

LEADERS: AFRICAN AMERICAN  
WOMEN SERIES

# THE INTERRUPTERS

A FILM BY STEVE JAMES AND ALEX KOTLOWITZ

## EDUCATOR GUIDE

TRIBECA  
YOUTH  
SCREENING  
SERIES

[C] COMMUNITY  
CLASSROOM  
ENGAGING EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS THROUGH FILM

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The film module—a shortened version of *The Interrupters*—and a PDF of this lesson plan are available  
FREE online at **ITVS.ORG/EDUCATORS**

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## ABOUT THE FILM

*The Interrupters* tells the moving and surprising stories of three Violence Interrupters—Ameena, Cobe, and Eddie—who aim to protect their Chicago communities from the violence they once employed. From acclaimed director Steve James and bestselling author Alex Kotlowitz, this film is an unusually intimate view of violence, its causes, and its interrupters.

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## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



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### STEVE JAMES

Steve James is a celebrated producer and director of several award-winning documentary films. His most renowned film, *Hoop Dreams* (1994), follows the lives of two high school students with dreams of becoming basketball players. The film won numerous honors, including a Peabody and a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award in 1995, and was selected for the Library of Congress' National Film Registry. James's most recent film, *The Interrupters* (2011), portrays a year inside the lives of former gang members in Chicago who now intervene in violent conflicts. That film won the Grand Jury Prize at the Miami Film Festival and a Special Jury Award at Full Frame Documentary Festival.



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### ALEX KOTLOWITZ

Alex Kotlowitz wrote the bestselling book *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*, published in 1991. The book has sold over half-a-million copies. His first journalism job—after a yearlong stint on an Oregon cattle ranch—was with a small alternative newsweekly in Lansing, Michigan. Since, Kotlowitz has written for NPR, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, Rolling Stone, The Atlantic and The New Republic, and his journalism honors include the George Foster Peabody Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award and the George Polk Award. He currently lives with his family just outside Chicago.

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## ABOUT THE CURRICULUM WRITER



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### TRACEE WORLEY

Tracee Worley is an educator and curriculum developer who loves to design student-centered learning experiences. Her work helps students, teachers, and organizations use the design process to develop curricula and environments that promote innovation and creativity. Her innovative curricula have been featured by NBC and The New York Times. She holds a B.A. in African-American Studies from UC Berkeley, an M.A. in Education from Brooklyn College, and a M.S.W. from Columbia University.

# LESSON PLAN: WOMEN PEACEMAKERS

**Grade Level:** 9-12, College

**Time:** One to two 50-minute class periods

**Subject Areas:** Social Studies, Women's Studies, Sociology, Criminal Justice

## PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

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In an effort to stop the cycle of retaliatory violence that plagues the streets of Chicago, former gang members and ex-convicts known as “violence interrupters” work with an organization called CeaseFire, using their street credibility to stop shootings before they happen. Ameena Matthews, former drug ring enforcer and daughter of one of Chicago’s most notorious gang leaders, uses her unique skills as a violence interrupter to identify and de-escalate a conflict before it turns to bloodshed. In this lesson, students will contemplate the realities of violence, its devastating impact on communities, and the capacity of “violence interrupters” to break the cycle of violence. Students will also investigate the role gender plays in engaging communities and changing social norms around peace and violence.

**Teachers Note:** The topic of violence can be a sensitive issue in the classroom. It may take considerable work to establish a classroom culture that allows all students to feel safe enough to discuss some of the issues brought up in this lesson plan. Before teaching this lesson, it is recommended that you talk to your school guidance counselor about how to respond to student disclosures. Please refer to your school’s policies about reporting abuse and criminal activity. Additionally, you may wish establish safe space with activities from these websites: Facing History and Ourselves: [facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/contracting](http://facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/contracting)  
Teaching Tolerance: [tolerance.org/supplement/developing-empathy-high-school](http://tolerance.org/supplement/developing-empathy-high-school)  
Teachable Moment: [teachablemoment.org/high/teachingcontroversy.html](http://teachablemoment.org/high/teachingcontroversy.html)

## OBJECTIVES

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### Students will:

- Define the meaning of violence
- Analyze Chicago youth homicide statistics
- Identify and analyze the key traits Ameena Matthews embodies as a “violence interrupter” that allow her to successfully prevent shootings and mediate conflict in inner-city Chicago
- Consider the role gender plays in engaging communities and changing social norms around peace and violence
- Compare the role of the 2011 Nobel Peace Laureates to the role Ameena plays in settling violent disputes
- Write an activist spotlight, profiling Ameena’s peace-building efforts

