

EDUCATION SCREENINGS *at the*
MILWAUKEE CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL
September 27-October 11, 2012

***Brooklyn Castle* Education Screening**

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the Milwaukee Film Education Screenings! We are delighted to have you and thankful that so many Milwaukee-area teachers are interested in incorporating film into the classroom.

So that we may continue providing these opportunities, we ask that your class **complete at least one activity** in conjunction with the screening of *Brooklyn Castle*. Your cooperation ensures that we are able to continue applying for funding to bring in these films and offer them to you (and literally thousands of other students) at a low cost.

This packet includes several activities and discussion questions. To fulfill this requirement, your students may write about their discussion of, or reaction to, the film, or complete any of the activities included. Journal entries about completing any of the activities also count. We may post some of the best writings and activities on our website (with students' first names and school only) later in the semester.

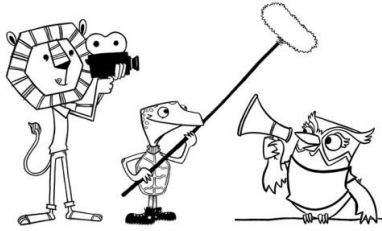
Please photocopy or scan your students' activities and email them to susan@mkefilm.org or mail them in **by November 1** to:

Milwaukee Film
Attn: Susan Kerns
229 E Wisconsin Ave Suite 200
Milwaukee, WI 53202

All screenings of *Brooklyn Castle* additionally fulfill the following Common Core English Language Arts Standards: SL6.1, SL6.2, SL7.1, SL7.1, SL8.1, SL8.2.

Thanks again, and we'll look forward to seeing you next year!

Susan Kerns
Education Director, Milwaukee Film



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How to Read a Film: Questions to Consider for *Brooklyn Castle*

Use these questions to spark dialogue about the film with your students after viewing *Brooklyn Castle*. Consider splitting the class into small groups to discuss one or two of the questions below, and then allow the groups to share their insights with the entire class. Another option is to use these questions as journal entry prompts.

What *happens* in the film? What important events occur? What is the resolution? Who are the important characters?

*These questions help students start to talk about plot, story, plot/narrative structure, character development, and conflict.

What is the film *about*? What themes arise? What morals or messages are in the film?

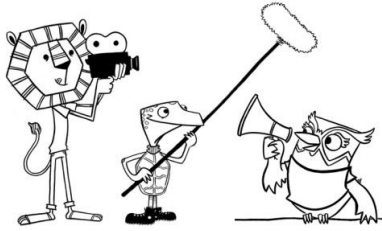
These questions help students think about a film's themes, messages, and morals – and seeing them as different from the story itself. In other words, a film can be about a group of students participating in a chess competition as well as issues in educational funding. Themes for *Brooklyn Castle* might include motivation, priorities and growing up, race and class issues, activism, and educational funding.

Do students in your class see different messages in the film? What differences do people see?

Discussing how students read the film differently helps students understand that films often express more than one message, and these messages speak differently to different viewers.

How does your real life affect how you understand a film? In other words, what might you notice or respond to differently in the film if you were of a different race or gender, or if you lived in a different neighborhood/city than you do?

One difference between documentaries and fiction films is that documentaries often include interviews. What do the interviews add to this film? Sometimes characters are shown giving their interview answers, and other times the interviewee's answers are used as voiceover to accompany images in the film. Both are used in *Brooklyn Castle*. When is each used, and what is the effect?



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Got a Problem at Your School? Get Your Voice Heard! Write a Letter

Common Core Standards: W6.1, W6.4, W7.1, W7.4, W8.1, W8.4; L6.1, L6.2, L6.3, L7.1, L7.2, L7.3, L8.1, L8.2, L8.3; WHST6-8.1, WHST6-8.4, WHST6-8.5

Wisconsin Model Academic Standards: Social Studies: History B.8.5, Political Science and Citizenship C.8.7, C.8.8

Mid-way through *Brooklyn Castle*, the parents at I.S. 318 write letters to the mayor of New York City and the Chancellor of New York City Schools in protest of budget cuts facing the school. Toward the end of the film, after their 1% cut turns into a 2% cut, the students also write letters. We see Pobo research the email address for the governor of the state of New York and we hear the letter Pobo writes. These letters seem to be effective, as 1% of the funding is reinstated.

If you're concerned about the funding your school receives, you could write a letter too! Representatives at all levels of government (from city council and mayor to state senators and representatives to the governor and president) have public addresses where they listen to citizen's concerns. Local newspapers often publish letters from citizens like you to let their readers know what's happening and what people are concerned about.

⇒ **TEACHERS!** If you want students to practice researching how to contact a government representative or newspaper, use Part One. Modify this section to your class's context and online research skills. If you'd prefer they all write to one person (Gov. Walker, for example) you could skip Part One and just give them the contact information.

