

*Journeys in Film* (Lesson 5)

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

**Lesson Overview:** The following is the third and final lesson in a series of three for this class which focuses on the documentary: *On the Way to School*. Students viewed the film in the previous lesson, and engaged in a series of discussion questions based on the viewing. They also journalled about various topics related to the impressions made on them by watching the documentary. In this final lesson, students will further explore the countries that the children from this film live in, as well as reflect on the similarities and differences between their lives and the ones of the children from the film. Finally, students will have the opportunity to review the film they watched.

1. **Journal Reflection:** Begin by having your student write a journal response to one of the following quotes from the film. Have them copy the focus quote into their journal, and then write about how they interpret the quote based on their experience watching the film.
  - ***“On oublie trop souvent que l’école est une chance.”***  
**It is often forgotten that education is an opportunity.**
  - ***“Dans certaines régions du monde, le chemin de l’école est un parcours du combattant et le savoir une conquête.”***  
**In some regions of the world, the road to school is an obstacle course; and knowledge, a conquest.**
  - ***“Chaque matin, parfois au peril de leur vie, des enfants heroiques s’engagent sur le chemin de la connaissance.”***  
**Each and every morning, sometimes in utter defiance of danger, some heroic children get on the road to knowledge.**
  - ***“Ces ecoliers sont les heros de leur propre histoire, de vraies histoires...”***  
**These school children are the heroes of their own story - their true stories...**
2. Using their notes from the previous lesson, have your student create a character sketch of each of the children featured in the film. Include the following on each child: age, country, what they’re like, how they get to school, responsibilities they have, etc. An example is below:

<b>Jackson</b>
<b>Carlito</b>
<b>Zahira</b>
<b>Samuel</b>

3. Based on your student's viewing of the film, discuss the following questions:
  - Do you think that education is valuable? Why or why not?
  - What is the general attitude of students towards school in the United States?
  - Is education valued everywhere? Why do you think that?
  
4. Think about the children in this film. How do their lives compare with yours? How are they similar? How are they different?
  
5. **Extension Activity I: Exploring Geography**  
 Using atlases, Google Earth, and other maps to locate each of the countries shown in the film, students can research about each country, investigate key facts including population, climate etc., and create fact files about these countries and their people. Use the

information to identify similarities and differences between the United States and each of these countries.

6. **Extension Activity II: Compare and Contrast Project**

Have your student choose one of the children to focus on from the film. Have them complete a compare and contrast study on their two lives. They can do this through a compare and contrast essay, or they can create a poster or a slideshow that looks at different aspects of their backgrounds.

7. **Extension Activity II: Film Review**

Have your student write a review of the film. This will give them the opportunity to focus on the main plot points of the documentary, while allowing their own opinions to shine through. Below are two examples of reviews for this film, but encourage your student to bring their own observations and perspectives into their writing. Below is a link for how to write a film review:

★ [Instructions for How to Write a Film Review](#)

- Film Review #1:  
<https://africasacountry.com/2015/02/film-review-on-the-way-to-school>
- Film Review #2:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/06/movies/on-the-way-to-school-a-documentary-by-pascal-plisson.html>