhere to turn for help and were deeply ashamed to go “on relief” or to accept free meals in soup kitchens run by charities. For most, it was the first time they had to rely on charity. But with so many people in need, the charities soon ran out of money, too. Families and neighbors helped one another as much as they could, but often there was not enough to go around.

Excerpted from *Meet Kit* by Valerie Tripp, Vignettes by Susan McAliley © 2000 American Girl, LLC. All Rights Reserved



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity One: A History Lesson

Vocabulary Definitions

Stock	An evenly distributed monetary portion of a particular company or organization
Invest	Putting money to use by purchasing something that could create more money in return
Investor	A person who invests money
Credit	A certain amount of time allowed for payment or repayment for goods or services
Debt	Amount of money or a service owed to an individual or organization
Stock market	A place where stocks and bonds are traded
Loans	Money that is lent for temporary use and that gains interest
Profits	Money gained in an investment

Follow-up information:

The Great Depression was a very difficult time in the history of America but, like other hard times, America got through it.

Factors that helped relieve the American people of some of the strains of the Great Depression were set in place by newly elected president Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932. Roosevelt's New Deal involved many components to help the American people, such as banking reform laws, work relief, emergency relief and agricultural programs.

To learn more, do some of your own research using your local library or the Internet.



Kit Kittredge: An American Girl ©2008 from HBO Films/A Picturehouse release
Photographer: Cylla von Tiedeman



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity Two: Living During the Great Depression

As the previous excerpt describes, the Great Depression had an enormous impact on all of America. Nearly every person in the country was affected, and it caused people to alter their lives drastically. Use the following discussion questions to further explore the Great Depression and how it was represented in the movie.

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways did Kit's family try to raise enough money to pay their bills during the Great Depression?
- Compare Kit's plight with that of her friends and community members.
- Throughout the story many characters lose possessions, money and even family members who leave to find jobs. Is Kit more upset by the loss of material things or her father? Why?
- Kit's family is lucky because they are successful in making enough money to keep their house while other families in their neighborhood are losing their homes. What are some of the options those displaced families had?
- Although Kit is young she tries very hard to help her family during a difficult time. In what ways does Kit help her family?
- If you were in Kit's place, what would you have done to help your family? What do you do to help your family?
- During the Great Depression many people had to rely on other people to get by. Who are some people you turn to when you need help, whatever problems you might be facing?



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity Three: Necessity vs. Luxury

Kit's mom is a very resourceful woman, as were many during the Great Depression. There was a shortage of many things, which caused individuals to turn to alternative means in order to get by. Kit's feed sack dress, although she was at first embarrassed to wear it turns out to be a fashion hit. People learned to stretch their resources to make everything go farther.

Kit and her family learn to make meals stretch farther by saving leftovers; they use chicken-feed sacks to make clothing. They also take in boarders and give up their personal space and bedrooms to make enough money to keep their home. Kit's family gives up many things that people might view as necessities, but they come to realize they can get by in a different way.

Use the chart below to explore those things in your life that are necessities and those that are luxuries.

	Necessity	Luxury
Shoes		
Clothing		
DVD player		
Winter boots		
Going to the movies		
Video games		
Food		
Jewelry		
Computer		
Winter coat		
Television		
MP3 player		
House		
Car		
Cell phone		
Running water		
Electricity		
Heat		
Air conditioning		

After filling out the table individually, team up in groups of four to discuss each necessity and luxury. As a group, discuss those items that you agree on as being a luxury or necessity. After identifying those items you all agree on, discuss the items you disagree on and explain why you made the decisions you did. Do you think some of these selections will vary depending on where you live (hot vs. cold climate; urban vs. rural)?



