

The Life of David Gale

Director/Producer	Alan Parker
Writer	Charles Randolph
Genre	Thriller
Released in	February 21, 2003 (USA)
Language	(American) English
Length	130 minutes
Summary	<p>The film <i>The Life of David Gale</i>, directed and produced by Alan Parker and written by Charles Randolph, is an American thriller from 2003 and has Kevin Spacey, Kate Winslet, and Laura Linney as high-profile cast. The film's main topic is death penalty in Texas, illustrated by the example of David Gale, a professor at the University of Texas. The two main characters, David Gale and his friend Constance Harraway, are active members of a group called "DeathWatch", campaigning against death penalty. Gale is accused of having raped one of his students. Although he is discharged from the accusation, his life changes because of it and his wife leaves him. Later, he is accused of having raped and murdered his friend Constance Harraway. Ironically, Gale is on death row in a prison in Texas. He hires Bitsey Bloom, a reputable journalist, to have three interviews on the last three days before his execution. Bitsey and her assistant Zack Stemmons are then trying to find out the truth about the murder of Constance. Right before the execution, Bitsey is in possession of a tape that can prove Gale's innocence but it is too late. Gale is executed just before she arrives with the lifesaving instrument. In the end, to discredit death penalty, it is revealed that Gale and Constance (Constance had leukemia and was about to die) made Constance's death look like a murder Gale is accused of to finally render a concrete case of death penalty killing an innocent person.</p>
Structure	Three last days before Gale's execution. One interview each day with flashbacks that tell the story. In between the interviews the current story of Bitsey, trying to find out the truth, goes on.
Characters	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Constance Harraway David's best friend</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>David Gale</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Bitsey Bloom Journalist</p> </div> </div>

Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Death penalty ❖ Execution Law in the USA (Texas) ❖ Life and Death ❖ Justice and Injustice 	
Secondary Literature	<p>Hüttmann, Oliver. “<i>Das Leben des David Gale: Gnadenakt im Todestrakt</i>“. Spiegel.de. Web. 16 February, 2016.</p> <p>Ryan, Michael/Lenos, Melissa. “<i>An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film</i>”. New York/London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2012.</p> <p>Thaler, Engelbert. “<i>Teaching English with Films</i>”. Paderborn: Schöningh UTB, 2014.</p>	
Suitable Age	Grades 10-12. Dealing with “Death Penalty“ in English and Ethics class and introducing film analysis	
Activities	<p>Literary aspects of the film</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot, Characters, Motifs • Death Penalty (in cooperation with Ethics class) <p>Film analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of technical terms (Composition, Editing, Art Direction, etc.) • Analysis of important techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How are life and death depicted in the film? How does cinematography support the feeling of David winning or losing the fight against time? <p>Analysis of death penalty: how is death penalty depicted? What makes one think that? How does cinematography support or contradict that impression?</p>	
Teachability	<p><u>Pro</u></p> <p>+ combinable with Ethics class (distribution of content of death penalty in Ethics class and film analysis supporting the content in English class)</p> <p>+ appropriate English for 10-12th graders</p> <p>+ interesting topics for 10-12th graders (death penalty, etc.)</p> <p>+ good introduction to film analysis with Art Direction (greatly applied in the film)</p>	<p><u>Con</u></p> <p>- length of the film</p> <p>- no great variety in topics covered (better films available)</p> <p>- scenes that might seem inappropriate (sex scene with Berlin and Gale)</p> <p>-</p>
Overall Evaluation	<p>In my opinion, the film <i>The Life of David Gale</i> is very suitable to be taught in class. On the one hand, it can be used dually in combination with Ethics class. Death penalty (in most cases) is a topic in Ethics class sooner or later and the film is an entertaining illustration of it. Furthermore, the use of technical support is highly analyzable for the English classroom. Composition, Editing, and Art direction can be analyzed due to their support of the film’s story.</p>	