

## Some Cultural Literacy Lessons for Gabby

Written by By Gregory Kane  
Thursday, 13 December 2012 20:00

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Ah, teens! Quite the whippersnappers these days, aren't they?

One such whippersnapper is Gabby Douglas, all of 16 years old and fresh off a gold-medal-winning gymnastics performance at the 2012 Olympic games.

Gabby has been on top of the world since then, and rightly so. Especially now that she's "got that 'herr' did."

Recently People magazine did a story on Gabby. Not a cover story, mind you. On the cover editors at People decided to put Brad Pitt.

Brad Pitt? BRAD PITT? Did BRAD PITT just win a gold medal at the Olympic games? I don't think so. Get it together, People editors.

Anyway, back to Gabby: she was sailing along quite well in the story there, when she brought up the subject of how Kirk Douglas— apparently a Gabby fan big time— sent her a handwritten note.

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Now most of you reading this column are probably old enough not to have to be reminded of who Kirk Douglas is, or of his place in the pantheon of American film stars.

But, as I said, Gabby is only 16. And what, on average, do 16-year-olds know?

Here's how the People story read, which was in an interview question-and-answer format:

People: Oprah famously tweeted about you— but Kirk Douglas sent you a handwritten fan note! Did you know who he was?

Gabby: I knew Michael Douglas, but I was like “Kirk Douglas. Who’s that?” My mom (couldn’t believe it). So I was like, “Well, who’s One Direction?” And she was like, “I don’t know.” I said, “Exactly!”

And I’m like....APPALLED that Gabby thinks One Direction has had the impact on music that Kirk Douglas has had on film.

First things first: Gabby, you would do well to drop the annoying, idiotic saying “I was like” from your vocabulary.

Now, on to One Direction: Gabby, like your mom, I had no idea who they were. Probably unlike your mom, I didn’t care.

So I had to do a Google search to find out who they were. And guess what, Gabby? Now I care even less than I did before.

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Here's what I learned, Gabby-roo: One Direction is "an English-Irish boy band" (oh, can you hear me gagging already?) "consisting of members Niall Horan, Zayn Malik, Liam Payne, Harry Styles and Louis Tomlinson."

Their history, Gabby, dates ALL THE WAY BACK TO 2010!

WOW, Gabby! When I read that, I was like, IMPRESSED!

I'm sure you can detect the sound of sarcasm when you hear it, so I'll stop. My point is this: you can't compare your mom's not knowing about a two-year-old boy band with your not knowing about an actor that's considered an American film legend.

Look, Gabby, we're talking about One Direction, not the Beatles or the Rolling Stones here. Those boy bands created music 50 years ago that's still around today. We don't know if One Direction will still be around 50 days from now, much less 50 years.

Douglas has appeared in films that are now considered classics. Those films are still around today and are still being shown, and scenes from some are even being copied.

Ever heard of Douglas' film "Ace in the Hole"? The ending shot is considered such a tour de force that directors are copying it to this day.

Spike Lee used the shot in one of the scenes from his movie "Malcolm X."

If you've seen the film "Rise of the Planet of the Apes," you'll see the same shot in that flick.

Other Douglas films that you should know about— as a matter of being what's called "culturally literate" —are "Paths of Glory" and "Spartacus." The first is a quintessential anti-war

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film; the second is about the man that led a slave revolt against the Roman Empire.

Kirk Douglas isn't just some actor your mom likes, Gabby; he's an icon.

One Direction, on the other hand, is simply a boy band that you do happen to like. So far, as of December of 2012, that's ALL they are. Only time will tell if that's all they remain.

In the meantime, stop making those apples to hand grenades comparisons. And PLEASE do something about that "I was like" thing.