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity Four: Resourcefulness

ACTIVITY

Even though we don't live in the Great Depression era right now, there are still countless people who live in poverty who must carefully watch their daily consumption like Kit's family. In addition, today we are aware we live in a warming global climate and that resourcefulness in our everyday lives may help alleviate or prevent some of the damage to the environment. Instead of throwing things out, you can put them to use for other purposes! Here are some ideas to be resourceful in your own home:

- Use energy efficient light bulbs—they last much longer!
- Find out what types of plastics and glasses your community recycles and start recycling in your own home or apartment complex, if you don't already do so.
- Re-use jars and containers to store leftovers or as vases for flowers.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Turn off the water while you're brushing your teeth.
- Turn down the heat/AC when you leave your house.
- Walk, bike or use public transportation in place of driving whenever possible.
- Use refillable water bottles.
- Use re-usable canvas bags in the grocery store instead of plastic or paper.
- Use egg cartons and yogurt containers to store paint or for planting flowers and herbs.
- Make collages out of paper scraps, pieces of old clothing and sheets.
- Start a compost bucket in your kitchen that can be used to enrich the soil in a garden.
- Use cloth towels to clean instead of paper towels.
- Hang-dry your clothes instead of using the dryer.
- What are some additional ideas you have?

Visit www.epa.gov/kids for more ideas



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity Five: Activities in Your Backyard

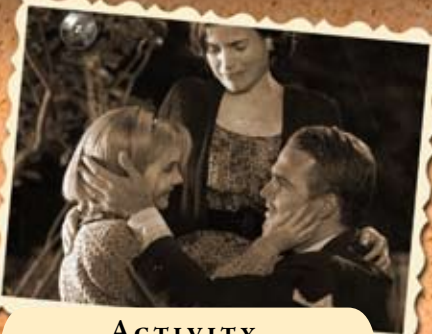
Kit and her friends had wonderful adventures in the movie and didn't have to spend any money doing so. They read books and magazines, watched a magic show put on by Mrs. Kittredge's boarder Mr. Berk, took a long hike and explored the hobo jungle in the woods, and simply enjoyed the company of friends.

In fact, when Ruthie's family goes on vacation she remarks that she wishes she could stay in Cincinnati with Kit because they have such a good time.

There are many activities that don't require money that you and your friends can enjoy outside or inside. On the next page is a list of activities to get you started. Use the open spaces to fill in some of your own ideas, and then cut all of the ideas out and place them in a jar. The next time you are bored and don't know what to do, select one of the ideas from the jar and do that instead of spending money or watching TV.



Kit Kittredge: An American Girl ©2008 from HBO Films/A Picturehouse release
Photographer: Cylla von Tiedeman



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity Five: Activities in Your Backyard

Play hopscotch

Make homemade play-dough using ingredients from the kitchen
Mix 1 ½ cup flour, ¼ cup salt, ¼ cup water and knead together

Build a fort with chairs and blankets

Bike or jump on a trampoline

Draw with chalk on the sidewalk

Play on a playground

Play in the rain

Blind walk—create an obstacle path from one end of the yard to the other, then one at a time, kids are blindfolded and have to walk the path guided by friends

Find a ball and play kickball, catch or soccer in the yard

Build a snowman

Make puppets out of supplies in your house and put on a puppet show

Go sledding

Create a nature scavenger hunt (collect a certain number of rocks, sticks, flowers, types of plants, etc.)

Have a snowball fight

Make a bird feeder out of a pine cone slathered in peanut butter and bird seed—hang it by string on a tree

Play in the sprinkler

Write imaginative stories and act them out

Make snow angels

Use a public pool or recreation center

Play in the leaf piles in the fall

Try to make a human pyramid with 5 other friends

Pick wildflowers and make bouquets for neighbors

Write a letter to someone



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity Six: Overcoming Difficult Situations

The Great Depression was a time during which there were many hardships. Almost everyone had to deal with difficult situations and frustrating moments.

At one point in the movie Kit becomes frustrated that her dad is leaving her and her mother to go to Chicago to look for work. Kit begins to type angrily about the situation on her typewriter and it gets jammed up. When Kit's dad finds her, she is upset with the typewriter and upset with her father. Kit's dad tells her not to let a situation "beat her." If she lets the situation get the best of her she won't learn from it. She takes his advice and learns to overcome her frustration and solve her problem.

