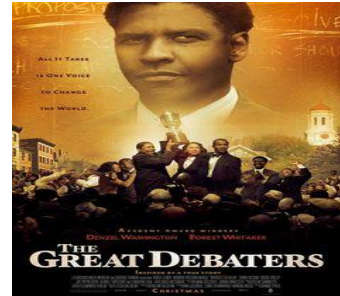
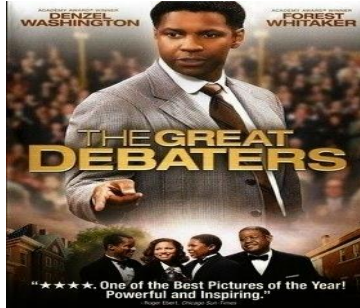


## ENGLISH II



### Plot

The movie is a drama based on the true story of Melvin B. Tolson, Poet and professor at the black Wiley College in 1935, Texas, era of the American depression and racial discrimination against blacks.

He decides to start a debate team and forms the first debate team with four students: **Hamilton Burgees, Henry Lowe, Samantha Boone and James Farmer**, whom he prepares in orality and argumentation techniques. Thanks to the diction and debating strategies given by Tolson, the young debaters started to highlight and to compete with other academic institutions of the country against discrimination and always supporting the ideal of justice and equality for colored people and farmers.

The team faces social barriers, and debates in different institutions. Eventually, Professor Tolson is able to form a team of strong-minded, intelligent young students, and they become the first black debate team champions at Harvard's prestigious college.

### Characters of the debate team:

**Melvin B. Tolson:** the debate professor.

**James Farmer:** a reflexive pastor, teacher and the father of James farmer jr.

**Hamilton Burgees:** a very intelligent student.

**Henry Lowe:** a rebellious, mischievous but intelligent guy.

**Samantha Boone:** the only woman in the debate team.

**James Farmer Junior:** the youngest member of the debate team.

## Quotes and interventions

**Pastor Farmer:** "Education is the only way out. The way out of ignorance. The way out of darkness, into the glorious light".

**Professor Tolson:** "You are my students. I am your teacher... and I think that's a sacred bond."

**Professor Tolson:** I am here to help you find and keep your righteous mind.

**Professor Tolson:** I am the darker brother. I too, am American.

**Professor Tolson:** "Some are born in a cradle of gold, with stars hanging like rattles. I was born wild and black, with the instruments for battle"...

**Professor Tolson:** "Denigrate. There's a word for you. From the Latin word "niger", to defame, to blacken. It's always there, isn't it? Even in the dictionary. Even in the speech of a Negro professor. Somehow, "black" is always equated with failure."

**Henry Lowe:** School's the only place you can read all day. Except prison.

**James farmer junior:** "We do what we have to do, so we can do what we want to do.

**Professor Tolson:** "Debate is combat, but you weapons are words".

**Samantha Booke:**

The state is currently spending five times more for the education for a white child than it is fitting to educate a colored child. That means better textbooks for that child than for that child. I say that's a shame, but my opponent says today is not the day for whites and coloreds to go to the same college. To share the same campus. To walk into the same classroom. Well, would you kindly tell me when that day is gonna come? Is it going to come tomorrow? Is it going to come next week? In a hundred years? Never? No, the time for justice, the time for freedom, and the time for equality is always, is always right now! -

**Samantha Booke:** "The time for justice, the time for equality is always right now".

**James Farmer junior :**

My opponent says that nothing that weakens ... the law can be moral. But there is no law in Jim Crow South, not when Blacks are denied a home, removed from schools, hospitals, and when lynched.

**James Farmer junior :**

In Texas, they lynch negroes. My classmates and I saw a man strung up by his neck and set on fire. We drove through a lynch mob, pressed our faces against the floorboard. I looked at my teammates. I saw the fear in their eyes; and worse -- the shame. What was this negro's crime that he should be hung, without trial, in a dark forest filled with fog? Was he a thief? Was he a killer? Or just a negro? Was he a sharecropper? A preacher? Were his children waiting up for him? And who were we to just lie there and do nothing? No matter what he did, the mob was the criminal. But the law did nothing just left us wondering why.

My opponent says, "Nothing that breaks the law can be moral." I tell him, "There is no law that says black people have no rights, nor that they should be rejected and lynched. St. Augustine said, "An unjust law is not a law." It means that I have the right or duty to resist... with violence, or civil disobedience... Pray that I choose the second one."

## Tolson teaching the debate team about diction



**Tolson:** Who is the judge?

**Team:** The judge is God.

**Tolson:** And why is he God?

**Team:** Because, he decides who wins or loses, not my opponent.

**Tolson:** And who is your opponent?

**Team:** He doesn't exist.

**Tolson:** And why doesn't he exist?

**Team:** Because, he is a dissenting voice to the truth I speak.