



Team 3: The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)

The MPAA is responsible for enforcing the Production Code, which was a system of moral guidelines mandating what content was considered acceptable or unacceptable to include in movies. The Production Code was replaced with an official film ratings system in 1968, which is still in use today.

Task: After each trailer, the MPAA will briefly discuss and report out if the movie is at risk for making any violations of the Code in terms of its content.

Final Report: After a team discussion, the MPAA choose one movie to **restrict** from being seen by a general audience. The team must fully explain their methodology and final decision to the class.

What to Watch For: The MPAA should pay special attention to any action on the screen that could be considered controversial, especially in regards to violence, sexuality, criminal behavior, and juvenile delinquency.

Additional Materials: Use the excerpts from the Production Code on this handout to help determine the type of content that was considered unacceptable for films to portray in the 1950s.

Excerpts from the Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 (in use until 1968)

A Code to Govern the Making of Talking, Synchronized and Silent Motion Pictures. Formulated and formally adopted by The Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc. and The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. in March, 1930.

General Principle

No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.

Particular Applications

- *The technique of **murder** must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.*
- *The use of **firearms** should be restricted to the essentials.*
- *The use of **liquor** in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.*
- *The **sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home** shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.*
- ***Excessive and lustful kissing**, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.*
- ***Miscegenation** (sex relationships between the white and black races) is forbidden.*
- ***Obscenity** in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.*
- ***Dances** suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passions are forbidden.*