PART ONE: FINDING SOMEONE TO WRITE TO

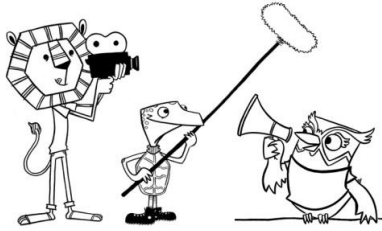
Start by deciding whom you want to read your letter. If you are writing about a school issue, you might send your letter to the Superintendent of your school district, the head of your PTA, or even your principal. If it's an issue about funding for schools in your area, you might send your letter to the governor or your state representative. If you want lots of people to read your letter and know about the issue, you might send a "letter to the editor" of your local paper.

Once you've decided whom you want to read your letter, figure out their name, job title, and email or mailing address. Use Google (or another search engine) to look this up. Try searching for "Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent email address" and look for results that say "how to contact" or that show an email or mailing address. Ask a teacher or parent for help searching if you're not finding what you want. Write down what you find here:

Name _____

Job Title _____

Email or Mailing Address _____



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PART TWO: WRITING YOUR LETTER

When writing your letter to such busy and important people, you'll want to make the letter businesslike and professional. You'll also want to make it clear and to-the-point, keeping in mind that the person you're writing has no idea what's happening everyday in your school.

Structure your letter into six parts:

Greeting Address the person you're writing by using their full name and job title. If there's a "Dr." in front of their name, use that too. Otherwise call them "Mr." or "Ms." This shows respect for them and encourages them to keep reading.

Who you are In the first few sentences of your letter, introduce yourself: your name, grade, school. You might also tell them more personal details to help them see you as an interesting person. This might be an activity you participate in at school (chess club, a sport, being class president, etc.) or a detail about you as a student (your favorite subject, a teacher who inspires you, etc.). Finish the first paragraph of your letter with a short sentence explaining why you are writing to them. For example: "I am writing to you today to tell you about how my school is being affected by the recent budget cuts."

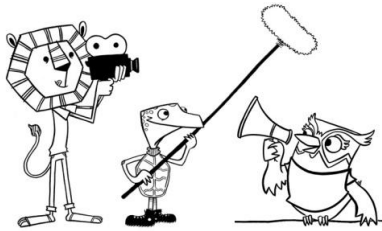
What you're concerned about In the second paragraph of your letter, go into detail about the problem or your concern. Use as many details as possible. Remember that this person probably has never visited your school or been in your grade for a very long time! Explain what it's like to go to your school and why they should take notice of the problem or concern you describe.

Why you're concerned Further explain why the problem you describe matters. What impact does it have on you as a student? On others you care about? Why do you care about this subject? Why should your letter reader care?

What you'd like them to do In the last paragraph of your letter, tell your reader what you think they could do to help with the concern you described. How can they help make it better?

Closing Finally, close your letter with a salutation ("Sincerely," "Thank you for your time," "Cordially," etc.) and your name. If you're printing your letter to mail, leave space between your salutation and your typed name for you to sign the letter.

Then, all you have to do is send the letter and wait for a reply!



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New York City Subways: Getting Around in a Big City

Wisconsin Model Academic Standards: Social Studies: Geography A.8.1

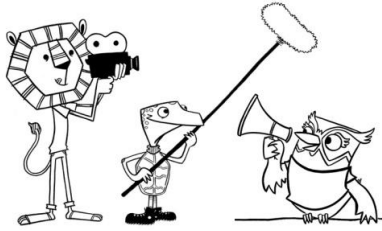
Early in the film, sixth-grader Justus is new to I.S. 318, and we learn that he commutes from the Bronx to Brooklyn. Later in the film, we see that he gets up early (it's not even light out yet!) and takes the subway to school.

New York City is very big and spread out over five boroughs: Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Boroughs are a bit like what Milwaukee calls "wards"—a big area of the city with many neighborhoods. In New York, though, there are so many people that each of these boroughs is also its own county! Here is a map showing all five boroughs:



(map from <http://nyctourist.com>)

If you've been to New York City (or just seen pictures) you are probably most familiar with Manhattan. That's where you can find the Empire State Building, Times Square, Broadway, and Central Park. In baseball, the New York Yankees play in the Bronx, while the New York Mets play in Queens. In the NBA, the New York Knicks play basketball in Manhattan, and the Nets are relocating from New Jersey to Brooklyn this upcoming season. (Oddly, the New



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Next, find the two stations nearest I.S. 318—the school is near the Broadway station (on the light green G line) and the Lorimer St. station on the J and M lines (brown and orange on this map). Trace these lines back toward Manhattan and write down all of the stations where Justus could change trains. Include the train lines he could change to and mark their number or letter and their color.

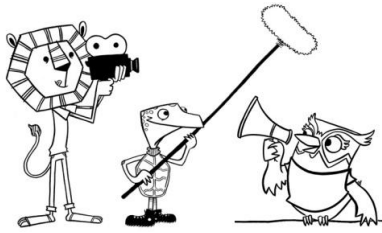
Justus can change from the G, J or M lines...

at this station...	...to this letter or number of line...	...shown in this color.

