



BROOKLYN CASTLE: Viewing Guide

BEFORE THE FILM

Big Question: In your opinion, what is the purpose of an education? What should students learn in school beyond the content of class? Consider social, moral, and intellectual benefits.

Title Analysis Question: The title of this film is "Brooklyn Castle." Generate at least 3 inferences using one or both words from the title that help you brainstorm what this film may be about.

Personal Connection Question: Think about your experience in school so far. What are the biggest life lessons you've learned that have nothing to do with ELA, Math, Science, or Social Studies? Do you think these life lessons are as important as what you learn from your academic core classes?

DURING THE FILM

Record what you see, hear, and think as you watch the film. The film is our text. Take notes on it the same way you would annotate a text in class.

What do I see?	What do I hear?	What do I think?
What images, words on the screen, facial expressions, physical movements, props, lighting, details in the background, camera movements do you see?	What words or phrases, sound effects, vocal inflection, accent or dialect, background Music do you hear?	What themes are emerging? What opinions are you forming? What questions do you have?

Who are the main characters?

What are the major conflicts?

What are the main settings?

AFTER THE FILM

Personal Reflection: As soon as the film ends, write about your response and reaction to what you just saw. This may include your opinions about the film, what you will remember most about the film, and what lessons you think are most important that we learn from the film.

Text Connection Question: Albert Einstein was a famous chess player. He once stated “Anyone who never made a mistake has never tried something new.” How do Einstein’s words relate to the path that one of the main characters experiences in “Brooklyn Castle?” You may choose to focus on Rochelle, Pobo, Justus or Patrick for this question.

Title Analysis Question: Look back at the inferences you made about the title of the film in the “Before” section. After viewing the film, how do you think each of the following characters defines their “Brooklyn Castle?”

Pobo would describe his Brooklyn Castle as....

Alexis would describe his Brooklyn Castle as....

Assistant Principal John Galvin would describe his Brooklyn Castle as....

Rochelle would describe her Brooklyn Castle as....

Filmmaker’s Purpose Question: Just as an author’s purpose must be analyzed, a filmmaker’s purpose must be analyzed. What do you think the biggest lesson is that Katie Dellamaggiore, the filmmaker, is trying to teach us with this film? How does she teach us this lesson?

Extension Assignment: Begin by annotating the poem by Maya Angelou below. Circle and underline key phrases or words that stick out to you as you think about “Brooklyn Castle,” and, specifically, Rochelle’s story as she works to become the first African American Female Grandmaster Chess Player in history. Then, respond to the prompt below.

“You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I’ll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
‘Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I’ll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don’t you take it awful hard
‘Cause I laugh like I’ve got gold mines
Diggin’ in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I’ll rise.”

Writing Prompt: Rochelle is the only female chess player the film “Brooklyn Castle” focuses on. Her story is significant for a number of reasons. Compare her story to the story told in the poem “Still I rise” above. How does Rochelle’s tone mirror or differ from the tone of the poem? How does the poem echo Rochelle’s journey towards her goal to make history? Use the text as evidence for your ideas as often as possible.