Use the following questions to discuss why it is important to not let a situation get the best of you.

Discussion questions:

- Have you ever let a situation "beat you"? How did you let it get the best of you? How can you react to situations in the future so they don't "beat you"?
- When you encounter a problem how do you begin to solve it?
- What is a problem you have recently had and how did you deal with it? Did you feel better once you had resolved the problem? (Youth can partner up to share their current problems and seek advice.)
- When you have problems do you try to solve them on your own or do you have a person you turn to for help? Why have you chosen this person?
- Has someone, like Kit's dad, helped you learn an important lesson? What was that lesson?



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module One: A Different Way of Living

Activity Seven: Problem Solver

Kit is a natural problem solver. She always tries to help people around her solve their problems, and she often succeeds. Many of her friends and family members are problem solvers as well. Below are four characters from the movie and the books. In groups of four, work together to think of the problems these characters faced and the way they went about solving their problems. Write your answers beside each character.



MOM

PROBLEM

SOLUTION



DAD

PROBLEM

SOLUTION



STIRLING

PROBLEM

SOLUTION



RUTHIE

PROBLEM

SOLUTION



**INSERT YOUR OWN
FAMILY MEMBER**

PROBLEM

SOLUTION



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Two: Exploring Journalism

Dear Facilitator,

Not only does *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl* introduce youth to a different era and help them explore the Great Depression, but it also introduces them to a new vocation: Journalism.

Journalism is a wonderful way to get youth involved in exploring the world around them, whether they pursue it as a career in the future or simply as a hobby. The following activities are designed to help youth further explore the world of journalism so that they might begin to think of all the possibilities that exist for them in their future.

OBJECTIVES FOR YOUTH:

- Explore a brief history of journalism
- Evaluate the objectivity of different media sources
- Discover character traits of good journalists
- Write a letter to an editor about an issue that is important to them



Kit Kittredge: An American Girl ©2008 from HBO Films/A Picturehouse release
Photographer: Cylla von Tiedeman



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Two: Exploring Journalism

Activity One: A Brief History of Journalism in America

Radio, television and the Internet have not always been around. Before people had the ability to communicate using electronic technology, the news was communicated with a newspaper. Due to many factors such as the cost of paper and the difficulty of printing, newspapers were not widely distributed in the 1600s and 1700s.

- The first multipage newspaper in America was created during the Colonial period in 1690. This first newspaper, *Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick* only lasted one issue, but there were other small newspapers that followed this one.
- Later Benjamin Franklin, who you might also know of as a politician and an inventor, started *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. This and other newspapers of the time were not like the newspapers we see today. They were often poorly printed and contained short stories and satires, but not those things we consider newsworthy today.
- In the 1800s continuous rolls of paper were produced, making it easier to print newspapers. Also, telegraphs allowed information to be more easily transmitted between distances, allowing more current information to be included in newspapers instead of waiting for news to travel by train or ship. Papers increasingly became more newsworthy, containing information about current events, politics, etc.
- In the early 1900s radio was invented and by 1920 regular programming began airing on a Pittsburgh radio station, with more stations following suit, making radio the way to gather breaking news.
- Television emerged later in the 20th century, and the Internet became another main player in communicating the news in the late 1990s. Both of these technologies helped to spread the accessibility and timeliness of the news. Today there are many ways of gathering newsworthy information. Many newspapers are still printed each day, but television newscasts and the Internet are updated multiple times each day as new stories break.



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Two: Exploring Journalism

Activity Two: Famous Journalists

There have been many famous journalists throughout history. Two journalists you might be familiar with are Dan Rather and Barbara Walters.

Dan Rather began his career in 1950 with the Associated Press. The Associated Press is an American news agency, which is a group of journalists who supply news reports that can be picked up by newspapers across the country and internationally. Soon after working for the Associated Press, Rather moved to radio and then television. Dan Rather worked as a reporter and then as the anchor of CBS Evening news and retired in 2005. He served as the CBS Evening News anchorman for 24 years, the longest anyone has served as an anchorman for the same show in the history of American television.

