

Summer Screenshots: Hot Nights/Cold War  
Exploring the history of Cambodia through the film,  
*The Missing Picture*

KKK-14 Curriculum Component

# Terms for classroom use

- Khmer
- Angkor Kingdom
- Yasodharapura
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Angkor Wat
- Phnom Penh
- Imperialism
- Colonialism
- French colonial Indochina
- Vietnam War
- Ho Chi Minh Trail
- President Richard Nixon
- Operation Menu
- Kent State protest & shooting
- communism
- Pol Pot
- Khmer Rouge
- *Peap pray*
- *Ankgar* or “Organization”
- Rithy Panh

## Teaching *The Missing Picture*

- Rithy Panh narrates his film in first person and uses clay figures to help him to remember and process the trauma he and his family experienced during the Khmer Rouge's brutal reign of terror in Cambodia.
- Before viewing parts or all of the film, teachers may want to provide students with this graphic organizer to help them prepare themselves for the viewing (link for graphic organizer on resources slide.).
- Under the "I Think" and "I'm Curious About" columns, ask students to work in pairs to discuss 1.) why they think the film is called *The Missing Picture* 2.) why they think Panh used clay figures to depict his story 3.) what they think of the history of Cambodia so far 4.) what they are curious to know more about

TCU Chart		
Topic: _____		
T I think...	C I'm curious about...	U Now I understand...
Notes: _____		

## Quotes from *The Missing Picture*: before the fall of Pnomh Penh

- THEMES: INNOCENCE, PEACE
- “I seek my childhood like a lost picture or rather it seeks me.”
- “His suit is white. His tie is dark. I want to hold him close. He is my father.”
- “I remember how sweet life was. Then came the war.”

### □ Suggested Activities:

1. Have students come up with these themes (or others) based on the provided quotes and discuss as a class.
2. Have students consider how they would remember their childhood if it was represented as a single picture.
3. Have students consider what they would miss most about their lives if they were interrupted and impacted by war.

## Quotes from the Fall of Phnom Penh

- THEMES: DEHUMANIZATION, FEAR, LOSS
- “They entered the capital on April, 17, 1975. There were no cries of joy, only sign of the expectancy. I was there. I remember the look in the eyes of the young soldiers as if we had not been there.”
- “The city is impure. The city is corrupt. It is emptied within hours. Two million people are thrown onto the roads. They leave behind their homes, their loved ones, their memories. In fact, their former worlds.”

### □ Suggested Activities:

1. Have students come up with themes for the quotes.
2. Have students do a bit of research on the Fall of Phnom Penh and create a Storymap of the events leading up to it.
3. Discuss with students the role of “young soldiers” in the Khmer Rouge. Why were the young recruited in the Khmer Rouge’s armies? Have the students do research on the use of child soldiers in other world conflicts and/or civil wars.
4. Ask students why they think the Khmer Rouge wanted to empty Phnom Penh of its inhabitants.

## Quotes from *The Missing Picture*: the takeover

- THEMES: DEHUMANIZATION, LOSS, FEAR
- “Immediately the Khmer Rouge counted then separated women and men, adults and children. Souvenirs were forbidden. All personal effects. Suddenly there were no individuals. Only numbers.”
- “They cut our hair. They take our watches, glasses, toys, books. They dye our clothes black, they change our first names. We are the new people-bourgeoisie, intellectuals and capitalists to be eradicated and destroyed.”
- “Soon there will be no more faces, no more friends, no more love, no more father and mother. Soon there will be no more emotion and even the words will be transformed. Each being will be a revolutionary, a fertilizer for the rice fields.”
- “To hang on you must hide within yourself, a strain, a memory, an idea that no one can take from you. For a picture can be stolen. A thought cannot.”

### □ Suggested Activities:

1. Have students suggest themes for the quotes and explain why they have chosen them.
2. Discuss the term “class warfare” with students to help them to better understand quote #2. Ask students to research other revolutions in world history (French, Russian, Chinese) that were based on class warfare. Have students compare and contrast those revolutions with Cambodia's.
3. Ask students to consider how dehumanization is, in particular, emphasized as a goal of the Khmer Rouge. Why would they do this? What was their strategy?

## Quotes from *The Missing Picture*: the use of propaganda

- THEMES: MANIPULATION, PROPAGANDA
- “The Ankgar: Long life to a new society devoid of rich and poor.”
- “Comrade, you are so very free, from now you must obey. Dig ceaselessly, move earth, move rock.”
- “The spade in your pen. The rice field is your paper.”

### □ Suggested Activities:

1. Have students come up with the themes for these quotes.
2. Discuss the “Ankgar.” What was its role, what did it mean? Do more research as a class for a better understanding of this term.
3. Ask students to compare the strategies of the Khmer Rouge with the Nazis during the Holocaust. Consider the fact that the words, “Work will set you free.” were displayed over the entrances of the concentration camps at Dachau and Auschwitz.
4. What is the meaning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quote? Discuss in particular its reference to class warfare.



## Quotes from *The Missing Picture*: attacks on capitalism

- THEMES: INDOCTRINATION, PROPAGANDA, TERROR
- “There is no more selling, no more trading. The new people are to be re-educated in the rice fields.”
- “The Angkar never use an object from imperialist or feudal society.”
- “Our only belonging is our spoon.”
- “How do you revolt when all you have are your black clothes and a spoon.”
- “They turn the high school into a torture center. They turn Phnom Penh into an execution center.”

### □ Suggested Activities:

1. Have students come up with themes for quotes.
2. Make sure students understand what the term propaganda means by having them provide examples of it.
3. Discuss the irony of the Khmer Rouge using the capital city and its high school as execution and torture centers.
4. Have students conduct research on the Khmer Rouge's leader, Pol Pot? Was he a revolutionary peasant in the fashion of Mao Zedong or an educated intellectual in the style of Maximilian Robespierre or Vladimir Lenin? How did his background and tactics compare and contrast with his predecessors?



## “Now I Understand”

- When you have completed viewing the film (or parts of it), have discussed the quotes, and completed some of the suggested activities, have students reflect by completing the final portion of their graphic organizer, “Now I understand.” What didn’t they know or understand before viewing the film, that they now know or understand and how?
- Share with your students the saying, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Ask students to reflect on this statement in regards to *The Missing Picture*.

# Resources

<https://ancientadventurescambodia.com/2013/07/13/old-photographs-of-phnom-penh-from-early-1900s/>

<https://asiasociety.org/education/cambodia-historical-overview>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-10684399>

[http://www.firstrunfeatures.com/presskits/s21\\_press\\_kit/s21\\_pk.pdf](http://www.firstrunfeatures.com/presskits/s21_press_kit/s21_pk.pdf)

<https://wqed.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/855a1f36-fd40-400b-bc63-1ae80620132c/forces-that-fueled-the-war-map-the-vietnam-war/>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Think-Curious-Understand-Graphic-Organizer-Chart-2033114>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/indian-ocean-trade-routes-195514>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpq4FefX5Ps&feature=youtu.be>