Handout: Bowling for Columbine



# Lead-In / Orientation

After the deadly Columbine school shooting in 1999 with 15 dead students/teachers, Michael Moore, a documentary filmmaker, is travelling around the US and Canada to find answers to many open and often unasked questions. He is challenging the US gun lobby and asking important questions about racial problems, opportunities in life, poverty and hope.

1. What do you expect from the title “Bowling for Columbine”? What do you think it stands for?
2. Have you seen another Michael Moore Movie (Roger & Me, Where to Invade Next, Fahrenheit 9/11, Fahrenheit 11/9 or Sicko)?
3. Have you heard from the school shooting in your childhood? For me the years around 1999 – 2002 were memorable and affected my time in Kindergarten (The “Heile Welt” was over):
   1. 1999 Columbine school shooting with 15 victims
   2. 2001 9/11 with nearly 3000 victims + start of the Afghan war
   3. 2001: Zug massacre (CH) with 15 victims
   4. 2002 Erfurt (DE) school shooting with 17 victims

# Vocabulary

Note: The left/right order (German & English) was switched due the German explanations:

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| --- | --- |
| English | German |
| ATF Firearms Dealer | Staatlich anerkannter Waffenhändler |
| Evicting/Evicted | Aus der Wohnung zwangsgeräumt werden/geräumt wurden |
| Hypocrite | Heuchler, Scheinheiliger |
| Issuing a rifle | Ein Gewehr verteilen/ausgeben |
| KKK / Ku Klux Klan | Amerikanische rassistische und gewalttätige Vereinigung |
| Militia | Selbsternannte Milizarmee, nicht vom Staat abhängig |
| NRA / National Rifle Association | Nationale Gewehrvereinigung/grösste amerikanische Waffenlobby |
| Prepper | Person, die sich durch Sammeln und Selbstversorgung auf eine grössere Katastrophe/Staatszusammenbruch vorbereitet |
| Rifle | Gewehr |

# Critical Thinking / Discussion Tasks

## Source

You can find the movie on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-sO5CKQPG0>

## A. Getting a rifle from the local bank (01:40 <https://youtu.be/c-sO5CKQPG0?t=100>)

* Do you think it is normal go get a rifle for opening a bank account?
* How do they employees handle the situation?
* Should this be possible in Switzerland?

## B. Youngest school shooting in the US (1:23:45 <https://youtu.be/c-sO5CKQPG0?t=5025>)

* How should a society react to such a tragedy?
* How should law enforcement/courts or a judge react?
* Can we/should we punish & sentence a six-year-old offender? Does it more harm than good?

## C. Changing the world (1:56:28 <https://youtu.be/c-sO5CKQPG0?t=6988>)

* What does/did Michael Moore change?
* Is it possible to change a society? How long does it take (Think about racial segregation or same sex marriage)?
* Did he overdramatize the movie? Was this his/the right choice?

## D. Gun Control (Whole movie)

* Are you in favor of more/less guns 🡪 Gun control?
* According to gun statistics, wouldn’t the US be the safest place on earth?
* How about Switzerland?

# References

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