Finally, look over both lists to find a station where the 4 train and either the J, M or G trains cross (places where Justus can change from one train to another). If there are none, look for a common train that he could take before changing to a third train. For example, maybe he takes the 4 train to Grand Central Station, where a lot of lines come together, and changes to a train that will later connect to the J, M or G train. In the space below, write down all the possible routes for Justus to take using the following format:

Justus could take the dark-green 4 train to _____ station, where he will change to the _____ line (list the letter/number and color) and take that to _____ station.

Add on additional changes until Justus finishes his trip at the Broadway station on the G line or the Lorimer St station on the J or M lines. Then he can walk a few blocks to I.S. 318!

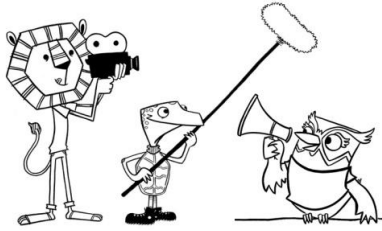


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⇒ **TEACHERS!** You can easily access a color PDF of this map on the MTA website (<http://www.mta.info/nyct/maps/submap.htm>) and offer it to students as a PDF or print a larger version that may be easier to read!





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Documentaries: Building a Story Out of Real Life Media Literacy/Language Arts Student Worksheet

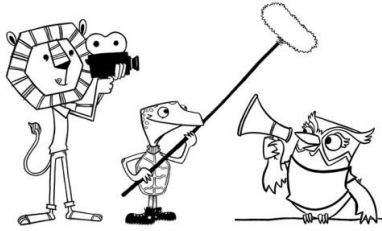
Common Core English Language Arts Standards: W.6.3, W.6.4, W.7.3, W.7.4, W.8.3, W.8.4, L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3

Documentary films are meant to be “true stories” that present events as they happen. However, non-fiction documentary films are as constructed as fiction films. In other words, **directors** and **editors** of documentary films watch hundreds of hours of **footage** to find the most interesting events, funniest or most emotional moments, and most beautiful images. They then **edit** these **shots** together to create drama, tension, or comedy, and they usually use a traditional narrative that has a **beginning (exposition), conflicts (rising action), climax, and resolution.**

Thinking about Reality versus Documentary: Creating your Documentary Treatment

Imagine someone is creating a documentary about your class or school. What might be the story of your film? Even though creating a documentary is often an unpredictable experience, having a plan is important. Use this chart to help you create a **treatment** for a documentary film about your school or class. A treatment is a short (less than one page) explanation of what your film’s story, characters, and major events will be.

What is my Documentary’s Narrative?	
Perhaps think of something that already has a definite beginning and ending point. Would it be one class period? A class assignment, like writing a paper or doing a science experiment? An entire school year? The arrival of a new student and his or her experiences at your school?	
Who are the Characters in my Documentary?	
Who would be the real life “characters” in your film? Is there a class clown? Anyone who studies a lot? A group of popular kids? Athletes? Bullies? What kind of a character would your teacher or principal be?	
What are the B-roll images for my Documentary? <i>B-roll is additional footage that is not an essential part of the action.</i>	
B-roll is used to create atmosphere or add interest to scenes. Footage of the things on your classroom walls, the clock, students being silent and listening, and the school building itself are examples of B-roll. Would you try to create a certain atmosphere for your school or classroom? Is it a quiet space? A busy space? A fun space? A bland space? What would you include so audiences can understand that space?	



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Setting a Goal and Planning for How to Get There

While watching *Brooklyn Castle*, we get to know these students pretty well. One of the things they talk a lot about is their goals. Specifically, they talk about their goals in chess: Rochelle wants to become the first African-American female master in the history of chess, while Patrick just wants to use chess to help him overcome his ADHD and not be ranked toward the bottom of the list of players at I.S. 318.

Each student explains what kinds of hard work and help they need to achieve their goals. For example, Rochelle starts going to Chess in the Schools, and they get her a special grand master tutor. He assigns her "homework," and Rochelle struggles to keep up with it alongside her schoolwork. She explains that school is her family's number one priority for her and that chess has to take second place. Her hard work pays off when she wins a tournament and a full scholarship to the University of Texas. As another example, Patrick has Pobo tutor him, travels to the chess tournament, and achieves a higher ranking.

It is easy to see how chess goals for these students are a lot like other goals in life. Use the worksheet below to help you plan for achieving your goals.

What is one goal I'd like to achieve in the next year or two?	
Why does this goal matter to me? What makes it important for me?	
What steps can I take to achieve this goal? What should I do first, second, etc?	
What other priorities do I want to place in front of this goal (school, family, sports, friends)? Why?	
What could get in the way of reaching this goal? Why? What can I do to avoid or address potential problems?	
Who can help me achieve my goal or the problems I might face? How can I encourage these people to help me?	