

Disability Awareness: X-Men (Movies)

Est. Time: 2 Hours Viewing/45 Minutes Class

Objective

Better understand the perceptions and portrayals of individuals with disabilities in media.

Synopsis

Ostracized by society and educated in a special school administered by Charles Xavier (Professor X), the X-Men wage a secret war against Magneto and his band of evil mutants who have sworn revenge against the government and those who have turned their backs on mutants everywhere.

Activity

View the movie or movies listed below and be prepared to discuss the questions below in class.

Titles: *X-Men* (2000), *X2* (2003), *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006)

Studio: Twentieth-Century Fox

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. Though the students at Xavier's school would not necessarily be considered to have disabilities, they certainly have special needs. Many students with disabilities use accommodations or assistive technology in the classroom setting to help them access the curriculum. Identify at least five accommodations or assistive technology devices used by the X-Men.
2. Charles Xavier uses a wheelchair.
 - a. Describe how his disability is conveyed in the movie.
 - b. Was it a focal point of the plot, or was it portrayed as just another of his many characteristics?
 - c. Do you think perceptions of Xavier would be different if he weren't a mutant? Explain.
 - d. Would they be different if he didn't use a wheelchair? Explain.
3. The movies depict the public's reaction to the mutants.
 - a. In what ways does the depiction mirror real-world attitudes about people with disabilities?
 - b. In what ways is it dissimilar?
4. Comic books and super hero movies often involve portrayals of disabilities or disease as a means through which characters become heroes. Why do you think this theme is so prevalent?
5. If possible, identify other heroes or pop culture characters who are either portrayed as having disabilities or who have fictional conditions that mirror real-world disabilities.