## RESOURCES

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- Film Module: The Interrupters: Collective Responsibility [8:39]
- Film Module: The Interrupters: Ameena & Caprysha [9:42]
- LCD projector or DVD player
- *Teacher Handout: Activist Spotlight Rubric*
- *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet*  
*Student Handout B: Activist Spotlight*
- Whiteboard/blackboard and markers/chalk
- Computers with Internet access



# PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY

**You will need:** Whiteboard/blackboard, dry-erase markers/chalk, computers with Internet access

**Goal:** Before introducing Ameena's work with CeaseFire, students will define violence and personalize the issue by discussing their perceptions of and experience with violence. They will examine and analyze youth homicide statistics in Chicago to gain further perspective on the effects of violence on young people, their families, and communities.

## OUTLINE

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1. Explain to students that unfortunately, violence is a part of our daily lives. We see it on TV and portrayed in movies and video games. We hear about it in popular music. Share the fact that the United States is one of the most violent nations in the world. The US has the highest youth homicide rate among the world's 25 wealthiest nations, and violence is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 19.
2. Write the term VIOLENCE on the board and have students brainstorm how they would define violence in their own words. Record their responses.
3. Divide the students into small groups of three to five. Assign the questions listed below to each group.
  - Where have you witnessed violence?
  - Why do you think there is so much violence in our society?
  - Why do you think violence is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 19?
  - How has violence effected your life?

Discussing violence in the classroom poses enormous challenges since students are often reluctant to share their personal experiences with classmates. Before students answer the discussion questions, identify what rules the class would like to establish for discussing the personal experiences. Teachers can find useful guidelines for "Contracting" at Facing History and Ourselves' website: [facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/contracting](http://facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/contracting)

4. Ask a volunteer from each of the small groups to briefly summarize their responses to the questions discussed.
5. Next, read aloud the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) definition of violence:  
*"The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation."* (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002)
6. Check for student understanding of the CDC definition by asking them to rewrite it in their own words. Ask students to share their definitions.
7. Ask students if they are surprised to hear that the CDC approaches violence as a public health issue that can be addressed in similar manner to other injuries or health problems. Why or why not? Ask students to describe the similarities violence might have to an infectious disease. An example of this idea can be found in the Ameena Matthews interview on the Colbert report: [huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/02/ameena-matthews-the-interrupters\\_n\\_1250150.html](http://huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/02/ameena-matthews-the-interrupters_n_1250150.html)

# PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY CONT.

8. Have students visit Red Eye Chicago's website, and examine a map/list of the 382 youth ages 15-20 who have been killed in Chicago since January 1, 2008:  
[homicides.redeyechicago.com/age/15-20/#homicide\\_link\\_2170624](http://homicides.redeyechicago.com/age/15-20/#homicide_link_2170624)  
Discuss the statistics with students:
  - How these statistics make you feel?
  - What is the leading cause of homicide among youth in Chicago?
  - Who is more likely to be killed: young men or young women? Why do you think this is?
  - What do you think are some of the causes of the violence?
  - What are some possible solutions?
9. Have students briefly revisit their definition of violence and recap some of the comments that were made during the group discussion in Step 3. Ask them what they think the role of a "violence interrupter" might be.
10. Inform students that they are going to watch two film modules that features the work of CeaseFire employee and "violence interrupter," Ameena Matthews. Explain that as a former gang member and daughter of a famous gang leader, Ameena's skills and street credibility allow her to successfully interrupt potentially volatile conflicts on the streets. Let students know that community mobilization is a key component of Ameena's strategy, which includes street outreach, mentorship, and drawing upon her ties in the community.



# VIEWING/DISCUSSING THE MODULES

**Goal:** Students will watch the film modules and discuss the key traits and skills Ameena Matthews embodies as a “violence interrupter” that allow her to successfully prevent shootings and mediate conflict. They will also consider the role gender plays in engaging communities and changing social norms around peace and violence.

## INTRODUCE MODULE 1

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**You will need:** Pens and writing paper, LCD projector or DVD player, Film Module: *The Interrupters*, Collective Responsibility [8:39], *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet*

- Distribute *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet* and review together before viewing the modules.
- Instruct students to fill in their graphic organizer while viewing a module introducing Ameena’s background and highlighting her work in the streets. Tell students to keep the worksheet for reference during the post-screening discussion.

