



1000% Me: Growing Up Mixed

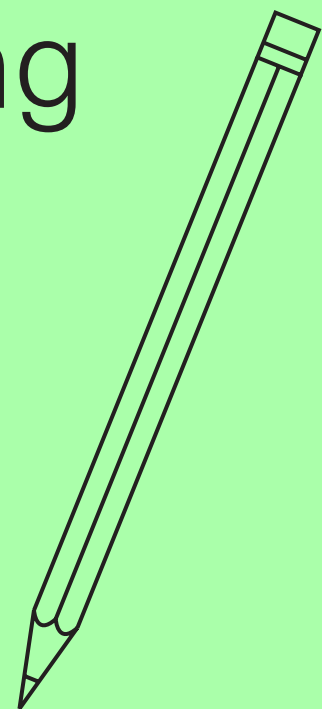
STUDY GUIDE

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All SFFILM Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy. SFFILM Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials..

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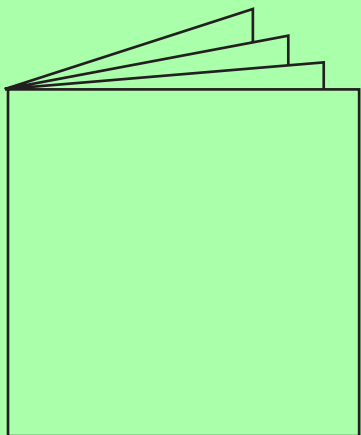
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About the Film

In a series of interviews with his kids, other multiracial kids in their community, and the grown ups who love them, comedian and filmmaker W. Kamau Bell finds that they have way more going on than what we see on the surface. Kamau also finds out they consider race just one part of their identities, which also include religion, culture, adoption, LGBTQ+ identities, and more. As the film unfolds, the conversations get deeper. We get to see how these families navigate things like anti-Blackness, colorism, and white privilege. While multiracial kids are decidedly NOT a magical solution to systemic racism in the United States, they are creating opportunities for growth. As one mixed kid’s mom says, “This kind of uncovering just would have never happened if we didn’t have kids. [...] Mila is an instrument of healing.” It’s up to all of us as viewers and community members to rise to the occasion.

Recommended Grades: 5–8

DIRECTOR
W. Kamau Bell

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
W Kamau Bell, Geraldine Porras

PRODUCERS
Kelly Rafferty, Grace Porras

(USA 2023) English,
59 mins

Teaching the Film

Through interview-vignettes centering on mixed or multiracial Bay Area children, director **W. Kamau Bell** pieces together a documentary teeming with the character and vitality of smart Bay Area kids and their loving families contending with what it means to grow up mixed today. Approachable and charming, this film revels in the everyday lives, stories, and on-film moments between family members contending with race and racism together.

A screening of this film complements a curriculum in Language Arts and History subjects, specifically delving into American History, Government, and English Language & Composition. Central themes include civil rights, social-emotional learning, and storytelling.

Subject Areas

- **Activism**
- **Arts/Media**
- **English Language Arts**
- **Government**
- **History**
- **Journalism**
- **Music**
- **Political Science**
- **Social Studies**
- **Women/Gender Studies**



Pre-Viewing Topics

1000% Me: Growing Up Mixed is a measured approach to difficult social issues through the insightful and heartwarming perspectives of children. The film's perspective is optimistic but firm and can provide a portal to more complex and serious conversations and lesson plans. To prepare a class for a screening of this documentary, consider how this screening could be different for students in the classroom who are mixed and could feel othered, exposed, or exoticized in this lesson. Begin a conversation with your students with the following questions:

- Do you think about how you identify? How do you like to describe who you are and where you come from?
- How do you feel others perceive you? Does it match how you perceive yourself? Why or why not?
- Is race important to how you identify? Is it important to how you feel you or your family are perceived?
- When do you stop thinking about your identity or how you are perceived? What is different in those moments?
- Why are these conversations important? What roles do our identities have in our everyday life?



Presenter Bio



W. Kamau Bell

W. Kamau Bell is a stand-up comedian and the director and executive producer of the critically-acclaimed four-part Showtime documentary, *We Need To Talk About Cosby*, which premiered at Sundance. The series was nominated for four Emmy Awards and won a Gotham Independent Film Award, a Cinema Eye Honors Award, a Hollywood Critics Association Award, and a Critics' Choice Real TV Award, among others. Kamau also received the 2023 Sundance Vanguard Award for Nonfiction for his work on the series. He is the host and executive-producer of the Emmy-Award-winning CNN docu-series *United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell*. In 2018 he directed an hour-long documentary *Cultureshock: Chris Rock's "Bring the Pain"* for A&E. Kamau has written two books, performed two stand-up specials, and hosted several beloved podcasts. Kamau's work often highlights untold and occasionally controversial stories and centers marginalized voices on screen and off screen. He's the ACLU Celebrity Ambassador for Racial Justice and serves on the board of directors of Donors Choose and the advisory board of Right To Be.



