Crash Activity
Complete the following activity in preparation for and while watching the film Crash in class.

PLOT: Los Angeles citizens with vastly separate lives collide in interweaving stories of race, loss and redemption.

BEFORE: *Discuss the following questions with your table.*

1. Other than in the media, where have you seen racism? Consider experiences in your school or among people you know in your family or community. Describe a representative example.
2. Which groups of people, not necessarily which races, do you feel are most affected by bigoted comments or actions in the current culture? Describe a representative example.

BEFORE: *Read the following and consider an example of your own double consciousness.*

Double Consciousness occurs when there is a marked difference between the way a person views himself and the way he is viewed by the larger society. In 1908, W.E.B. DuBois wrote in his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*:

> *It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.*

Teenage girls may see themselves as good students who are shopping for mascara, whereas clerks at the high-end make up counter see the girls as probable shoplifters. Black students at elite colleges may see themselves as scholars, while some on the campus will see them as having been enrolled because of Affirmative Action and therefore less qualified than others. An unwed mother abandoned by the father of her child may see herself as a parent striving to provide a good home for her child, while another person may see her as an irresponsible and loose woman who is mooching off the welfare system. An immigrant working off the books may be striving to be an honorable father helping his family survive, while citizens may see him as an alien unwanted presence and a potential drain on the welfare system. It doesn't matter whether any set of perceptions are true or whether there is truth in both.

Once an individual understands that other people perceive him in a way that is different from his self-perception, double consciousness can ensue.

DURING: *Respond to the following questions in the space provided.*

1. Crash contains several examples of "profiling." Describe one.

2. Which racial incident in the film do you feel is the most impactful?

3. Which character in the film best illustrates through action or dialogue the problem of Double Consciousness?

4. What does the story line of Officer Hansen tell the audience about racism? Where is the irony in this incident?

5. Which attempts at redemption in the film are most ironic and what do they show about racism?

6. Reflection: What are your take aways from this film?