



## Learning Activity - Key Stage 3

This resource provides learning activities for your students using People's Collection Wales. It is one of a series of six relating to Paul Robeson for KS3.

Let Paul Robeson Sing!  
Paul Robeson's Early Life  
Paul Robeson- An Education  
Paul Robeson: Global Citizen  
**Paul Robeson: Stage and Screen**  
Paul Robeson in Wales



## Paul Robeson: Stage & Screen



By South Wales Miners Library

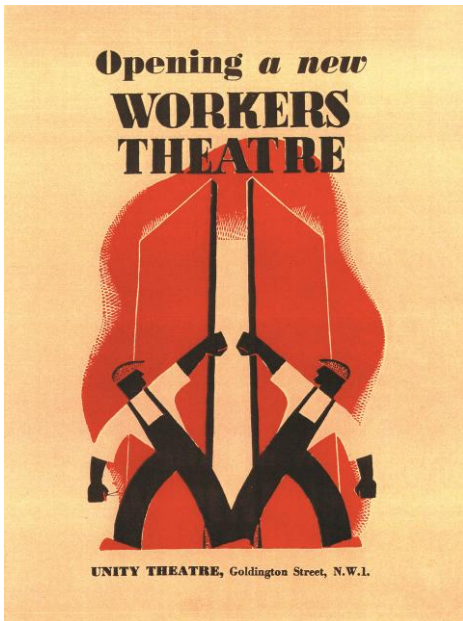
### Introduction

This unit supports development of enquiry skills by looking at the stage and screen appearances of Paul Robeson. It also looks at the typecasting of actors and the stereotyping of the roles of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

#### Tasks and learning objectives

1. Which stage plays did Robeson appear in?
2. Which films did Robeson appear in?

## 1. Which stage plays did Robeson appear in?



Poster for the Unity Theatre London, 1938



Othello, 1943-45

Paul Robeson appeared in many stage plays in the United States of America and in London during the first half of the twentieth century. He became a well-known name of stage, screen and concert performances internationally.

The plays covered Shakespeare to musicals. Robeson's passion to change attitudes to civil rights led to him to refuse to perform on stage in front of segregated theatre audiences, as was common in America and other countries, until into the 1960s.

Discuss what types of plays Robeson found himself playing during the first half of the twentieth century.

Identify the key characteristics of these roles?

Are there some common themes running through them?

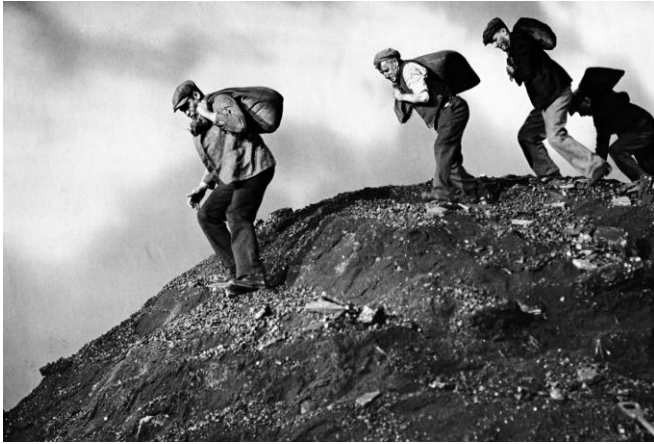
Compare what you have discovered about Robeson's experiences with current roles for Black actors on stage or on television

**Link to images on People's Wales Collection website**

[Poster for the Unity Theatre London, 1938](#)

[Othello, 1943-45](#)

## 2. Which films did Robeson appear in?



*Proud Valley, 1940*



*Cast of Showboat, 1928*

The rise and influence of cinema on audiences worldwide offered an opportunity for Paul Robeson to blend his politics with his artistic talents. It provided a chance to connect with a rapidly growing film audience.

Paul Robeson starred in eleven films. They were filmed in the US and in Britain with *Proud Valley* being set and filmed in Wales.

Discuss what you have discovered about the roles played by Robeson on film. Are there any similarities or differences to those he played on stage?

Were the roles stereotypical for an Africa-American actor?

What is typecasting? What do you think about the typecasting of ethnic profiles in film and on stage or television?

**Link to images on People's Wales Collection website**

**[Proud Valley, 1940](#)**

**[Cast of Showboat, 1928](#)**