**Optional:** Provide additional context for the film module by screening the trailer for the film, which can be found at [interrupters.kartemquin.com/trailer](http://interrupters.kartemquin.com/trailer) To acquire the full length version of the film, visit: [interrupters.kartemquin.com](http://interrupters.kartemquin.com)

## MODULE 1 POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION

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**You will need:** Pens and writing paper, LCD projector or DVD player, Film Module: *The Interrupters*, Collective Responsibility [8:39], *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet*

Begin by discussing the film module and ask for volunteers to share their notes on *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet*. Use the following prompts to guide the class discussion:

- How does Ameena’s personal experience give her access to the streets of Chicago?
- Describe Ameena’s personality traits. How do they help her interrupt violence?
- What connections does Ameena have in the community? How do those connections help her identify potentially violent situations?
- What skills does Ameena use to capture the attention of the young people she works with? How does she gain their trust?
- Who does Ameena hold accountable for street violence? What does she ask community members to do?
- In the film, Ameena is referred to as the “golden girl” who can get in where male violence interrupters can’t get in—why is this? How might Ameena’s gender be an asset when attempting to interrupt a violent situation? How might it hinder her?
- Is peace “feminine”? Is street and gang violence “masculine”?
- Does Ameena use different tactics to interrupt violence than men might use? If so, why might this be the case?
- What are the advantages of recruiting former gang members, like Ameena, to prevent violence? What are the disadvantages?
- How is the job of an interrupter different than the job of social worker or a police officer?



# VIEWING/DISCUSSING THE MODULES CONT.

## INTRODUCE MODULE 2

**You will need:** Pens and writing paper, LCD projector or DVD player, Film Module: *The Interrupters*, Ameena & Caprysha [9:42], *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet*

- Ask students to continue taking notes on their graphic organizer while viewing another module that explores Ameena's mentorship with a troubled teen named Caprysha. Tell students to keep the worksheet for reference during the post-screening discussion. Instruct students to fill in their graphic organizer while viewing a module introducing Ameena's background and highlighting her work in the streets. Tell students to keep the worksheet for reference during the post-screening discussion.

## MODULE 2 POST SCREENING DISCUSSION

**You will need:** Pens and writing paper, *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet*

1. Begin by discussing the film module and ask for volunteers to share their notes on *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet*. Use the following prompts to guide the class discussion:
- Why do you think young women like Caprysha get involved in violent activity? What unique realities affect young women such as Caprysha?
  - In the film module, Ameena calls Caprysha "Little Meena." What do Ameena and Caprysha have in common? Why does Ameena make a particularly good mentor for a young woman in Caprysha's situation?
  - Describe Ameena's approach to mentoring Caprysha. What challenges does she face in trying to get Caprysha to follow the right path?
  - Who/what were some of Ameena's violence interrupters?





# POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY

**You will need:** Pens and writing paper, *Student Handout A: Film Module Worksheet* and *Student Handout B: Activist Spotlight* and *Teacher Handout: Activist Spotlight Rubric*.

**Goal:** Students will brainstorm what a peacemaker is and learn about the three female activists and political leaders who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. Then students will write an activist spotlight, profiling Ameena's peace building efforts.

## POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION

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1. Write the term PEACEMAKER on the board and have students brainstorm how they would define a peacemaker in their own words. Record their responses. Ask students: How is Ameena an example of a peacemaker?
2. Ask students what they know about the Nobel Peace Prize. Explain that the prize was established in scientist Alfred Nobel's will to celebrate achievements of peacemakers that "have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind."
3. Ask students to identify the qualifications, qualities, and achievements they think the winner of a Nobel Peace Prize should possess, and why. Create a list of qualifications, qualities, and achievements on the board.
4. Explain to students that in 2011, three female activists and political leaders—Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, her compatriot Leymah Gbowee, and pro-democracy campaigner Tawakul Karman of Yemen—were awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize for "their nonviolent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights" as peacemakers.
5. As a class, you may want to read and discuss the article, "Nobel Peace Prize Awarded to Three Activist Women" ([nytimes.com/2011/10/08/world/nobel-peace-prize-johnson-sirleaf-gbowee-karman.html?ref=world&pagewanted=all](http://nytimes.com/2011/10/08/world/nobel-peace-prize-johnson-sirleaf-gbowee-karman.html?ref=world&pagewanted=all)), focusing on the following questions:
  - For what achievement or achievements did each recipient receive the Nobel Peace Prize?
  - How does each recipient's achievements help to make the world a more peaceful place?
  - What are the significant events and issues that frame each recipient's work as a peacemaker?
  - In what ways is Ameena's work as a violence interrupter similar to the work of these peacemakers?
  - What role can women play in promoting peace worldwide?
6. Distribute *Student Worksheet B: Activist Spotlight*. Explain to students that the Nobel Women's Initiative's website features profiles of women from around the world whose work promotes peace—work that is often carried out in the shadows with little recognition. Explain to students that they will be designing an "Activist Spotlight" page for Ameena to be included on the Nobel Women's Initiative's website. Review the rubric with the class.
7. Students can view examples of other Activist Spotlights by visiting: [nobelwomensinitiative.org/spotlight](http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/spotlight). As a class, compile a list of the components of an Activist Spotlight:
  - A photo
  - Background information on the activist
  - An explanation of the activist's work, including their key accomplishments, goals, and challenges
  - A quote from the activist
  - A video clip of the activist

## POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY CONT.

8. Students use online resources, such as interviews and videos, to gather information about Ameena. Some resources include:
  - Interview: “Meet Ameena Matthews, One of Chicago’s Gang ‘Interrupters’”: [indiewire.com/article/interview\\_meet\\_ameena\\_matthews\\_one\\_of\\_chicagos\\_gang\\_interrupters](http://indiewire.com/article/interview_meet_ameena_matthews_one_of_chicagos_gang_interrupters)
  - Interview: “It’s a warzone here - a look the Interrupters and interview with Ameena Matthews”: [permanentplasticshelmet.com/2011/12/06/its-a-warzone-here-a-look-at-the-interrupters-and-interview-with-ameena-matthews](http://permanentplasticshelmet.com/2011/12/06/its-a-warzone-here-a-look-at-the-interrupters-and-interview-with-ameena-matthews)
  - Interview: “How Can We Interrupt Violence?": [msmagazine.com/blog/blog/2011/09/13/how-can-we-interrupt-violence](http://msmagazine.com/blog/blog/2011/09/13/how-can-we-interrupt-violence)
  - Interview: “It’s Either Kill or Be Killed...”: [pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/social-issues/interrupters/its-either-kill-or-be-killed](http://pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/social-issues/interrupters/its-either-kill-or-be-killed)
  - Video: Ameena Speaks at a Young Man’s Funeral: [youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE](http://youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE)
  - Video: Ameena’s Prayer Vigil: [youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE](http://youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE)
9. Students can publish their activist profiles online using blogging platforms, such as:
  - Edublogs: [edublogs.org](http://edublogs.org)
  - Pen.io: [pen.io](http://pen.io)
  - Pencamp: [pencamp.com](http://pencamp.com)
10. Use the *Teacher Handout: Activist Profile Rubric* to review students’ profiles (also allow the students to assess themselves.) Consider whether students’ profiles synthesize information from a variety of sources to highlight Ameena’s key accomplishments, goals, and challenges.



# POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY CONT.

## ASSESSMENT ESSAY

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As stated in the pre-screening discussion “violence is a part of our daily lives.” Based on what you’ve learned, what qualities do you possess that would help you to contribute as a violence interrupter in your own community? How is your community’s affected by violence? How are women, specifically, affected by violence? What actions would you choose to take as a violence interrupter? Who would you work with? What outcome(s) would you hope to achieve?

## EXTENSIONS

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1. To encourage further understanding of the impact of the youth homicide statistics from the pre-screening activity, explain that violence has a profound impact on the lives of young people, their families, friends, communities, and society in general. Divide students into groups of three to five and distribute chart paper. Instruct them to create 3 webs: Individuals, Families, and Communities. Ask them to brainstorm the ways in which individuals, families, and communities are affected by the statistics they examined. Suggestions may include:
  - Individuals: injury, death, trauma, anxiety, fear, depression, substance abuse, interference with academic achievement/graduation rate, increased incarceration rates
  - Families: family stress and instability, parents worrying about their children
  - Communities: increased costs for medical care, law enforcement, social services, lost economic productivity, decrease in property values

Have students create informational brochures on the “cost of violence.” Students can visit the CDC’s website ([cdc.gov/violenceprevention/violentdeaths/cost\\_estimates.html](http://cdc.gov/violenceprevention/violentdeaths/cost_estimates.html)) to access statistics on the economic cost of youth violence.

