

## DISNEY'S "MIRACLE" VIEWING GUIDE - TEACHER INFORMATION

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Please note that the movie viewing questions follow the movie in chronological order.

### Movie Information:

- **Summary:** The true story of Herb Brooks, the player-turned-coach who led the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team to victory over the seemingly invincible Soviet squad.
- **Rating:** PG for language and some rough sports action.
- **Release Year:** 2004
- **Director:** Gavin O'Connor
- **Writer:** Eric Guggenheim
- **Notable Stars:**
  - Kurt Russell as Herb Brooks
  - Noah Emmerich as Craig Patrick
  - Eddie Cahill as Jim Craig
  - Nathan West as Rob McClanahan
  - Patricia Clarkson as Patti Brooks
  - Billy Schneider as his father Buzz Schneider
- **Fun Fact:** Disney's *Miracle* was not filmed in Lake Placid, NY. It was filmed in British Columbia, Canada. There were several ice rinks also used for filming. Those included Queen's Park Arena in New Westminster, M.S.A. Arena in Abbotsford, the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver, and PNE Agrodome in Vancouver.

## DISNEY'S "MIRACLE" VIEWING GUIDE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### **1. What role does rivalry play in motivating the U.S. team, both within their own team and against the Soviets?**

Discuss how internal rivalries among teammates contribute to their growth and how the intense rivalry with the Soviet Union drives their determination. What are the positive and negative aspects of using rivalry as motivation?

### **2. In what ways does *Miracle* explore the theme of patriotism, and how does it show the impact of sports on national pride?**

Discuss how the movie reflects the political and cultural climate of the 1980s. Why was this victory so meaningful for Americans during the Cold War, and how does the movie convey these emotions?

### **3. How does *Miracle* address the importance of teamwork over individual talent?**

Analyze specific moments where teamwork is shown to be more valuable than individual skill. How does Coach Brooks instill this value in his players, and why do you think it's essential for them to succeed against a dominant team like the Soviets.

### **4. Show students the scene where the USA and Soviet Union play their exhibition match at Madison Square Garden. Between 1:13:12 - 1:13:23, Mark Johnson goes up to the face-off against Boris Mikhailov. After viewing this scene, then show students 1:55:39 - 1:55:46. This scene is during the "Miracle on Ice" game when Mark Johnson goes up to the face-off against Boris Mikhailov a second time.**

**What do you notice about the angle from which each scene is filmed? Do you think there was change in demeanor from Mark Johnson and/or Boris Mikhailov? Why do you think this was done?**

Consider why filmmakers made this decision. When the Americans first played the Soviet Union at Madison Square Garden, they were very much afraid and intimidated of the superpower hockey team. That's why the camera angle makes Mark Johnson look like he is looking up at Boris Mikhailov, intimidated by his opponent. However, when the teams meet again in the medal round, the American players now have a sense of confidence, belief, pride, and passion. When Mark Johnson goes up to the face-off a second time, he is no longer intimidated. That is why the camera angle changes to have Boris Mikhailov and Mark Johnson on an equal level.

## DISNEY'S "MIRACLE" VIEWING GUIDE - ANSWERS AND TIMESTAMPS

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1. In the movie's opening scenes, there are various news clips and stories about world events during the 1970s. Name three events that they highlight.

- Movie Timestamp: 0:00 - 3:16
- Answers can include the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, Anti-War protests, the Women's Liberation Front, the Cold War, the Munich Olympics and Russia's gold medal win in basketball, Watergate, computers and silicon chips, Nasa's budget cuts and its last trip to the moon, television sets being used for video games, President Ford's Oath of Office, inflation, Saigon falls and U.S. embassy is evacuated, Disco fever, Coneheads from Saturday Night Live, America's Bicentennial, President Carter's Oath of Office, Billy Beer, oil shortages, Elvis dies, Love Canal in Niagara Falls, NY, and Three Mile Island nuclear facility partial meltdown.

2. What is the name of the assistant coach that Herb selects for the 1980 Olympic hockey team?

- Movie Timestamp: 8:41 - 12:18

a. Lou Vairo

b. Craig Patrick

c. Tony Granato

3. Herb is quick to select his team on the first day of Olympic team tryouts. How many players does Herb select at the first day of tryouts and how many players will be on the final roster?

- Movie Timestamp: 12:40 - 16:46

# of Players Selected at Tryouts: 26

# of Players on Final Roster: 20

4. What does the team doctor think is the reason for Herb's harsh treatment towards his players?

- Movie Timestamp: 25:53
- Answer: The team doctor thinks that maybe if the players hate Herb, they won't have time to hate each other.

5. What do you think Herb means when he tells his players "legs feed the wolf"?

- Movie Timestamp: 32:52 - 33:22
- Answer: He is emphasizing the importance of physical conditioning and endurance. He uses this metaphor to convey that a wolf, representing the team, relies on its legs—its strength, stamina, and persistence—to survive and succeed. For the players, it means that their ability to outlast their opponents and perform at their best comes from strong legs and physical fitness, which is crucial in the demanding sport of hockey. Essentially, it's a reminder that hard work and conditioning are key to victory.