Discussion Questions

Identity Formation

1. Each subject of the film defines their “mixed / mixed-race” identity differently. Why do the interviews start with this question and what answer did you find the most interesting and why?
2. At 18:03, parents Bongo and Joti express the importance of picking names that represent both of their cultures. Do names have cultural importance to you? Do you feel your name fits you? Why or why not? Is your name important to you and your identity?
3. In Kanani’s story at 24:30, we hear how her uncle instilled a message that “they will try to change us. But we speak our language and know who we are.” What lesson does Pica, the mother, learn at this moment? What does this lesson tell us about the lives of children of color, especially non-English speakers, in America?
4. At 47:30, when asked what is something she wants people who are not mixed-raced to understand about those that are mixed-raced, Nola says, “Understanding that being multiple things doesn’t make you any less of any of those things.” What social issues contribute to the misunderstanding Nola addresses? What does it take to solve them? What solutions can you find in this film?

Vocabulary

1. Consider these two words and their definitions.
2. Endonym - name for a place or a people used internally by that people. Self-designation
3. Exonym - name for a place or people used outside of that people or place.
4. What are some exonyms and endonyms you recall the children talk about in the film? Why is it important for the interviewer to ask how the subjects identify themselves?
5. At 1:13, Myles self-identifies as “100% Filipino, 100% African American, and 1000% a person.” What problems do percentages and fractions pose in self-identification?

Why do you think the film is titled **1000% Me: Growing Up Mixed**?

6. Throughout the film, interview subjects share how the public misidentify them based on their appearance, incorrectly understanding who their family is too. What impact does this experience have on young people’s confidence? What does it mean to pass as a different identity? What does the idea of passing say about our society today?
7. At 39:00, Roy talks about the rejection and hurtful words expressed to him as a child during a time when interracial couples and their children were in dispute by lawmakers. In 1967, the Supreme Court overturned state bans on non-white people marrying white people in the United States. How is this history present in the lives of mixed children shown in the film?

Education

1. What argument do the filmmakers and film subjects make for the importance of ethnic studies education in K–12 schools?
2. Shortly after, an excerpt from Roy’s interview is shown with him saying “I am mixed but I am not mixed up.” What does Roy mean with this statement? Why is it important?
3. At 46:18, Carter talks about her experience with her adoptive parents who do not share her mixed-race identity, stating “I know that they (her parents) try hard to get into our minds and teach us what we should know but it gets hard sometimes.” How does this difficulty affect mixed-race children? How do these interview subjects deal with this difficulty? Who do they turn to? What do their loved ones offer them and why is it so crucial?
4. At 56:00, Kamau asks Mila, “a lot of people don’t think kids can handle conversations about race and racism. What do you think about the idea that kids aren’t prepared?” Mila says, “It really affects us and how we move through the world and how we are treated” and firmly asserts the benefits to learn about race and identity as a child rather than later in life. What are those benefits Mila is speaking to? How can schools support this educational need?



Activities

Create a Personal Essay/Project

Using the autobiographical material of the film's interview subjects as an inspiration, prompt your students to consider **(1) a defining moment that was important in shaping their identity or (2) a time/place/person that makes them feel comfortable in who they are.**

Next, allow them to **design a project** that describes/depicts this place and why it is important to them and their identity. This project can take the form of an essay, image, song, poem, story, or any other medium of their choosing.

Social Identity Wheel

Developed and used at various college campuses, the Social Identity Wheel exercise and activity allows students to identify their own identities and experiences. This activity is **vulnerable** and concerns relationships with others in addition to their own self-perception. Certain identities on the wheel can be ignored/excluded depending on the needs, comfort level, and age of your classroom. As this exercise is originally intended for college students, ensure proper framing for your students before engaging with the material. This activity is recommended for high school students.

Begin with a discussion to consider the goal of the exercise together **before students fill out their wheel** (<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/wp-content/uploads/sites/355/2018/12/Social-Identity-Wheel-3-2.pdf>). Here are some questions you can pose to your students:

- When do you think the most about your identities? What do those times have in common?
- Do any of the identities you hold change over time? How do they remain the same? Students can refer to the wheel to help them answer their questions.
- Are any of the identities on the wheel confusing?
- Why are conversations about identity important?

Survey Project

Survey design is a complex and ongoing study often taught at the college level. But surveys connected to standardized testing or even the U.S. Census Bureau can be an instructive and defining moment in how people come to identify themselves. Multiple interview subjects in **1000% Me: Growing Up Mixed** talk about their own experience filling out surveys.

