



FilmEd Classroom
Films to Engage Students in
Meaningful Conversation

FILM GUIDE

AMELIA'S CLOSET

GRADES 6-8

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

- The protagonist in **AMELIA'S CLOSET** experiences hurtful discrimination in her classroom and it's important to acknowledge this with your students. 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 students may not and may bring up other reasons for why the protagonist is being treated differently.

- We suggest an inquiry-based approach to facilitate and support this and any challenging conversations that may come up.
- Watch [this interview](#) with Halima Lucas (45 mins), where she discusses her inspiration for the film. You may find value as an educator in hearing her discuss the teacher's role in this film (and you can decide if you want to share the video with your students). Invite other teachers or staff to watch with you and reflect. What new perspectives can you gain about the role educators play in ensuring inclusive and accepting 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 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 1960 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?

Identity Chart Activity

- Invite students to create an identity chart for Amelia. Discuss with students how identities are complex and layered.

- Read [Teaching at the Intersections](#) and watch this brief video on [Intersectionality 101](#) for more planning support. Find more on intersectionality in the Additional Resources of this Lesson Plan.
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