

Journeys in Film (Lesson 3)

***On the Way to School* Documentary**

Lesson Overview: The following three lessons for this class focus on one film: *On the Way to School*. Viewing this inspiring film with students welcomes the conversation about something that students can relate to: education. While this film doesn't examine the vast differences in the education that children around the world are receiving; it does invite consideration of what it means to have access to education. The film places a spotlight on the lives of three students who face tremendous obstacles in order to attend school. In this first lesson, students will begin by reflecting on their own journeys to school through journaling. This lesson concludes with students making predictions about the film based on reading the synopsis, watching the trailer, and exploring background information about the countries and the cultures of the film's focus students.

1. Journaling Activity: Quick Write Prompt

- Ask your child to briefly write about their journey to school. (These answers will vary, especially considering the current times of COVID-19. Your student can choose to write about the present day, or about their experience in pre-COVID times.)
 - What does their pre-school morning look like? What time do they have to wake up? Do they have chores to do? Siblings to help get ready? Food to prepare?
 - How about their transportation? How do they travel to school? Does somebody take them? What dangers might they face on their journey to school?

2. Pre-viewing the Film Trailer:

Show your student the trailer of *On the Way to School*. Follow this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZsEvLaua4w&has_verified=1

3. Making Predictions: Have your student return to their journal. Have them address the following questions based on their viewing of the film's trailer.

- What kind of film do you think this is going to be? A happy one? A sad one? A funny one? An action film?

- What did you notice about the children in the film? Did anything significant stand out about them? Their ages? Races? Accents?
- Do you think that you could have anything in common with these children?
- Did you recognize any of the locations shown in the trailer?

4. Frontloading Background Information Part I

Before viewing the film, explain to your student that this film is a documentary. Ask them if they know what makes this a significant genre in film? Also, explain that this film contains subtitles, because it is filmed in French. This provides an additional layer for experiencing the film, including cultural exposure.

- ★ Follow this link to read about the benefits of watching movies with subtitles:
<https://theconversation.com/why-children-should-be-watching-tv-with-the-subtitles-on-144320>
- ★ Follow this link for a closer look at the significance of documentaries:
<https://www.pbs.org/pov/engage/resources/honest-truths-ethics-documentary-film/icebreaker-what-makes-film-documentary/>

Ask your student what other documentaries they have watched in the past? What did they enjoy about them? What is their experience with watching films with subtitles? Have them make a list of the different documentaries/foreign/subtitled films they have watched.

5. Closing Activity: Quick Write

The quote below is displayed during the trailer for the film. Have your student copy the quote down in their journal.

“Four remarkable stories, all of them fighting for the same dream”

What do they think this quote means? Do they believe that four children from completely different parts of the world can share the same dream?