2. In order to get students thinking about their point of view regarding prevention and intervention strategies, do a “Stand and Declare” activity. Write “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” on two pieces of paper and post them up at the opposite ends of the classroom. Explain that you will read a statement then students will stand on the spot between the two extremes that represents their stance. Once students have chosen their spot, ask three or four volunteers to explain why they chose their stance. After hearing the viewpoints expressed, ask if anyone wants to move to a different spot. Remind students to listen to the speaker and to voice their opinions respectfully. Once students understand how the activity works, read the following statements:
  - Police should arrest young people who commit violent crimes, so they understand that out-of-control behavior won’t be tolerated.
  - The courts should hold parents responsible for the illegal behavior of their children.
  - Communities should organize to help, using the churches, parents, and neighborhoods, engaging former gang members and ex-convicts to reach violent young people.
3. CeaseFire founder, Gary Slutkin, compares street and gang violence to infectious diseases like tuberculosis and AIDS. His strategy is to go to the source of the infection and interrupt the transmission of violence. Ask students to read Alex Kotlowitz’s New York Times Magazine article, “Blocking The Transmission of Violence” ([nytimes.com/2008/05/04/magazine/04health-t.html?pagewanted=all](http://nytimes.com/2008/05/04/magazine/04health-t.html?pagewanted=all)) then have them design a storyboard for the public health violence prevention model. Each frame should show how the cycle of retaliatory violence escalates, but can be interrupted by alternatives to shooting. Students can use multimedia tools, such as Prezi, to create their storyboards ([prezi.com](http://prezi.com)).
4. Have students individually or in groups write a journal entry from the perspective of a CeaseFire client. The journal entry should include the reasons why they chose an alternative to violence and the role the “violence interrupter” played in changing their behavior. Additionally, students can write a second entry from the perspective of the Interrupter about what they learned as a result of working with the client.
5. Have students choose a partner. Each partner should pick a person—either a violence interrupter or a young person involved in a violent incident—and create a dialogue that might have taken place between the two to de-escalate a potential conflict. Students can present their dialogues to the class.



# POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY CONT.

6. Aameena is one of only a couple of women who work at CeaseFire. Although women are often characterized as victims of gang and street violence, they also play an active role in both violence and violence prevention. Will CeaseFire's conflict resolution efforts be successful without the involvement of female violence interrupters? Using their knowledge of Aameena, have students write a proposal to CeaseFire, outlining the ways that women can become part of the conflict resolution process.
7. Read rapper Nas' Open Letter to Young Warriors in Chicago, written in response to Derrion Albert's death ([ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2009/09/30/open-letter-to-young-warriors-in-chicago](http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2009/09/30/open-letter-to-young-warriors-in-chicago)). Ask students to write their own open letter to the youth of Chicago.
8. Explain to students that a "social-ecological model" of violence prevention been suggested as a way of considering the multiple factors that contribute to violence: individual, relationship, community, society, and environment. Have students go to The Center for Action Civics ([centerforactioncivics.org/site/files/963/122146/411514/565737/Ecological\\_Model.pdf](http://centerforactioncivics.org/site/files/963/122146/411514/565737/Ecological_Model.pdf)) to explore the four factors. Ask students to chose one individual from the film and create a social-ecological map of the different factors that contribute to that person's experience with violence.
9. Have students research community-based violence prevention programs in their neighborhood and conduct a program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of those programs. If possible, have students visit the website, read annual reports, and interview clients and administrators. Ask students to note the organization's understanding of the root causes of violence, what kinds of services they provide, and who funds them. Have students prepare a presentation about one effective program that exists in their community.
10. Help students place violence prevention in a global perspective by having them watch "Women, War, and Peace"([pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace](http://pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace)) and use the engagement resources to reflect on the themes of the film. ([itvs.org/films/women-war-and-peace/engagement-resources](http://itvs.org/films/women-war-and-peace/engagement-resources)). Assign an essay, asking students to make a comparison between Aameena's work in Chicago and the work of women peacemakers abroad.

## RESOURCES

### Books

Kotlowitz, Alex, *There Are No Children Here The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1991.

McCollum Sharon L., Banas, Sean, Murphy, Madonna M., *Managing Conflict Resolution*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009.

