



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 IV

BEHIND THE SCENES

LEARN ABOUT THE FILMMAKER & FILMMAKING PROCESS

Examine the ways that a **live action, realistic fiction** film, is different from the previous three short films and explore the filmmaker's voice and experience as it relates to the **plot**.

CONSIDER THE FILMMAKER'S STYLE & TECHNIQUES

Briefly recap the previous three lessons, **WASH DAY**, **WELCOME TO MY LIFE**, and **CHIN UP**. Ask students to:

- Share a one sentence summary of each film, including what they learned from/about it.
- List some ways **AMELIA'S CLOSET** was similar or different from these films. Did it look different? Sound different?
- How about the film's length? Why do you think this film might have been so much longer than the first three films?
- While everything we saw in **AMELIA'S CLOSET** could happen in real life, what we see in this film are actors acting out a script or story. What were some ways that you were able to tell that the story is fictional, though realistic?
- Why do you think the filmmaker may have chosen to tell this story with **live action** instead of **animation** or **documentary**?

- If you weren't sure if a film was **fiction** or **nonfiction**, how might you try to find out?

CONSIDER THE FILMMAKER'S UNDERLYING MESSAGE

Help students understand that all of these details were decisions that the filmmaker, Halima Lucas, made to convey the character and the story to us, the viewers.

- Earlier we discussed Amelia's relationship with her father. Why do you think the filmmaker might have chosen to include this in the film?
- How might the film have been different if we only saw Amelia at school and not at home?
- How would you describe the way the teacher treats Amelia? How does the rest of the class treat Amelia?
- Why do you think the filmmaker might have chosen to include these characters in the film?
- How might the film have been different if the teacher had treated Amelia in another way?
- Earlier we discussed the school project. Does this assignment seem fair to give to all students? Why or why not? Why do you think Halima Lucas may have chosen to feature this project in the film?
- Why do you think the filmmaker might have wanted to tell this story?
- What questions do you have about this film that you would like to ask the filmmaker if you could?

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS: HALIMA LUCAS

Halima Lucas is the writer and director of the live action short film **AMELIA'S CLOSET**. She attended USC's School of Cinematic Arts where she created **AMELIA'S CLOSET** and other short films. Halima recently completed a year-long term in the acclaimed Nickelodeon Writing Program and is currently poised to launch an original project. She is also working at Disney TV Animation

on the series **MOON GIRL AND DEVIL DINOSAUR**. Her passion as a storyteller is to make people laugh while amplifying voices from marginalized communities.

Q&A WITH THE FILMMAKER

Let students know that while the filmmaker might have had a message or idea in mind, we are all welcome to interpret the film in our own way.

Did you consider different endings for this film?

The film in its earlier stages originally had an ending where the teacher apologized to Amelia and gave her the pep talk that her father gave her, but when I shared the script with others, they asked me if that was the experience I had, and the truth was, it wasn't. I, and many students from marginalized communities who get mistreated in school or remain unsupported by our educators, often don't get that kind of justice from our teachers or administrators. We often don't get an apology for the way we were treated and that's largely because the teachers don't even realize that they are treating us a particular way. So, when I was asked that question, I realized that in order to tell the story as real and honest as possible, I need to have a more true-to-experience ending and I'm extremely happy that I did.

How or why did you become interested in filmmaking?

Filmmaking for me is an empathetic tool. It ties you in the shoes of a character you've never met and allows you to see the world from their point of view. Hopefully, walking in someone else's shoes helps you understand their experience in a way that allows you to understand them, and hopefully, that new understanding makes you more considerate and sensitive to others. My goal is to shift people's perspectives and build bridges of understanding between communities and points of view through the media I create. In my opinion, understanding is the foundation of empathy and peace.

What is some advice you would give to young students interested in filmmaking?

Go make movies and videos! And different kinds if you want! You don't need fancy cameras or famous actors! Use your friends, family, and phone to start telling stories and tell the stories YOU want to tell because your unique perspective is what matters the most! And don't be afraid to share your stuff! Post it on social media, share it with people. The more you do it the more you'll grow. Don't fret over whether you think your project is perfect or not. Trust me -- it's all about getting practice! All of my short films are online, from the ones I shot early on to the ones that have won awards and I'm proud of each and every one of them!

What is something that you think people don't know about working as a filmmaker?

It is an incredibly collaborative job. Sure, people know more than one person makes a movie or a show, but take some time to look at the credits of a movie. ALL of those people were part of making it happen. Every single one. So, if you don't like group projects, filmmaking isn't for you! Most of the job is learning how to exchange ideas, delegate, and keep people motivated.

Also, people don't often think about how adaptable filmmaking skills are. There are so many roles and things outside of just writing, directing, and acting that people can explore and find their niche. For example, many people I went to school with began thinking they wanted to direct films and later found that they really enjoyed sound designing for films or picture editing or special effects make-up, or even costume designing! Having skills in different areas is helpful when it comes to working on your own project. I've done video editing, costume design, even make-up on my own projects! There are tons of roles that use almost every skill on earth, from tech support to number crunching a film's budget!

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