

# Documentary Storytelling / Exercise 1

Journalists' Toolkit 2 / Spring 2008

Mindy McAdams / mmcadams@jou.ufl.edu

The following questions are based on the textbook by Sheila Curran Bernard. You will need to refer closely to the textbook to answer the questions properly.

- Watch your selected feature-length documentary *completely* before you begin trying to answer the questions.
- Answer all of the questions based *specifically* and *exactly* on **your selected documentary**. Do not generalize! Also, do not be redundant in your answers. If you keep writing the same thing, you're not trying hard enough.
- **Type** your complete answers in a numbered format (numbers matching the questions below) in MS Word (or equivalent).
- **E-mail** the Word document to me as an attachment by the deadline.

## Chapter 2

1. What is in the **exposition** of this documentary? (pp. 15–17)
2. Explain in one or two sentences the **train** of this documentary. (pp. 17–19)
3. What is the **theme** of this documentary? (pp. 19–20)
4. Explain in one or two sentences the **story arc** of this documentary. (pp. 20–21)
5. Is this documentary **character-driven** or **plot-driven**? Support your answer with an explanation. (pp. 21–22)
6. Who or what is this documentary about? (pp. 23–24) Be simple and brief.
7. What does the protagonist want, or what are the objective(s) or goal(s) of the central character? (pp. 24–25)
8. Briefly describe the **tension** or **conflict** that drives the train. (pp. 25–28)

9. How well did the filmmaker **involve you** in the experience? (pp. 28–30)  
Discuss whether or not the stakes were raised, and explain.
10. How did the **ending** meet, or fail to meet, the criteria spelled out in pp. 30–31?

### Chapter 3

11. Discuss any three (3) of the following in the context of your selected documentary:
  - a. Access and feasibility (p. 38)
  - b. Affordability (p. 39)
  - c. Passion and curiosity (p. 39)
  - d. Audience (p. 40)
  - e. Relevance (p. 41)
  - f. Timeliness (p. 41)
  - g. Visualization (p. 42)
12. Explain in one or two sentences the **hook** of this documentary. (pp. 42–43)

### Chapter 4

13. Briefly describe the **approaches** used in this documentary, using the examples in the text (pp. 47–52) as a guide.
14. Discuss the **biases** or subjective point(s) of view in this documentary in terms of the audience having trust, or losing trust, in the filmmaker. Use the text (pp. 52–54) as a guide. (We don't expect a documentary to be wholly objective.)
15. Address each of the remaining three sections in Chapter 4 (pp. 54–60) and, **for each one**, explain *whether* and *how* it is relevant to this documentary.