### Films

*Will I Be Next?* Directed by Ralph Rollins, produced by Jeff McCarter and Elizabeth Czekner. [mediathatmattersfest.org/watch/9/will\\_i\\_be\\_next](http://mediathatmattersfest.org/watch/9/will_i_be_next)

*Crips and Bloods: Made In America*. Directed by Stacy Peralta, produced by Baron Davis. [cripsandbloodsmovie.com/about.html](http://cripsandbloodsmovie.com/about.html)

*Bastards of the Party*. Directed by Cle Sloan, produced by Alex Demyanenko. [bastardsofthepartydvd.com](http://bastardsofthepartydvd.com)

# ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

## WRITING STANDARDS 9-10, 11-12

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- #1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and sufficient evidence.
- #2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- #3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- #4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- #5 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- #6 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- #7 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

## SPEAKING AND LISTENING 9-10, 11-12

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- #1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- #3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
- #4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- #5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
- #6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## WRITING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS 9-10, 11-12

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- #1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- #2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- #3 Analyze in detail a series of events in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

## NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

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- #1 CULTURE: Through the study of culture and cultural diversity, learners understand how human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture, and appreciate the role of culture in shaping their lives and society, as well the lives and societies of others. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, history, sociology, and anthropology, as well as multicultural topics across the curriculum.
- #2 PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS: This theme helps learners to develop their spatial views and perspectives of the world, to understand where people, places, and resources are located and why they are there, and to explore the relationship between human beings and the environment. In schools, this theme typically appears in courses dealing with geography and area studies, but it is also important for the study of the geographical dimension of other social studies subjects.
- #3 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY: Personal identity is shaped by family, peers, culture, and institutional influences. Through this theme, students examine the factors that influence an individual's personal identity, development, and actions.
- #4 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS: Institutions such as families and civic, educational, governmental, and religious organizations, exert a major influence on people's lives. This theme allows students to understand how institutions are formed, maintained, and changed, and to examine their influence.
- #5 POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE: One essential component of education for citizenship is an understanding of the historical development and contemporary forms of power, authority, and governance. Through this theme, learners become familiar with the purposes and functions of government, the scope and limits of authority, and the differences between democratic and non-democratic political systems.
- #6 CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES: An understanding of civic ideals and practices is critical to full participation in society and is an essential component of education for citizenship. This theme enables students to learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizens of a democracy, and to appreciate the importance of active citizenship.

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**Directions:** As you watch the modules, fill in the graphic organizer with evidence from the film of her key characteristics, connections, and quotes.



# STUDENT HANDOUT B:

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

**Directions:** The Nobel Women's Initiative's website features profiles of women from around the world whose work promotes peace-work that is often carried out in the shadows with little recognition. Your assignment is to design and write an "Activist Spotlight" page for Ameena Matthews to be included on the Nobel Women's Initiative's website.

**Step 1:** View examples of other Activist Spotlights on the Nobel Women's Initiative's website: [nobelwomensinitiative.org/spotlight](http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/spotlight). In the space below, write down a list of the components of an Activist Spotlight:

**Step 2:** Gather research for your profile:

- Interview: "Meet Ameena Matthews, One of Chicago's Gang 'Interrupters'": [indiewire.com/article/interview\\_meet\\_ameena\\_matthews\\_one\\_of\\_chicagos\\_gang\\_interrupters](http://indiewire.com/article/interview_meet_ameena_matthews_one_of_chicagos_gang_interrupters)
- Interview: "It's a warzone here - a look the Interrupters and interview with Ameena Matthews": [permanentplastichelmet.com/2011/12/06/its-a-warzone-here-a-look-at-the-interrupters-and-interview-with-ameena-matthews](http://permanentplastichelmet.com/2011/12/06/its-a-warzone-here-a-look-at-the-interrupters-and-interview-with-ameena-matthews)
- Interview: "How Can We Interrupt Violence?": [msmagazine.com/blog/blog/2011/09/13/how-can-we-interrupt-violence](http://msmagazine.com/blog/blog/2011/09/13/how-can-we-interrupt-violence)
- Interview: "It's Either Kill or Be Killed...": [pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/social-issues/interrupters/its-either-kill-or-be-killed](http://pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/social-issues/interrupters/its-either-kill-or-be-killed)
- Video: Ameena Speaks at a Young Man's Funeral: [youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE](http://youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE)
- Video: Ameena's Prayer Vigil: [youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE](http://youtube.com/watch?v=uVzHX8qsrqE)