Barbara Walters began her career as a writer at CBS News, but she soon joined NBC as a writer and researcher. Her first on-air duties were lighter reporting assignments, but in 1974 she became the first female co-host on *The Today Show*. Barbara Walters is well known for her ability to interview people, and she has had a very successful career conducting personal interviews with many different politicians and celebrities.

You may or may not be familiar with Dan Rather and Barbara Walters, however there are many other journalists that you are probably familiar with. Below is a list of journalists both alive and deceased. Select three journalists you are familiar with or that you would like to know more about and do some research so you can write about their career, as in the examples above. If there are other journalist you want to know more about, add those to the list! Where did they start their career? What makes them a unique journalist? Where are they now?

Television & Radio Journalists

Anderson Cooper
Diane Sawyer
Chris Matthews
Tucker Carlson
Tim Russert
Brian Williams
Katie Couric
Ed Bradley
Juan Williams
Nina Totenberg

Sports Writers:

Rick Reilly
Bob Costas
Tony Kornheiser
Jim McKay

Columnists:

Eugene Robinson
Maurene Dowd
Thomas Friedman
William Raspberry

Blogs:

Arianna Huffington

Photo-journalists:

Annie Liebowitz
Dorothea Lange
Gordon Parks
Walker Evans

Satirical Journalists

John Stewart
Steven Colbert
Bill Maher



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Two: Exploring Journalism
Activity Three: Objective Reporting

Different media organizations portray events in different ways. In order to get the complete story sometimes it is necessary to look at multiple media sources.

Give your youth a selection of current events being covered by the media whether political, economic or environmental—and encourage them to explore if the story is portrayed differently through the lenses of different news organizations/media forms.

Direct youth to the following sources:

Written forms: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*

Visual: News stations (Fox, ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, etc.)

Audio: National Public Radio

Split youth into groups of at least three and assign each youth to track the same current event through one of the above groups of media over the course of four days. On the fifth day have the youth regroup and share their results with the other group members. Did each get the same story? In what ways were the stories the same? In what ways were they different? Did some of the news sources offer more information than others?

Additional Activity Idea

In order to emphasize the difference between positive journalism and negative journalism and which gets more attention, kids can look at magazines and newspapers to see what the headlines are covering. Have youth create a chart of the top stories each day and chart the pattern of positive and negative stories. Why are both important? Why does negative news attract more attention? Why is this attention sometimes essential for change?



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Two: Exploring Journalism

Activity Four: Reporter Characteristics

Being a journalist requires a certain type of person. Below is a list of words describing some of the qualities one might find in a journalist. Discuss these vocabulary words to gain a better understanding of them for the following activity.

- Ethical:** Doing what is accepted as right and avoiding what is accepted as wrong
- Objective:** Basing something strictly on fact and not being influenced by personal feelings
- Credible:** Trustworthy and reliable
- Inquisitive:** Curious, desires knowledge and asks questions
- Thorough:** Very attentive to detail
- Observant:** Good at noticing things

After discussing the meanings of the above words, use the matching activity below to help you remember these characteristics. Cut out all the words and definitions, place each face down and play a memory matching game, connecting each vocabulary word to the correct definition.

ETHICAL	OBJECTIVE	CREDIBLE	INQUISITIVE
THOROUGH	OBSERVANT	Doing what is accepted as right and avoiding what is accepted as wrong	Basing something strictly on fact and not being influenced by personal feelings
Trustworthy and reliable	Curious, desires knowledge and asks questions	Very attentive to detail	Good at noticing things



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Two: Exploring Journalism

Activity Five: A Fresh Perspective (continued)

In addition to writing a letter to the editor, kids can also pursue other journalistic activities with friends or through clubs and school. Below are some ideas to get you started, but be creative and think of other ways to become involved in journalism everyday.

