



FilmEd Classroom
Films to Engage Students in
Meaningful Conversation

FILM GUIDE

AMELIA'S CLOSET

GRADES 3-5

HALIMA LUCAS | United States

SHORT FILM | LIVE ACTION | REALISTIC FICTION | 17:23 MINUTES | 2016
Subtheme: Identity, Bullying, Race, Racism

PART III

THE BIGGER CONVERSATION

EXPAND CONVERSATIONS AND CONNECT TO SUBTHEMES

There is no perfect way to have a conversation about race. It may be uncomfortable or challenging. That is okay. Your role in this conversation is to be a facilitator, not to be an authority on topics of race. Create a safe space with your students (revisit your Community Agreements), so that they see you as a trusted source and will be more likely to engage with you on this topic. Be transparent, avoid generalizations, and be open to having the discussion.

Teacher Prep: Making space for conversations about race

- While the films until now have touched on themes of **stereotypes**, **prejudice**, and **bullying**, the protagonist in **AMELIA'S CLOSET** experiences hurtful discrimination in her classroom. Use examples from the film to anchor your conversation. You can have students watch the film again or select specific scenes to study closely. While some

students might see race as the underlying cause of the bullying in the film, some may bring up other reasons for why they think the protagonist is being treated differently.

- We suggest an inquiry-based approach to facilitate and support challenging conversations that may come up as you discuss the film.
- Watch [this interview](#) with Halima Lucas where she discusses her inspiration for the film. While this might be too mature for your students, you may find value as an educator in hearing her discuss the teacher's role in this film. Invite other teachers or staff to watch with you and reflect. What new perspectives can you gain about the role educators play in ensuring accepting and inclusive classrooms?

Classroom Conversation Starters

- Why do you think the kids were bullying/picking on Amelia? If useful, rewatch the scene where Amelia recounts her bullying (10:45).
- What do you think the kids in Amelia's class saw differently about her?
- What do you think about the way the teacher responded to Amelia's situation with the other students? Do you agree with her response? Why or why not?

California Mission Project

- Have students research the [California Mission Project](#) referenced in the film. Share articles about this controversial assignment which was a real part of California elementary school curriculum from the 1960s until 2017. Students can read opinion pieces [in favor of](#) or [against this project](#).
 - Talk about how the assignment requires resources and materials as well as parental support and how it may impact students and families. Do you think this is a fair project for all students? Why or why not?
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