**Step 3:** Write and publish your activist profiles online using one of the following blogging platforms:

- Edublogs: [edublogs.org](http://edublogs.org)
- Pen.io: [pen.io](http://pen.io)
- Pencamp: [pencamp.com](http://pencamp.com)

# TEACHER HANDOUT:

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT RUBRIC

	EXCEEDING THE STANDARD	MEETING THE STANDARD	APPROACHING THE STANDARD	EMERGING
<b>Content</b>	I select many specific details that show what is important and interesting about the person.	I use some appropriate details to show what is important and interesting about the person.	I use a few details, but the reader doesn't really learn what is important and interesting about the person.	I do not use very many details, and the reader does not learn what is important or interesting about the person.
<b>Language: Vocabulary</b>	I use interesting and lively words that show rather than tell about the person.	I use interesting words to describe the person.	I use some interesting words, but most of the language in my article is ordinary.	The language in my article is ordinary.
<b>Language: Quotations</b>	When it makes sense to do so, I include some of the person's exact words in quotation marks in my article along with my descriptions of what the person said to make the story more interesting.	Sometimes I include the person's exact words.	I try to include the person's exact words, but sometimes it doesn't really make sense.	I do not include any of the person's exact words.
<b>Conventions</b>	I do not have any mistakes in sentences, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization in my article.	I do not have any mistakes in sentences, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization that make it hard for the reader to understand what I have written.	I have a few mistakes in sentences, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization that make it hard for the reader to understand what I have written.	I have so many mistakes in sentences, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization that readers have a hard time understanding what I have written.
<b>Multimedia</b>	I effectively integrate multimedia features throughout the spotlight. The photo and video are high-quality, support the spotlight's purpose, and are appropriate for the audience.	I use multimedia features effectively throughout the spotlight. The photo and video are high-quality and relate to the topic.	I try to use multimedia the spotlight, but some of the photos or video are low-quality or do not relate well to the topic.	I do not use multimedia on my spotlight.

\*Adapted from Intel's Assessing Projects Library: [educate.intel.com/pk/AssessingProjects](https://educate.intel.com/pk/AssessingProjects)



ENGAGING EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS THROUGH FILM

## ITVS ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION STAFF

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**Ashley Farmer**

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**Julia Yang**

## COMMUNITY CLASSROOM

Community Classroom is an innovative and free resource for educators, offering short-form film modules adapted from ITVS's award-winning documentaries and standards-based lesson plans for high school and community colleges, NGOs, and youth organizations. [ITVS.ORG/EDUCATORS/COLLECTIONS](http://ITVS.ORG/EDUCATORS/COLLECTIONS)

## ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds, presents, and promotes award-winning independently produced documentaries and dramas on public television and cable, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning series *Independent Lens* on PBS. ITVS receives core funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people. Women and Girls Lead is a strategic public media initiative to support and sustain a growing international movement to empower women and girls, their communities, and future generations. To learn more, visit [ITVS.ORG/WOMEN-AND-GIRLS-LEAD](http://ITVS.ORG/WOMEN-AND-GIRLS-LEAD)

## TRIBECA FILM INSTITUTE

Tribeca Film Institute is a year-round nonprofit arts organization that empowers filmmakers through grants and professional development, and is a resource for and supporter of individual artists in the field. The Institute's educational programming leverages an extensive network of people in the film industry to help New York City students learn filmmaking and gain the media skills necessary to be productive citizens and creative individuals in the 21st century. [TRIBECFILMINSTITUTE.ORG](http://TRIBECFILMINSTITUTE.ORG)

## TRIBECA YOUTH SCREENING SERIES

The Tribeca Youth Screening Series is a free-of-charge program that brings New York City public middle and high school students and teachers to screenings at Tribeca Cinemas and during the Tribeca Film Festival. Films are chosen for their educational relevance, but also for their cinematic merits. Students are exposed to independent films, filmmakers, and subject matter not typically explored in mainstream Hollywood fare, and teachers are supplied with a film text that can serve as a unique supplement to their curriculum. In order to facilitate further study of films, TFI creates original study guides for each film and works with teachers to incorporate both these and TFI's Teaching Artists in the classroom.

Allison Milewski: Arts and Media Education Consultant, Curriculum Specialist, and Founder, *PhotoForward*

Loira Limbal: Independent Filmmaker and Deputy Director of *Firelight Media*

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Honorable Margaret S. Chin,  
New York City Council

Honorable Scott M. Stringer,  
Manhattan Borough President

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