Surveys are an important government and social tool that also is a historical record for how conversations around race and identity have progressed. Additionally, surveys take many different forms.

With your class, work to define these two words:

- Quantitative Surveys: designed to collect numerical data and measure variables.
- Qualitative Surveys: designed to collect non-numerical data and gain insights.

Once the class has defined these types of surveys and given examples of each kind of survey. Divide them to groups and prompt the students to create either a quantitative or qualitative survey designed for their class. Subject matter for the problem they wish to gather data on **MUST** be approved by the teacher. Every question, for the purposes of this assignment, must be optional.

Surveys must be designed to measure the following variables:

- At least two important social identities (nominal variables)
- At least two opinions or interests (ordinal variables)
- Example: from 1 to 5: 1 for "very bad," 2 for "bad," 3 for "good," 4 for "very good" and 5 for "excellent."
- 1 section designed to receive feedback from those completing the survey



Activities (Cont.)

Groups should provide the purpose for each question on the survey and argue for their importance.

After each group has finished presenting their survey, briefly reflect on the difficulties of creating surveys and have students reflect on the nuances their surveys might miss.

Student Activism

Director **W. Kamau Bell** refuses to deviate from the youth voice when talking about social issues as they pertain to them. Historically, young people are at the heart of social change, often leading our society toward a more just world. This interest in listening to youth and honoring that they are the experts of their own experience.

This film serves as excellent groundwork to a more expansive activity about student activism and its importance. Using the [Youth Activist Toolkit](https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Youth-Activist-Toolkit.pdf) (<https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Youth-Activist-Toolkit.pdf>) developed by Advocates for Youth, this activity allows the class to develop a strategy and message for a social issue they want to organize around. Linked is the full toolkit where additional activities can be derived to sustain their movement even further.

Begin with a class discussion and work together to define terms. Prompt them to think about what organizing is. From the Youth Activist Toolkit, “Organizing is the process of building power **as a group** and using this power to create positive change in people’s lives.” With the understanding that collective power is important, **ask**:

- What vision do you have for the world as a group?

Encourage students to express their dreams for a more just and peaceful world. Be sure to reinforce it is OK to be ambitious. If prompting is needed, **ask**:

- What problems are you most angry about? Do other people share your feelings?
- What problems affect you? How do these problems relate to issues of rights, respect, and social responsibility?

- Can you think of a concrete, feasible solution to this problem?
- Can your solution have a lasting impact in people’s lives? Does it create structural/cultural change?

Once the class has decided on a social issue, create a Root Cause Tree Tool on P6 for the Youth Activist Toolkit. (<https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Youth-Activist-Toolkit.pdf>)

Alternatively, if this project is a solo project for students, feel free to have each student fill out a tree on their own for each social issue they wish to organize around. This model prompts students to fill out the leaves, trunk, and roots of their social problem:

- **Leaves** - What problems do you see facing your community?
- **Trunk** - What structures, practices, and policies institutionalize the problems?
- **Roots** - What are the underlying historical, social, or economic root causes of these problems? Why do these structures or policies exist?

After this analysis portion, students can now propose solutions that directly address the leaves, trunks, and/or roots of their problem.

Their solutions (sometimes referred to as demands by activists) should be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) statements. Give students 10 minutes to draft compelling demands (can be multiple) that they feel strongly about.

They are now ready to **strategize**

In groups, have students **identify**:

- **Targets** - The person who has the power to give you what you want. (The decision maker) A target is always a person, never an institution. EX: Elected leaders who are entrusted with power.



Activities (Cont.)

- **Current Resources** - List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include: skills of group members, connections to student and community organizations, funding.
- **Potential Supporters** - Who has the skills that you need to win the campaign?
- **Tactics** - Demonstrate your power while simultaneously building your power. Be within the comfort zone of your group, but outside the comfort zone of your target. Be directed toward your primary or secondary target. Moves you closer to reaching your demands

Taiye Selasi - Localities

In a 2018 TED Talk author **Taiye Selasi** gave entitled “Don't Ask Me Where I'm From, [Ask Where I'm A Local](https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local?language=en),” she expertly delves into the issues that arise when identities do not tell the full story of who we are. (https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local?language=en)

As a companion to the local and personal stories in **W. Kamau Bell's 1000% Me: Growing Up Mixed**, this TED Talk can prompt a rich discussion and activity for older students to understand who they are in new dimensions.



What is a documentary?

A documentary is a film whose goal is to capture truth, fact or reality as seen through the lens of the camera. But there are many kinds of documentaries, and not everyone's idea of truth is the same. The Scottish filmmaker **John Grierson** coined the term "documentary" in 1926 to describe American filmmaker **Robert Flaherty's** romanticized culture studies, but nonfiction filmmaking dates back to the earliest motion picture reels.

