

# MVFF EDUCATION

## BLACK GIRLS FILM C▶MP 2023 TEEN DIRECTORS



**CURRICULUM GUIDE**  
GRADES: 5-12

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Dear Educators,

Thank you for attending the 46th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's screening of *Black Girls Film Camp*, a collection of short films developed and directed by high school-age Black girls.

This year, our MVFF Education film selections continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe these films will be powerful and engaging texts to use in your classroom. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence, with a particular emphasis on social-emotional learning. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your screening experience.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

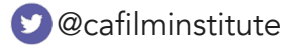
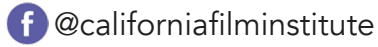
Sincerely,

The CAFILM Education Team

## ABOUT CAFILM

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CAFILM Education programs.

Follow the California Film Institute on social media



## STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which film had the best story? What was the story?
2. Which film was the most emotional? What emotions did you feel during that film?
3. Which film felt the most relevant to your world? What made it relevant?
4. Which story was the most inspirational? How did it inspire you?
5. Which film most reminded you of a story from your own life or another story you know?
6. Consider other films you've seen. What made these films unique or important? What are some connections between these films and other films?

# BLACK GIRLS FILM CAMP 2023 TEEN DIRECTORS



## ABOUT BLACK GIRLS FILM CAMP

Black Girls Film Camp is a nonprofit organization that provides a free 16-week filmmaking experience for high school-age Black girls across the country each year. Over 200 Black girls across the country applied for the 2023 camp, and 10 finalists were selected to direct and develop their own short films. This virtual screening of their work demonstrates how this program has developed a liberated space for Black girls to create and share their stories through film and how it is changing the film industry landscape by centering the experiences and voices of Black girls.

**Key Themes:** Filmmaking, Media Studies, Black Culture, Women's Studies

# ABOUT THE FILMS

## **A Thin Line Between Black and White**

Addison Belhomme | US 2023 | 7 min

A young Black activist faces her worst nightmare when her uncle brings an unexpected guest to dinner and they are forced to have a tense conversation.

## **Your Own People**

Taylor Brooks | US 2023 | 6 min

A Black suburban teen learns a valuable lesson about self-worth when a new neighbor challenges her ideas around Black identity.

## **Desquamated**

Terryn Pinder | US 2023 | 7 min

Desquamated follows the story of a young scientist who learns the consequences of tampering with her appearance.

## **Full Circle**

Jaida Cox | US 2023 | 7 min

A young teen loses herself after moving to a new school and must look within to rediscover her uniqueness.

## **The All Aroundz**

Avery Kelley | US 2023 | 7 min

Two 40-year-old frenemies are forced by love to work together to save their childhood home: their old double dutch center.

## **Advanced**

Gabriella Stafford | US 2023 | 7 min

A short documentary that examines the exclusionary practices that impact Black girls in the gifted education system.

## **How Did You Get Here?**

Hannah Merriweather | US 2023 | 7 min

A story about a Black teen girl named Rose who struggles with an eating disorder and has to choose whether she will confront the root of her problems and find true healing, or tell a lie.

## **Five Angry Black Girls**

Lanaa Dantzler | US 2023 | 7 min

A teen rebel finds herself in detention and learns the key to true freedom.

## **Uncensored**

Jaela Ellis | US 2023 | 7 min

A Black teen is met with countless overwhelming micro-aggressions at her majority-white school, which lead her to a journey of self-acceptance.

## **Identity**

Kalina Thomas | US 2023 | 5 min

A Black teen with anxiety finds comfort about her secret identity from a podcast that leads her to face her fear of rejection from her family and embrace her truth.



# DURING VIEWING NOTECATCHER

**Directions:**

The collection of shorts you will see are all films developed and directed by high school-age Black girls who attended Black Girls Film Camp. Use this notecatcher to keep track of the films so you will be able to dig a little deeper later with some interpretive analysis work. After each film, write a one sentence summary of the story in your own words. Then, use six words to record your personal review of the film.

Title	Director	One Sentence Summary	Six Word Review
A Thin Line Between Black and White	Addison Belhomme		
Your Own People	Taylor Brooks		
Desquamated	Teryn Pinder		
Full Circle	Jaida Cox		
The All Aroundz	Avery Kelley		

# DURING VIEWING NOTECATCHER

Title	Director	One Sentence Summary	Six Word Review
Advanced	Gabriella Stafford		
How Did You Get Here?	Hannah Merriweather		
Five Angry Black Girls	Lanaa Dantzler		
Uncensored	Jaela Ellis		
Identity	Kalina Thomas		



# AFTER VIEWING RESPONSE QUESTIONS

**Directions:** Sometimes when responding to film or literature, you might hear texts described as either **mirrors** or **windows**. Mirrors are those stories that reflect your own world, showing an experience that is familiar or relatable, while perhaps providing a fresh perspective. Windows, on the other hand, are those stories that let us look into a new and unfamiliar world, a world beyond our own lived experience. Think about these terms in relation to the films you've just watched and respond to the following prompts, using evidence from the film to support your writing.

1. Of these films, which one was the best mirror: a story that reflected a story you see in your own life, and gave you a way to see your own experience from a new perspective? What was relatable about this story and what was unique about the way the filmmaker chose to tell it?

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2. Of these films, which one was the best window: a story with insight into a world, identity, or experience you were unfamiliar with? What was unique about this story, and what was unique about the way the filmmaker chose to tell the story?

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# ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

©Tommy Lau

## What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

## History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films.. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

## Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

## Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway ([www.filmfreeway.com](http://www.filmfreeway.com)) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.