- Contribute to the school newspaper or create one if it doesn't already exist. Your youth group or classroom can also create its own paper or newsletter, assigning the following roles based on interests/strengths:
 - editors
 - ads
 - comics
 - current events
 - sports
 - interviews
 - letters
 - opinion
 - artwork/photographs
- In the paper, youth can focus on “breaking” important stories like Kit and/or creating fresh stories and interviews (some ideas are interviewing people who normally wouldn't be interviewed such as the school janitor, a new teacher or coach, a recent immigrant in the community, etc.). Youth can shadow this person just like Kit shadowed the hoboes. Additionally, youth can interview people that have lived through the Great Depression, World War II, or another time in history during which shortages occurred and foods and other items were rationed.

Send the articles you write to us at F.I.L.M. so that you can be featured on our web page! Send articles to FILMinfo@trulymovingpictures.org or mail to:

FILM Articles
Truly Moving Pictures
200 South Meridian Street
Suite 200
Indianapolis, IN 46225



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Two: Exploring Journalism

Activity Six: Pursuing Dreams

Kit's passion is journalism. Even at a young age Kit knows that she wants to write for the *Cincinnati Register*, and she doesn't let the fact that she is ten prevent her from following her dream. She encounters obstacles as she approaches this dream—from Mr. Gibson, the abrasive newspaper editor, to Kit's own frustration over the difficulty in getting to the bottom of the burglary spree. However, Kit doesn't let these obstacles stop her and goes on to get a story published.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever wanted to be a journalist or to have your voice be heard? What types of activities can you pursue now to help you get closer to becoming a journalist or getting your story out?
- If something in the field of journalism does not interest you, do you have a dream of what you would like to do when you grow up? What is it? Why?
- Who are some people you know who are in this profession? Did any of these people inspire you to pursue this profession?
- What are some of the steps you can take to begin pursuing this career?



Kit Kittredge: An American Girl ©2008 from HBO Films/A Picturehouse release
Photographer: Cylla von Tiedeman



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Three: Developing Community

Dear Facilitator,

Kit Kittredge and her family are wonderful examples of how to be good neighbors and members of the community. They realize the value of family and friends and work to support all those near them in a variety of ways.

The following section highlights the importance of community and why avoiding judgment of others is critical to strengthening relationships within a community. Also included are activity suggestions for you and your youth to become further involved in your community.

OBJECTIVES FOR YOUTH:

- Explore the importance of community
- Learn to avoid judging others
- Create a program to become better involved in their community



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Three: Developing Community
Activity One: Finding the Good in People

One of the most important components of growing a strong community is having faith in the people with whom you live, play and work. Kit has unflappable faith in her friends and family and goes well out of her way to support them.

Kit wants desperately to become a reporter, but she won't compromise her faith in her friends Will and Countee and the rest of their hobo community. When Mr. Gibson at the *Cincinnati Register* wants a story about hobos, Kit wants to provide him with one about the kindness in the hobo community.

Have three youth read this excerpt from the movie and act it out before the rest of the youth. Then use this scene to discuss why it is important to find the good in people.

Kit has just submitted an article to Mr. Gibson who reads the title with disdain.

GIBSON
KINDNESS AND HONOUR IN THE HOBO COMMUNITY?

KIT
There's no question mark. It's a declaration. Kindness and honour in the hobo community! You've got to admit, it's fresh.

GIBSON
Do me a favor, kid. Go make friends at the Gazette. Their circulation's low, this could be the nail in their coffin.

KIT
I want to be a reporter, sir. For the Register. You said I wasn't bad. I have witnesses.

Billy and Hank nod.

GIBSON
Yeah, but here's the thing, sweetheart, you generally want people to buy the paper, not laugh at it.

KIT
There's good hobos and bad ones, sir...just like with apples... and with ...editors.

He sneers at her, then turns and smiles, and walks away.

BILLY
I want to show you something.



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Three: Developing Community

Activity One: Finding the Good in People (continued)

They walk over to a bulletin board.

BILLY

See that map? Every one of those cities—Cleveland, Hamilton, Columbus—has reported crimes with hobos as the prime suspects. They're offering \$150.00 to anyone who catches the hobo criminals.