The definition of documentary expanded as filmmakers experimented with technology and the goals of nonfiction. Avant-garde documentarians, like **Dziga Vertov** in the 1920s, believed that the mechanical eye of the camera gave a truer image of reality than the human eye and pointed his lens at newly industrialized cities. **Leni Reifenstahl's** propaganda films from Nazi Germany used the nonfiction form to convey a political message, a slanted truth

The international cinema vérité or observational movements of the 1960s attempted to remove authorship from the documentary. The observational filmmaker hovered like a "fly on the wall" watching the world without commentary. Modern documentaries often seek to raise awareness about a social, environmental or political issue, guiding their audiences toward civic participation and activism.

While watching a documentary, it is important to remember the core concepts of media analysis: who made the film, for what audience and why? The nonfiction format can be deceptively subjective, as all filmmaking involves an inherent selection process: in the images that are shot, the music and narration that accompanies them and, most significantly, the way in which they are all edited together. Media literacy means always analyzing a documentary for its message and authorial intent.

Even though they are nonfiction films, most modern documentaries structure their content around a traditional story arc: with a beginning, middle, and end, as well as characters, and a conclusion, theme or thesis to impart to the audience. Documentary filmmakers begin their projects with an idea or an issue that they wish to explore more deeply. Through research and planning, they develop a comprehensive plan before they begin shooting.

A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE DOCUMENTARY

1895

The Lumiere brothers develop the first motion picture film reel, capturing brief unedited clips of life around them called 'actualities.'

1900-1920

Travelogue or 'scenic' films become popular showcasing exoticized images from around the globe.

1926

Dziga Vertov, with the Soviet Kino Pravda movement, released the experimental nonfiction film, **Man With A Movie Camera**.

1939

John Grierson collaborated with the Canadian government to form the National Film Board of Canada, with the initial goal of creating Allied propaganda in support of war.

1960s

The 'cinema vérité' movement began in Europe, followed by the 'direct cinema' in the US. Portable cameras and sync sound allowed filmmakers to capture intimate footage with minimal intervention.

1968

The Argentine film, **La Hora de los Hornos**, opened the door to activist cinema of the 1970s, using film as a tool to counter capitalist politics in Latin America.

1988

Independent Television Service (ITVS) was founded.

2000s

The widespread use of digital cameras and editing software made the documentary medium more affordable to independent filmmakers.

Present Day

The term 'documentary' comes to encompass a wide range of nonfiction cinema. Contemporary filmmakers continue to push the boundaries of truth in film and to explore new avenues and applications for the medium.



Media Literacy Resources: Screening with Meaning

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. Every projected image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the language of the medium. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Many students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive. Analysis of a media message, or any piece of mass media content, can best be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

1. **Medium:** the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
2. **Author:** the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
3. **Content:** the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
4. **Audience:** the target audience to whom it is delivered
5. **Purpose:** the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active citizens and critical thinkers.

MEDIA LITERACY STANDARDS

MEDIUM

All Media Is Constructed.

- What is the message, how is it delivered and in what format?
- What technologies are used to present the message?
- What visual and auditory elements comprise the media content?
- What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?

AUTHOR

All Media Is Constructed by Someone.

- Who is delivering the message?
- Who originally constructed the message?
- What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?

CONTENT

Media Is A Language For Information.

- What is the subject of the media message?
- What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content?
- What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response?
- To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?

AUDIENCE

All Media Messages Reach an Audience.

- Who receives the message?
- For whom is the message intended?
- What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- How might others perceive this message differently? Why?

PURPOSE

All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.

- Why was the message constructed?
- Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How?
- To what extent does the message achieve its purpose?
- What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?



Common Core Standards

English-Language Arts Content Standards:

Grade 5: Standard 1.8 Analyze media as sources for information, entertainment, persuasion, interpretation of events, and transmission of culture.

Grade 6: Standard 1.6 Support opinions with detailed evidence and with visual or media displays that use appropriate technology.

Grade 6: Standard 1.9 Identify persuasive and propaganda techniques used in television and identify false and misleading information.

Grade 6: Standard 2.8 Note instances of unsupported inferences, fallacious reasoning, persuasion, and propaganda in text.

Grade 7: Standard 1.8 Analyze the effect on the viewer of images, text, and sound in electronic journalism; identify the techniques used to achieve the effects in each instance studied.

Grade 7: Standard 2.6 Assess the adequacy, accuracy, and appropriateness of the author's evidence to support claims and assertions, noting instances of bias and stereotyping.

Grade 8: Standard 1.9 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, illustrators, news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.

This lesson addresses the English and Language Arts Standards for Reading Informational Texts in grades 5–8. Additional specific standard applications are below:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7 Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2 Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.