

# COLOUR BLIND

**Colour Blind** is a film about subtle racism and its daily impact on teenagers in high school.

To outsiders, Princess Margaret Senior Secondary, in the heart of Surrey, BC, looked like an ordinary high school. To teachers and students, however, it was a school full of racial rage, segregation and violence.

It's troubles began in 1995 when changes in the student population resulted in a shift of predominance from a white to ethnic student body. Five years later, we follow five teenagers as they learn tolerance for each other's differences. **Colour Blind** documents that painful and confusing process of overcoming racial conflicts.

The video's purpose is to encourage young students to examine their own behaviours and attitudes and to ask probing questions of themselves about how they react to racism within their own high school.

Director: Jinder Oujla-Chalmers  
Producer: George Johnson

24 minutes  
Order number: C9199 233



Closed captioned.  
A decoder is required.

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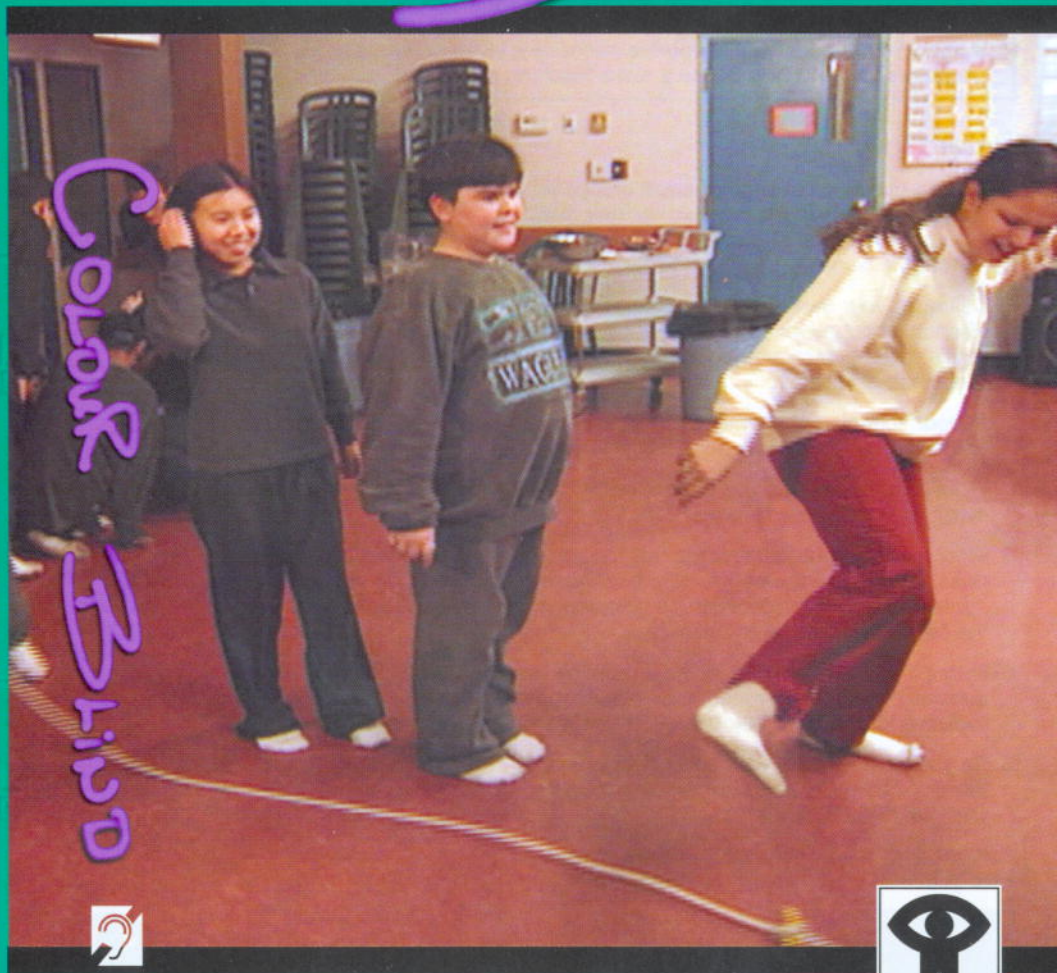
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VHS

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A National Film Board of Canada Production



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The educational aim of **Colour Blind** is to initiate healthy dialogue and to increase student awareness of racism. This video can be used to demonstrate problem solving and assertiveness skills as they apply to abusive or exploitive relationships. It can also be used to further develop interpersonal skills that demonstrate respect for others. Adults working with youth will also find the stories in this documentary illuminating and insightful.

**ADVISORY:** Racism is a difficult subject and may evoke strong emotions, therefore previewing this film *and* the follow-up questions is important. If additional support is necessary, invite anti-racism educators to your class or use a team-teaching approach.

## Before Viewing:

Ask these questions in large or small groups in class, or have individuals respond on their own. The purpose is to get students thinking and talking about the issues.



1. Define, in your own words, the following terms: *racism, prejudice, discrimination, minorities, stereotypes* and *culture*. Can you describe subtle racist behaviours, eg, racial-cultural harassment, unequal treatment, silencing?
2. At your school, is there much ethnic and cultural diversity? How do you recognize this? How does this diversity make you feel?
3. What assumptions do you have about other cultures? What about your own?
4. What names do other students use to classify ethnic groups? What does it say about the people who use those words? How do you think it makes you feel inside when you use those names? How do you think the person they are aimed at feels?
5. How do you refer to other cultural groups? How can we develop a culturally appropriate vocabulary to describe minorities? For example, is calling kids "white" pejorative?
6. Do you notice that in your school, groups of the same ethnicity hang out together? Give possible reasons why.
7. What does the phrase "us and them" mean to you?



**Director**  
Jinder Oujla-  
Chalmers

**Producer**  
George Johnson

**Cinematographer**  
James Tocher

**Editor**  
Debra Rurak

**Composer**  
Sidney Perez

**Executive  
Producer**  
Svend-Erik  
Eriksen

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**24 minutes**



## After Viewing:

1. What forms or shapes your attitudes about different cultures?
2. What ethnic groups were represented in this film? How did you identify them?
3. What initial assumptions did you have of Kevin?
4. Who's responsible for the fight between Kevin and Carlos? Was their dispute racially motivated? Which other factors contributed to the fight?
5. When you're the minority and not the majority at school, how does that make you feel?
6. What would it take for you to reach out to another person?
7. How does racist behaviour affect individuals? Name some of the signs of racism in this film. Which ones are subtle and which are obvious?
8. In the film, the students had preconceived ideas of other cultures. How do you think these preconceived ideas contributed to the racial problems?
9. At the beginning of this film, you saw an Indo-Canadian female student talking about living in two cultures. She says that her mother and grandmother object to her wearing shorts. Her mother has also told her daughter that she shouldn't hang out with white people. This has created inner turmoil. What does it mean "to live in two cultures"? How does living in two cultures cause anxiety and frustration? What are some coping strategies?
10. Who is ultimately responsible for your perceptions of others? How are you influenced by your parents' opinions? How are you influenced by the opinions of your peers?
11. What would help eliminate racism in your school?
12. Is racism acknowledged in your school? What activities in your school have helped reduce racism?
13. Gareema says that at camp she learned to see people as individuals, rather than as members of a racial group. How do you think she came to that conclusion?
14. At the end of this film, you hear "It's going to take a lot of hard work to overcome racial issues." How can you take more responsibility when you're involved with racial incidents at school?