6. Herb makes the team do skate sprints after their pre-Olympic match against Norway after a disappointing tie. Finish Herb's line: "Gentleman, you don't have enough talent to \_\_\_\_\_."

- Movie Timestamp: 40:38 - 40:48

- a. "coast through and still succeed."
- b. "win without giving everything you've got."
- c. "win on talent alone."

7. What player says, "I play for the United States of America," to make the skating sprints stop after the team's game against Norway?

- Movie Timestamp: 45:58 - 46:24

- a. Mike Eruzione
- b. Jim Craig
- c. Ken Morrow

8. What is Herb's strategy for his team to play against the Soviet Union at the Olympic Winter Games?

- Movie Timestamp: 50:00 - 50:34
- Answer: Herb's strategy is to not play defensively against the Soviets but to play offensively and use their own strategy against them. His strategy also includes ensuring they are well-conditioned to skate with the Soviets for a whole game.

9. What president's speech is playing on the radio while Herb is driving home after the team Christmas party?

- Movie Timestamp: 1:05:09 - 1:07:12

- a. President Nixon
- b. President Carter
- c. President Ford

10. Why do you think Herb wanted his team to play the Soviets at Madison Square Garden before going to the Olympic Winter Games?

- Movie Timestamp: 1:10:28 - 1:11:05
- Answer: Herb wanted his team to play the Soviets at Madison Square Garden before the Olympics to give them a reality check and show them just how tough their competition would be. By facing the strongest team before the Olympic Winter Games, he hoped his players would see the level they needed to reach, helping them focus and get their nerves out before playing in the Olympic tournament.

11. What is the final score of the hockey game at Madison Square Garden?

- Movie Timestamp: 1:14:21 - 1:14:43

a. 4 - 3

**b. 10 - 3**

c. 15 - 4

12. Why do you think Herb reacted so aggressively at his players in between periods during their first Olympic game against Sweden?

- Movie Timestamp: 1:24:29 - 1:25:36
- Answer: Herb Brooks reacted aggressively toward his players between periods during their first Olympic game against Sweden because he felt they weren't playing to their full potential. His aggressive response was also likely due to his understanding that this game set the tone for the rest of the Olympic tournament. He wanted to send a message that they needed to take every game seriously and fight hard from the beginning, or they wouldn't stand a chance against tougher teams like the Soviet Union. By challenging them so directly, he hoped to ignite their competitive spirit and get them to realize the importance of every moment on the ice.

13. Before the Americans play the Soviet Union in the medal round, Herb speaks with his team in the locker room. What emotions do you think Herb is trying to stir in the players with his speech? Circle all that apply:

- Movie Timestamp: 1:38:00 - 1:40:11

<b>Confidence</b>	Apprehension	<b>Unity</b>	Panic	<b>Determination</b>
Fear	<b>Pride</b>	Dread	<b>Inspiration</b>	<b>Belief</b>
Anxiety	<b>Fearlessness</b>	<b>Courage</b>	<b>Passion</b>	Hopelessness

14. Who are the two ABC sports commentators for the game between the Americans and the Soviet Union?

- Movie Timestamp: 1:42:07 - 1:42:25

1. Ken Dryden

2. Al Michaels

**15. What does Soviet Coach Viktor Tikhonov do at the start of the third period that makes the sports commentator say, "Al, this is a big move."**

- Movie Timestamp: 1:51:07 - 1:51:35
- Answer: Soviet Coach Viktor Tikhonov replaces his starting goalie, Vladislav Tretjak, with his back-up goalie Vladimir Myshkin which is something that Coach Tikhonov has never done before.

**16. Which player scores the 4th goal for the United States?**

- Movie Timestamp: 1:59:18 - 1:59:35

a. Mike Eruzione

b. Eric Strobel

c. Mark Wells

**17. After the game against the Soviets, what team do the Americans have to play next to win the gold medal?**

- Movie Timestamp: 2:07:42 - 2:07:48

a. Japan

b. Sweden

c. Finland

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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**3. Herb is quick to select his team on the first day of Olympic team tryouts. How many players does Herb select at the first day of tryouts and how many players will be on the final roster?**

# of Players Selected at Tryouts: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Players on Final Roster: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What does the team doctor think is the reason for Herb's harsh treatment towards his players?**

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**5. What do you think Herb means when he tells his players "legs feed the wolf"?**

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- |            |              |         |             |               |
|------------|--------------|---------|-------------|---------------|
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| Fear       | Pride        | Dread   | Inspiration | Belief        |
| Anxiety    | Fearlessness | Courage | Passion     | Hopelessness  |

**14. Who are the two ABC sports commentators for the game between the Americans and the Soviet Union?**

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