Kit writes the names of these towns in her note book.

BILLY

Now ask yourself who's gonna pay a nickel to hear what good folks they are?

KIT

That's exactly why they should hear it.

BILLY

Let me give you a tip: sometimes you got to play the tune your audience wants to sing to, Kit.

Excerpted from *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl* ©2008 from HBO Films/A Picturehouse Release. All Rights Reserved

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Kit feels it is so important that people learn there is kindness and honor in the hobo community?
- What are some examples of people doing good things in your school or community? Would these make good news stories? Why?
- Have you ever read a story or listened to gossip that caused you to misunderstand someone else? How did you learn the truth about that person or group of people?



ACTIVITY

AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Three: Developing Community

Activity Two: Avoiding Judgment

In both the Kit Kittredge movie and the books many individuals make assumptions about people without getting to know them first. In the movie Will and Countee both suffer from people making unfair judgments about them while Mr. Birk and his cousin Frederich are looked upon quite favorably. Using the table below, explore how judging others affects Will, Countee, Mr. Birk and Frederich.

<i>Will & Countee</i>	How are they judged by the community as a whole?	How do they turn out to be different from how they are perceived?
<i>Mr. Birk & Frederich</i>	How are they judged by the community as a whole?	How do they turn out to be different from how they are perceived?

Discussion Questions:

- Why are people in the Kit stories and movie so quick to make assumptions based on outward appearance?
- Why is Kit embarrassed by her family opening their home to boarders and selling eggs?
- Why are people so focused on maintaining their reputations?
- How are you perceived by others? How are you different from the way people judge and perceive you?



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Module Three: Developing Community

Activity Three: Reaching Out in Your Community

As Kit's mother and dad begin to feel the squeeze of the Great Depression, Kit realizes that she is capable of pitching in to help out, too. Kit helps her mom garden so they can sell vegetables, she helps sell eggs from a cart Will makes especially for her and she pursues a career in journalism, hoping to make a little bit of money she can share with her family to help pay the mortgage.

Think of a few things you can do to pitch in and lend a helping hand around the house or in your own community using the resource guide found at www.youthfilmproject.org/resources.htm as your guide. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Like Kit's family, team together with others and start a community garden in your neighborhood on an empty plot of land. Not only will you and your friends learn about gardening and teamwork, but the produce grown can be shared among the families helping at the garden, given to a local food shelter or sold each week at a farmer's market with the proceeds donated to a special cause.
- Start a clothing or canned food drive to help support a local shelter. Split into teams to see which team can collect the most useful clothing or food to donate. Alternatively, you and your peers can put on a play or magic show in your community and the price of admission can be a donated food or clothing item.
- Kit volunteers her time serving at a soup kitchen. Think of places in your own community such as a soup kitchen, nursing home or environmental cleanup group where you can donate some of your extra time.
- "Break" a news story in your community that deserves attention such as poverty, hunger, the environment, endangered animals, etc. Use photography to aid the telling of this story.
- Initiate a walk-a-thon to raise money for a specific cause.
- Auction student and community writing and artwork to establish a college fund for students in financial need in your community.



AN AMERICAN GIRL: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Post Program Evaluation

Dear Facilitator,

Please take a few moments to answer the questions in the evaluation for the American Girl: Discover Your World curriculum at www.youthFILMproject.org/evaluations.

We value your feedback, and your comments and stories can help inspire others and keep the FILM Project alive.

Please visit www.youthFILMproject.org/evaluations at the completion of this curriculum and tell us what you think. You can also send your stories to FILMinfo@trulymovingpictures.org.

Thank you for your support!

FILM curriculum is made possible through the partnership of Heartland Truly Moving Pictures and the National Collaboration for Youth. Heartland is a nonprofit organization that seeks to recognize and honor filmmakers whose work explores the human journey. The National Collaboration for Youth is a nonprofit organization providing a unified voice for its coalition of more than 50 national, nonprofit, youth development organizations, and concentrates on improving the conditions of youth in the United States and enabling youth to realize their full capabilities.

